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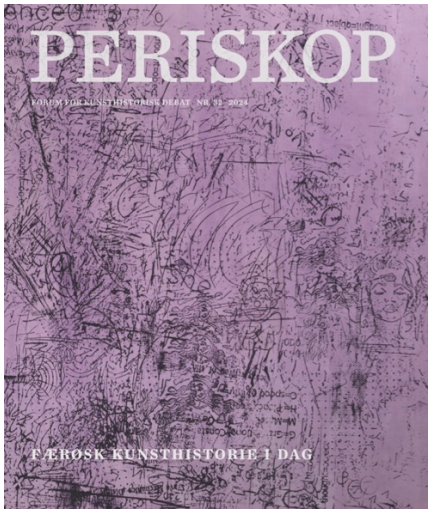


VÁR EYDNUDÓTTIR

Holding Hands at the Heart of Empire

In 1905, people from the different corners of the Danish empire held hands at a colonial exhibition in Tivoli, Copenhagen. The colonial exhibition (*Dansk Koloniudstilling (Grønland og Dansk Vestindien) samt udstilling fra Island og Færøerne*) displayed people and objects from Greenland (Kalaallit Nunaat), the Virgin Islands (former Danish West Indies), Iceland and the Faroe Islands to tighten the connections between Denmark, its colonies and northern dependencies (Bruun 1905). Today, the relations between the colonies and dependencies of Denmark seem largely disconnected and consciousness of colonial entanglements beyond the Danish mainland metropole is limited. As this article will show and counter, intra-imperial connections involving the Faroe Islands are often overlooked in studies of the Danish empire.

The article uncovers colonial relations of the past by analysing photographs from a scrapbook presumably created by the main organiser of the colonial exhibition, Emma Gad. The photographs show participants interacting at the exhibition, and the article asks: What kind of conversations about this forgotten past are made possible by these photographs? How can these photographs be used to reflect upon the ways ideas of race, whiteness, civilization, nationality, and empire have operated in the colonial encounters facilitated at the Tivoli exhibition? Throughout the article, the photographs point to histories of shared experiences between the colonies and dependencies that exhibition participants were supposed to represent in an orchestrated encounter at the heart of the Danish empire.

The historical case of the colonial exhibition is barely known in the Faroe Islands today, despite the large number of visitors it attracted and the comprehensive media coverage at the time, which also influenced the Faroese public debate. In contemporary research on Nordic colonialism, the colonial exhibition has received increased attention; however, the limited discussion of Faroese

participation makes it relevant to address the ways in which the Faroe Islands were represented in the exhibition together with Denmark's other colonies and dependencies.

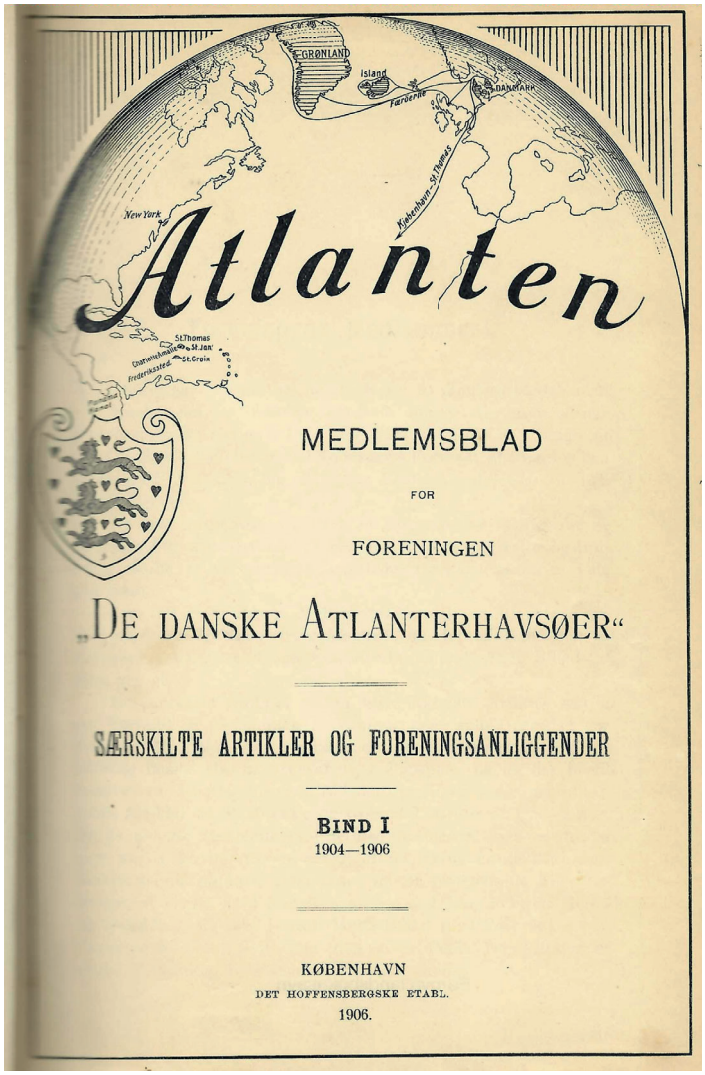
Colonial Disconnectedness

The Faroe Islands are routinely relegated to the margins of discussions on colonialism such that even in contemporary research on Nordic colonialism, the country most often simply does not seem to exist. This erasure of the Faroe Islands is generally unarticulated—as if simply forgotten or ignored—but is sometimes explained by the ethnicity of the majority Faroese population. In *Danmark – en kolonimagt* (Brimnes et. al. 2017, 6)—a five-volume publication on Danish colonial history—the Faroe Islands and Iceland are deemed irrelevant to the scope of the encyclopaedic project due to the populations' Nordic (white) heritage and the chronology of the foreign settlement:

> The Faroe Islands and Iceland are not considered as colonies even though the trade and other relations with these North Atlantic possessions during long periods have been organised like in the colonies. However, we find it more significant that the colonisation took place before modern European colonialism, and that the populations cannot in the same way be considered as ethnically and culturally different from the inhabitants of Denmark-Norway.

Other accounts of Nordic colonialism include Iceland without the Faroe Islands (Naum and Nordin 2013; Rud and Ivarsson 2021). The omission of the Faroe Islands in studies of Nordic colonialism as opposed to Iceland cannot be excused with "ethnicity" but demonstrates a general lack of awareness and research on the Faroese role in the Danish colonial network.

Some of the confusion around situating the Faroe Islands in colonial history can be attributed to the fact that the Faroe Islands never had the official status of a colony. Thus, there are conflicting conceptions of whether Faroese-Danish relations can be deemed colonial or not. Within Faroese academic debates, there are various perspectives on the Faroese-Danish relationship, ranging from those who view the Faroese national movement (considered to have started at the Christmas gathering (*jólafundurin*) in 1888) as unambiguously "decolonial" (Skarðhamar 2014), to those who characterise decolonial analyses as promoters of "imagined colonialism" that position the Faroe Islands as (false) victims of colonial domination (Simonsen 2012, 255).



[1] The front cover used by *Atlanten* between the years 1904-19.

I argue that the disregard of the Faroe Islands within the Nordic colonial context contributes to what I term *colonial disconnectedness*. Colonial disconnectedness makes it difficult to account for the Faroe Islands' colonial entanglements—not only their relation to Denmark and the Danish political, cultural, and linguistic influence in the country, but also (and more importantly) how to consider the Faroe Islands within the larger Danish colonial network. I do not mean to equate the coloniality of the Faroe Islands with the brutality of racism, enslavement, and resource extraction that Denmark inflicted on other parts of its empire, but we do need to acknowledge the Faroe Islands' entanglement in this colonial network. This entanglement includes: the transit trade post established in the Faroe Islands from 1768-1793 linking the harbour of Tórshavn (then named Frederiksvaag) to other colonial harbours like Frederiksted (St. Croix) through colonial commodities;[1] the Royal Danish Monopoly store (1708-1856), which controlled the trade and supply to and from the Faroe Islands within which locals could exchange knitted jumpers and socks (subsequently stored at the Faroese Warehouse (*Færøsk Pakhus*) in Copenhagen) for imported goods; and the so-called Faroese Harbour (*Føroyingahavnin/Færingehavn*) in Kangerluarsoruseq, Greenland that the Danish Administration of Greenlandic Affairs (*Grønlandsstyrelsen*) permitted the Faroese to establish in 1927 and which laid the foundation for an expanding Faroese fishing industry.[2] The fact that these historical connections and their material and human legacies are routinely disregarded in contemporary research on Nordic colonialism hinders the possibilities for historical contextualisation of how coloniality operates in the local Faroese present while also leaving out nuances of the colonial relations within the Danish empire.

Atlantic Connections

This article does not aim to settle the debate about whether the Faroe Islands can be considered a colony or not. Rather, my aim is to draw attention to some of the ways the country has been entangled in the Danish colonial project and the imaginary of the Danish empire. An example of this is seen in *Atlanten*—a member's magazine that was published monthly in the years 1904-19 by the Danish association The Danish Atlantic Islands (*De danske Atlanterhavsøer*). The magazine's front cover **[1]** shows a globe highlighting St. Thomas, St. John, St. Croix, Greenland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands, as well as maritime routes between these areas and the colonial metropole, Denmark. Additionally, New York and the Panama Canal are indicated to emphasise the geopolitical value of Danish possessions across the Atlantic Ocean. The large title *Atlanten* at the centre of the globe, above the Danish state coat of arms, proudly signals the country's valuable ownership over the Atlantic.

The Danish Atlantic Islands was established in 1902 in response to Denmark's plans to sell the Virgin Islands to the United States. The association consisted of a group of prominent people dedicated to promoting the maintenance of the empire. Among the association's supporters was Princess Marie of Orleans, the wife of Prince Valdemar of Denmark. As described in the association's articles, their aim was to improve the economic viability of the distant parts of the empire and to strengthen the solidarity between its citizens by producing and distributing knowledge, providing supervision, and influencing public and political opinion regarding the Danish relation to the Atlantic islands (*Atlanten* 1904, 28-29).

At the colonial exhibition in Tivoli in 1905, the association sold postcards with prospects "from all the colonies and from the exhibition itself" (Bruun 1905, 30)[3] and contributed presentations on the Atlantic islands, one of which featured bird-catching in the Faroe Islands (*Social-Demokraten* 1905b). The association was also directly linked to the exhibition committee, as one of their members, Moses Melchior, was president of the exhibition. Contextualising the colonial exhibition in Tivoli in relation to the involved organisers and associations provides an impression of a larger network of interests and actors invested in highlighting the value of the empire during this period.[4] Another central figure is the famous Danish writer and socialite, Emma Gad, who was the main organiser of the colonial exhibition and later also became a member of The Danish Atlantic Islands. Gad played a pioneering role in the Danish Women's Society (*Dansk Kvindesamfund*), where she organised gatherings and established associations promoting women's work. The colonial exhibition was organised on

behalf of the Danish Crafts Association (*Dansk Kunstflidsforening*), which Gad took part in founding in 1900 and chaired for several years. The proceeds of the colonial exhibition would go towards financing summer courses at the crafts association for women from Iceland, the Faroe Islands, the Virgin Islands, and Southern Jutland.[5]

Like the illustration on the front cover of *Atlanten*, the colonial exhibition exemplifies the Faroese position within the Danish colonial network and the relation to Denmark's other colonies and dependencies at the beginning of the twentieth century. The scrapbook photographs, to which I will now turn, bear witness to the ways in which these geopolitical and economic entanglements also entailed contact between people from across the Atlantic.[6]

Emma Gad's Scrapbook

Emma Gad's scrapbook is in the archives of the National Museum of Denmark. Since most of the scrapbook has not yet been digitised, public awareness of its content is limited. The scrapbook is thus an understudied historical source that gives access to otherwise unnoticed aspects of the exhibition. I have found the photographs in the scrapbook particularly relevant in the exploration of Faroese colonial entanglements.

Importantly, the scrapbook should not be understood as objective documentation of the colonial exhibition. Rather, it is a handmade collection of photographs, newspaper articles, caricatures, letter correspondences and financial documents related to the colonial exhibition across 135 pages. The scrapbook is stamped "Danish Crafts Association" and has been referred to as "the scrapbook of the exhibition organisers" by historian Per Nielsen (2016, 175) and as "the scrapbook of Emma Gad" by ethnologist Bjarne Stoklund (2008, 154). Gad's likely authorship of the scrapbook demands an awareness of how the selection, organisation, and handwritten text between the documents shape the narrative of the colonial exhibition from the perspectives of its organisers.

Engaging with the scrapbook as an archival object, I am inspired by cultural theorist Daniela Agostinho (2019) who in her account of the digitisation of historical records from the former Danish West Indies in the Danish National Archives addresses the limitations and possibilities of archival encounters. Referencing postcolonial media theorist Roopika Risam, Agostinho (2019, 145) reflects on the way the archive can neutralise violent colonial encounters in ways that reproduce ideas of colonial innocence or benevolence while presenting an opportunity to confront colonial dynamics and their legacies in the present:

> While colonial archives are always beset by colonial politics, knowledge gaps and traces of violence, they can also represent an opportunity to confront colonial dynamics, to challenge narratives of colonial innocence, and to complement the absences and silences of the archive with materials and narratives that reflect the experiences of documented communities.

Furthermore, Agostinho proposes that this familiar problem in archival and postcolonial studies should be seen in light of Denmark's reiteration of colonial innocence during the centennial of the sale of the former Danish West Indies to the United States in 1917. In this context, archives hold the possibility not only to generate new knowledge, but also to confront what scholar of comparative colonialism Lisa Lowe (2015, 39) describes as the "politics of our lack of knowledge".

Furthermore, my analyses of the scrapbook's photographs draw inspiration from visual culture theorist Tina Campt and her notion of the haptic. Campt (2012, 108) discusses "the physical and affective haptics of [...] embrace" across racialised positions in multiracialised family photographs in early twentieth-century Germany. She analyses haptic details as insights into social relations, as "modes of sociability and subjectivity" and "tactual condensation of sentiment" (Campt 2012, 114). Similarly, my analyses focus on haptic details like hand holding as ambivalent evidence of connection across colonial and racialised difference. In addition to hand holding, eye contact, costumes, and poses all shape my photographic interpretations.

The Colonial Exhibition

The colonial exhibition took place in Tivoli, Copenhagen from May 31 to September 24, 1905. In addition to being motivated by the topical debates on the value of the Danish possessions in the Atlantic, the exhibition also reflects the prevalence of human exhibitions at a time when the display of so-called "exotic people" was popular entertainment in Europe. As postcolonial scholar Rikke Andreassen (2003) points out, the 1905 colonial exhibition in Tivoli was one of around 50 human exhibitions hosted in Denmark in the years 1878-1909, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors. The exhibitions were a combination of the scientific paradigm of evolution and the mass entertainment industry narrating and controlling the hierarchical world order of the time. The exhibitions produced notions of authenticity to visualise the purportedly distinctive characteristics of the exhibited people and cultures and the extent to which they were influenced by (western) civilization. Photographs of the colonial exhibition brought the mass entertainment of stereotypical colonial visuality to a broader

[2] "Living room with Faroese girls." Scrapbook from the Danish Crafts Association, 1905. National Museum of Denmark.

[3] "Greenlandic Panorama with Miss Detlevsen." Scrapbook from the Danish Crafts Association, 1905. National Museum of Denmark.

audience. These photographs emphasise the ethnographic gaze and the visual establishment of the coloniser-colonised dichotomy determining who is being looked at and who is looking.

Although the Danish colonies were exhibited at different occasions, the exhibition in Tivoli is the only colonial "survey" exhibition that took place in Denmark. Whereas other human exhibitions displayed separate groups of people like Singhalese in Copenhagen Zoo 1890, Amazonians in the Circus Building (*Cirkusbygningen*) in 1897, and Chinese in Tivoli 1902 (Andreassen 2003), the colonial exhibition brought together a variety of people and objects based on "the aim to tighten the connections between Denmark and its colonies and northern dependencies" as the catalogue stated (Bruun 1905, 2).[7] The exhibition was structured in sections that represented the different cultures with furniture, hunting tools, taxidermy, crafts, and colonial commodities, accompanied by people representing what throughout the exhibition was referred to as "our" possessions in the Atlantic: Greenland, the West Indies, Iceland and the Faroe Islands. The exhibition also included an Icelandic log house, a Faroese kitchen and living room, a West Indian restaurant, and a pergola with stalls selling lottery tickets and specialities from the colonies and dependencies,[8] as well as a Danish farmer's cottage placed at the entrance of the exhibition to "symbolise the connection between the motherland and the Danish Atlantic islands" (Bruun 1905, 3-4).[9] At the centre of the entrance hall was a white bust of Crown Princess Louise of Denmark, the protector of the exhibition, around which the exhibition design was structured.

Udsigt over St. Thomas, et af Carl Lunds Mesterværker paa Koloniudstillingen.
I Forgrunden den paa Udstillingen ansatte Vestindianerinde.

Islænderinder udenfor det islandske Hus.

[4] "View over St. Thomas, one of the masterpieces of Carl Lund at the Colonial exhibition. In the foreground the employed West Indian and the exhibition." Scrapbook from the Danish Crafts Association, 1905. National Museum of Denmark.

[5] "Icelandic women outside the Icelandic house." Scrapbook from the Danish Crafts Association, 1905. National Museum of Denmark.

The colonial exhibition visualised the cultural and ethnic diversity of the Danish empire, while also rigidly delineating the different colonies and dependencies. Victor Cornelins, a seven-year-old boy from St. Croix sent to Denmark with four-year-old Alberta Viola Roberts to be exhibited in Tivoli, writes in his autobiography about his experience as an exhibition participant, or object, representing the former Danish West Indies. Cornelins (1976, 26-27) describes how the exhibition participants visited each other in the different sections in mornings, when there were few visitors:

> [To walk around at the exhibition] was possible in the forenoon when there were not as many visitors. Then the participants at the different sections often went to visit each other. Alberta and I also went out to see what it looked like at the other places, both together and alone. I was particularly fond of the Greenlandic section. [...] However, the exhibition staff could not be responsible for giving naïve visitors the wrong impression about what kind of people lived in Greenland (when I was there); therefore, they had to implement something that could keep me in the West Indian section on those fully visited afternoons and nights. [...] They acquired a cage!!! Here Alberta and I were placed.[10]

Cornelins' first-person account highlights the exhibition organisers' insistence on "authentic" representations of colonial territories, emphasising a racialised division between who belonged where within the exhibition's sections.

[6] "From Iceland, the West Indies, and the Faroe Islands." Scrapbook from the Danish Crafts Association, 1905. National Museum of Denmark.

Cornelins' autobiography demonstrates the exhibition's dehumanising effect on the two small children who were brought to Tivoli specifically to attract a high number of visitors (Andreassen and Henningsen 2011), which according to Cornelins himself only increased when they were caged. The emphasis on "authentic" representations of the different colonies and dependencies is also evident in a selection of photographs that reappear throughout the scrapbook where the exhibition participants are photographed at their respective sections—many of them in front of the large landscape panoramas painted for the exhibition by Carl Lund **[2-5]**.[11]

Holding Hands

In addition to the nationally isolated representations of the participants, the scrapbook includes photographs that visualise intimate connections between the exhibited participants across the distant geographies of the Danish empire **[6]**.[12] These photographs depict people in national costumes standing side by side, holding each other's hands at different locations of the exhibition space in Tivoli. The costumes were supposed to emphasise their cultural belonging and are in the archival material referred to as both national, regional, and folk costumes. The costumes have most likely had different cultural meanings in the different places: whereas the costumes worn by the Faroese, Greenlandic and Icelandic participants are very similar to what are characterised as national costumes today, the white dress and the madras check headscarf worn by the Caribbean woman is not understood as a national costume, but as Sunday best worn on special occasions in the US Virgin Islands (Nielsen 2016).

The photographs can be understood as spontaneous snapshots of the interacting participants, as suggested by anthropologist Kristín Loftsdóttir (2019), who in her analysis of the photograph of three women described as representing "Iceland, the West Indies and the Faroe Islands" understands the seeming friendship between participants as a possible example of their agency and resistance against the categorisation imposed on them by the organisers. "Perhaps, just as

Victor bravely resisted the categorisation as racially subjugated other, only to be put more firmly in his place", she writes, "these women were able to transcend this position for a few stolen moments" (Loftsdóttir 2019, 43). Considering Cornelins' first-person account of how the exhibition participants visited each other, it is likely that some of the images simply document the natural interaction that occurred between them at the exhibition and their active refusal of the curated division.

Another photograph of "Miss Detlevsen and William" depicted among foliage and conch shells in front of the West Indian harbour panorama could be a documentation of a spontaneous moment, as their expressions seem natural and relaxed **[7]**. The spontaneity is emphasised by the voyeuristic position of the photographer behind a plant. Contrastingly, the photograph of the five women described as "Faroese and Greenlandic young girls" positioned in a coordinated line facing the camera at the West Indian restaurant space is unquestionably staged **[8]**. This photograph is printed in a Danish newspaper collected in the book, and the grainy quality of the photograph distances the image and makes it difficult to discern the haptic details of the contact between the women that appear to be holding hands.

It is relevant to consider the photographs in relation to the original aim of the colonial exhibition and the desires of visitors. As mentioned earlier, the exhibi-

[7] "West Indian Panorama with miss Detlevsen and William." Scrapbook from the Danish Crafts Association, 1905. National Museum of Denmark.

[8] "Faroese and Greenlandic young girls." National Museum of Denmark.

tion was partly driven by the need to attract a large number of visitors in order to collect money for the Danish Crafts Association. The exhibition has therefore inevitably been influenced by attempts to meet the visitors' expectations, which according to Andreassen (2013, 28) were largely characterised by a specific demand for authenticity conforming to "pre-existing stereotypes of different races and people". The desire for a specific visuality is also demonstrated in Cornelins' (1976, 25) recollection of how visitors manoeuvred him and Alberta in order to capture certain images: "To some, this interest was so strong that they touched us, turned us around to make us photogenic before they took their photographs."[13] This, together with Victor's traumatic memory from the colonial exhibition, bear witness to the incongruence between the "innocent" photographs that appear in the scrapbook of Victor and Alberta and the children's violent experiences. Victor's memoir also indicates the relevance of considering the photographs from the Tivoli exhibition as a reflection of the visitors' colonial imagination, within which the hand holding might be an orchestrated gesture that juxtaposes the participants cultural and racialised characteristics. The ethnographic gaze is further emphasised by the caption underneath many of photographs designating the people's geographical belonging.

[9] "The Restaurant." Scrapbook from the Danish Crafts Association, 1905. National Museum of Denmark.

Staged Encounters

Another example of the encounter between the exhibited people, is found in an article in the Danish newspaper *Social-Demokraten* (1905a) that describes a meeting in the exhibition's restaurant **[9-10]** at the day of the opening:[14]

> In the big rotunda where a painted panorama of St. Thomas forms the background, the Greenlandic and the Faroese women are sitting in a cosy chat with a cup of coffee. We greet the young ladies from Greenland, who are sweating in their skin clothing. They are Miss Johanne Nielsen from Umanak [Uummannaq], Miss Lisbeth Andreas, whose father is a hunter, and Miss Marie Kleist, the daughter of a cooper in Julianehaab [Qaqortoq], who is not as experienced with the Danish language yet as the other two. They explain that despite all the wonderful things they experience down here (in Denmark), they have no more sincere wish than as soon as possible to return home to the icebergs with the cool, fresh air.
>
> The Faroese women are Mrs. Rigmor Lützen from Klaksvik [Klaksvík] and Elgine Kruse from Ejde [Eiði]. And lastly, we must mention the Icelandic ladies,

[10] "The Restaurant." Scrapbook from the Danish Crafts Association, 1905. National Museum of Denmark.

> Ragnheiður Jónsdóttir, married to carpenter Brynjulfsson from Reykjavik [Reykjavík], and Miss Oktavia Grønvold from Akureyri.
>
> A young n**** dressed in shining white is placed by the buffet. It is Mrs. Henriette Constance from St. Croix, married to a local carpenter, Peter Jensen from Copenhagen.
>
> The black lady approaches the group. "I would like to hear the young women speak Greenlandic", she says. The Greenlandic women suddenly stop the conversation and look surprised at their black compatriot. "Do you get scared because I am so black?" the n**** asks modestly. "Ah no, we are also a bit dark brown ourselves", the Greenlandic women replied laughing. "Come sit down and have a cup of coffee in our company", they add amicably. The n**** takes a seat in the circle around the steaming coffee. Immediately after, a photographer shows up and takes a picture of this interesting group photo.[15]

This passage can be understood as an oral version of the group photographs discussed here. Along with visual documentation, the written account articulates a photographic visuality and indicates how ideas of race, gender and cultural authenticity functioned in the encounters captured at the colonial exhibition. The passage appears in different versions, one of which was reprinted in a summarised form in the Faroese newspaper *Tingakrossur* two weeks after the opening ceremony. Literary scholar Jón Yngvi Jóhannsson (2003, 147) points out in his analysis of the last paragraph that the passage demonstrates the internal dynamics at play within the exhibition's predefined hierarchy. He describes how the Afro-Caribbean woman breaks the exhibition's racialised boundaries by taking on the role of the spectator, looking at the exhibition and showing interest in the Greenlandic participants. Jóhannsson argues that, in addition to the ways in which the women are also looking at each other, the "sisterly coffee-drinking" ("systurleg kaffidrykkja") illustrates their shared position within the exhibition that is ultimately established within the coloniser-colonised dichotomy by the white Danish photographer who captures the "interesting group photo" (147).

The photograph referred to in the end of the passage has, so far, not been located. It can therefore be considered as an "imagined record" (Gillian and Caswell 2015) that adds to the visual documentation of the scrapbook. In contrast to Jóhansson's reading of the passage, the non-existence of the photograph leads me to question the veracity of the encounter and the extent to which the passage is merely an expression of the journalist's colonial imagination. Historian Per Nielsen (2016, 173) points out that the conversation described in the article must be considered a "journalistic essay" ("journalistisk fristil")

that is not necessarily a reflection of what transpired at the exhibition. Rather, he argues, the journalist seems to have staged a miniature colonial encounter, a cultural study that, in accordance with the idea of the exhibition, signals diversity and community. Nielsen also points out that the description of Henriette Jensen reflects the language used by white Danes to describe a Black working class woman at the time. In continuation of Nielsen, I would argue that the racist language and the intense focus on the Afro-Caribbean and Greenlandic women's skin-color compared to the unmentioned skin-color of the Faroese and the Icelandic women clearly demonstrate the racial logics of the exhibition and how racial discrimination impacted the exhibited people differently.

Like the existing photographs of the different participants, the passage introduces the women by their specific place of origin (and here also by their names), emphasising the women's symbolic meaning in relation to the nation (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989), after which they are described according to their fathers' and husbands' professions. The focus on the clothing illustrates the symbolic meaning of national or regional costumes as presumed authentic expressions of the various cultures. As such, the clothing could be considered a demand for conforming to the visitor's pre-existing stereotypes rather than the participants' own choice. As described in *Social-Demokraten*, the West Greenlandic animal skin costume might not be something that the Greenlandic women would choose to wear during a European summer, had it not been for the exhibition, as it made them sweat. The performative function of the folk costumes is also mentioned in Cornelins' (1976, 22) memoir, where he describes how easy it was to "transform white Copenhageners to Faroe Islanders, Icelanders and Greenlanders by dressing them in the different folk costumes" compared to the difficulty of making them look "like black native West Indians".[16] Even though the passage in *Social-Demokraten* seems to illustrate that the exhibition participants were not just ethnic Danes who wore different folk costumes, Cornelins' account emphasises the performative aspect of the exhibition and his conception of how some of the identities could be enacted by white Danes wearing specific costumes while others could not.

Considering the Faroese national costume in relation to other photographs of Faroese women during this period, it is remarkable how the costume does not seem to reflect the desired clothing of Faroese women at the time. As illustrated in the photographic book *Female Pioneers* (Hansen 2018), within early photography in the Faroe Islands, Faroese women rarely wore the national costume when being photographed by Faroese photographers at the turn of the century. Rather, they wore contemporary "European fashion" with long dresses,

skirts, and hats when sitting for their studio portraits. In everyday life, the women seem mostly to have worn working clothes—skirts, knitted jumpers and shawls—as depicted in other historical photographs.[17] The Faroese women's use of the "foreign fashion" even seems to have been a topic of debate in the Faroe Islands during this period, as brought forward by Malan Simonsen (1987, 81) in her account of how women's clothing was discussed in the Faroese newspapers. Again, this could indicate how the clothing of the exhibited people did not necessarily reflect the authenticity of the different people on display at the colonial exhibition, but rather corresponded to the preconceived notions of the different cultures as well as Emma Gad's and the Danish Crafts Association's strong interest in local handcrafts.[18]

Colonial Negotiation

It is relevant to consider how the colonial exhibition was negotiated both publicly between the exhibited colonies and dependencies, and among the individual exhibition participants. Emma Gad's scrapbook includes clippings from the public debate, documents concerning the practical circumstances of the exhibition, photographs, and some private papers, such as a letter correspondence with the exhibition's protector Crown Princess Louise. However, the perspectives of the exhibited people are not readily accessible through this archival material. Other accounts on the colonial exhibition (e.g. Andreassen and Henningsen 2011) give insight into the difficult process of finding local people in the Virgin Islands to travel to Denmark to partake at the exhibition and some of the individual histories of the Afro-Caribbean participants (Henriette Jensen, William Smith, Victor Cornelins and Alberta Viola Roberts). The backgrounds and perspectives from the representatives of Greenland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands are less documented.

In my own research on the Faroese participants, I was able to trace both Elgine Kruse and Rigmor Lützen's relatives through their surnames and their place of origin, as stated in the passage in *Social-Demokraten* mentioned above.[19] I learned that neither of them had children, possibly making their life stories less accessible. However, through the descendants of their siblings I learned that both were of Danish origin, which is interesting considering the ethnic and "authentic" dimensions of the colonial exhibition. Their Danish origin might also explain why they were in Denmark during the beginning of the 1900s, most likely as students or as part of family visits. According to Kruse and Lützen's relatives, the colonial exhibition was not part of their family narratives. This is a significant detail in comparison to Henriette Jensen's participation, which

seems to have been a memorable event (Nielsen 2016). Again, this incongruence between participants' experiences indicates the unequal internal dynamics of the exhibition that are also reflected in the public debates and understandings of the relationship between the Danish colonies and dependencies in general.

With regards to the public debates, Ann-Sofie Nielsen Gremaud (2022) argues that there is no sign of dialogue with either the Afro-Caribbean or the Greenlandic population about the exhibition in the Danish media coverage, and internally in Greenlandic media there does not seem to have been any debate other than articles representing Danish voices and the Icelandic opposition. Contrastingly, the Icelandic reactions to the colonial exhibition take up a great deal of space in both Danish and Icelandic articles collected in the scrapbook. Kristín Loftsdóttir (2012) points out that it was especially the Icelandic student society in Copenhagen that initiated a heated debate, as they found it degrading to their culture and nationality to be categorised within a colonial exhibition alongside what they described as "uncivilised savage people". The Icelandic protests came to influence a great deal of the media coverage leading up to the exhibition, and the Danish newspaper *Politiken* printed a caricature depicting Emma Gad holding representatives of the Danish West Indies, Greenland and the Faroe Islands on a leash while trying to get a hold on the Icelandic representative that is eager to flee the Tivoli exhibition seen in the background. This caricature and the focus on the Icelandic opposition could be seen as reflected in the photograph of the three women representing "Iceland, the West Indies and the Faroe Islands" **[6]**. The crossed arms of the confident Icelandic woman turning her side to the camera might be a contrasting gesture to the arm holding of the Caribbean and the Faroese women, who both are facing the camera. The photograph seems to indicate an active negotiation between the photographer staging the image and the women. Yet, the smile on the Icelandic and the Caribbean women's faces leads me to question whether this might be yet another attempt to make a satirical caricature of the debates leading up to the exhibition dominated by the Icelandic protesters.

Even though the Faroese debates, judging by the contents of the scrapbook, do not seem to have reached the Danish media's attention, the Icelandic protests also initiated debates in Faroese newspapers, where several comments expressed similar concerns in terms of questions around colonial status, race and civilization. One protestor argued that if the Faroese would not follow the Icelandic withdrawal from the exhibition, it would position them "even worse—alone on the bench with e***** and n****" (Framburðfelagsmaður 1905).[20] Like the Icelandic protests, most of the critics used the emphasis on the Nordic origin of the Faroese

[11] Illustrated guide with 45 images from the Tivoli Exhibition, 1905, by Andreas Bruun.

to prove the perceived difference between them and the Afro-Caribbean population of the West Indies and the Inuit population in Greenland. However, the racist views that were expressed in order to distinguish the different countries on display must be understood as more significant than a mirroring of the mentality of the Icelandic protest. These viewpoints indicate how Faroese actively positioned themselves within a racial hierarchy of humanity during the turn of the century. But viewed in comparison to the unequivocal Icelandic stance, the Faroese reactions indicate a more ambiguous and complex self-conception, as expressed in the more unclear opinions on the Faroese participation. This ambiguity seems to have emerged both from the precise terms of the relationship with Denmark, whether or not the Faroe Islands should be considered a colony, a dependency or rather a Danish county (amt), as well as questions around the Faroese position within the paradigm of civilization. One newspaper comment questioned the Faroese level of civilization and the strong disassociation with the Greenlandic population by stating that "No, spiritually we are truly not worthy of placing ourselves as superior to 'S**********'—to use the so popular Icelandic designation of the indigenous peoples of Greenland [...] Any scorn or deception against the Greenlanders in that direction would be completely unfair" (*Tingakrossur* 1905).[21] This both illustrates how the Faroese have actively positioned themselves within a racial hierarchy of humanity, while at the same time demonstrating the Faroese ambiguity in its position within the Danish colonial network.

As a result of the Icelandic protests against the exhibition, a decision was made to change the original title Exhibition from the Monarchy's Dependencies and Colonies: Iceland, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and the West Indies in a way that clearly delineated Iceland and the Faroe Islands from Greenland and the West Indies and from the "colonial" categorisation. As seen on front cover of

the exhibition catalogue **[11]**, the final title was: *Danish Colonial Exhibition (Greenland and the Danish West Indies) and Exhibition from Iceland and the Faroe Islands*. In addition to the delineation between the countries in the title, a hierarchy was also made between the display of the countries in the exhibition itself. As pointed out by Thisted and Gremaud (2020, 40), this also manifests in the illustrations on the cover of the exhibition catalogue, where symbols of Denmark and Iceland are displayed paralleled as equals, whereas the symbols of the Faroe Islands, the West Indies and Greenland are smaller and placed below each other, framed within the extensions of the royal blue crown. The incongruity of the Faroese position within the exhibition set-up emphasises the ambiguous Faroese position in the Danish Empire during this period as non-comparable to the Icelandic level of "civilization", while at the same time as racially distinguishable from the Afro-Caribbean population of the West Indies and the Inuit population of Greenland.

[12] "Summer course in Danish Crafts Association. Young girls from Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Southern Jutland and the West Indies." *Kvindernes Aarbog 1912.*

Holding On

As documented in Emma Gad's scrapbook, proceeds from the exhibition —1,771.95 Danish Kroner—were transferred to the Danish Crafts Association to support a recurring summer course for women from Iceland, the Faroe Islands, the former Danish West Indies and Southern Jutland. Every summer, around 10 women were invited to receive instruction in weaving, hand spinning, lace, and embroidery from 1 June to 1 October (Dansk Kunstflidsforening 1906). A photograph, available today on www.emmagad.dk and originally printed in the 1912 book *Kvindernes Årbog,* depicts "Young girls from Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Southern Jutland and the West Indies" at a summer course **[12]**.[22] The photograph is most likely taken at the annual party held at Charlottenborg, where the women's appearance seems to have attracted special attention, as seen in an article in the Danish newspaper *Dagbladet* from 21 September 1910:

> In front of the platform, which was raised in back of the hall, was the most characteristic and beautiful decoration of a line of the association's students, young girls in national costumes from Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Southern Jutland, and the West Indies. The young Icelanders with the high, white Silkhats made the most festive, and a n**** with a red bow in the frizzy hair, the most peculiar effect.[23]

The photograph and the article in *Dagbladet* bear witness to the way the colonial encounters of the Tivoli exhibition continued at the Danish Crafts Association's summer courses. In a similar manner to the photographs from the colonial exhibition, the women in their respective national costumes perform their cultural belonging and together they visualise community and the global reach of the Danish empire—this time excluding Greenland. The handholding of the women in the middle of the group seems even more visible than in the photographs taken at the exhibition, as the women are placed closer together in what looks like an orchestrated studio photograph.

The documentation of the summer courses shows that even though the colonial encounters facilitated at the Tivoli exhibition might seem to be a unique example of human connections across the Danish empire, these encounters were not that rare after all, as they have continued several years after colonial exhibition at the Danish Crafts Association and possibly elsewhere as well. The exact duration of the summer courses is unclear, but towards the transfer of the Danish West Indies to the United States in 1917, Emma Gad seems to have changed her opinion regarding the Danish Atlantic islands. With reference to her acquaintance with women from the West Indies through the summer courses, Gad states that the West Indies have been "an unnatural appendage to us [...] it is as if we have never realised that the islands once were bought for money and therefore do not naturally belong to us" (Lehman 1916, 18).[24] Compared to the discussions around a sale of the former Danish West Indies during the colonial exhibition in 1905, Gad does not seem motivated to campaign against the sale of the islands at this time. She compares the interest, which increased as a reaction to the discussions of selling the islands a few years before, with an air balloon that ascended skyward but fell to the ground as soon as the decision was made to keep the islands. Similarly, Marie Bak (2020) has argued that the colonial exhibition that was supposed to strengthen the Danish imperial image instead turned out to weaken it—especially due to the Icelandic protests that attracted a great deal of the attention around the exhibition. One could therefore argue that the imperial image, stretching across the globe as illustrated in *Atlanten* and at the Danish

colonial exhibition in Tivoli in 1905, lost its viability when the former Danish West Indies became the US Virgin Islands in 1917, which put end to The Danish Atlantic Islands and the summer courses at the Danish Crafts Association.

Conclusion

The archival material I have analysed in this article has enabled me to critically address Faroese colonial disconnectedness by making visible the country's entanglements within the larger network of the Danish empire. From the numerous images and clippings collected in Emma Gad's scrapbook, I selected photographs of the adult handholding representatives from Denmark's different colonies and dependencies. In addition, I discussed supplementary images and newspaper articles to contextualise the colonial encounters displayed in the scrapbook photographs. At first glance, the scrapbook photographs visualise unlikely community and friendships between participants in Denmark's 1905 colonial exhibition. Yet placing the participants' intimate contact within their geopolitical context revealed these photographs' imbrication within colonial divisions of space and the racialised hierarchies at the foundation of the colonial exhibition and indeed of the Danish imperial project at large.

ABSTRACT

In 1905, people from the different corners of the Danish empire held hands at the colonial exhibition (*Dansk Koloniudstilling* (*Grønland og Dansk Vestindien*) *samt udstilling fra Island og Færøerne)* in Tivoli, Copenhagen. This article uncovers colonial relations of the past by analysing photographs from a scrapbook presumably created by the main organiser of the exhibition, Emma Gad. The photographs show participants interacting at the exhibition, and the article asks: What kind of conversations about this forgotten past are made possible by these photographs? How can these photographs be used to reflect upon the ways ideas of race, whiteness, civilization, nationality, and empire have operated in the colonial encounters facilitated at the Tivoli exhibition? The article seeks to answer these questions with a particular attention to the role of the Faroe Islands in order to counter the fact that the country is routinely relegated to the margins of discussions on colonialism. At first glance, the scrapbook photographs visualise unlikely community and friendships between participants. Yet placing the participants' intimate contact within their geopolitical context revealed these photographs' imbrication within colonial divisions of space and the racialised hierarchies at the foundation of the colonial exhibition and indeed of the Danish imperial project at large.

NOTES

1 The Danish merchant Niels Ryberg established the transit trade (in Faroese known as transithandilin, Vágsbotnshandilin or Rybergshandilin) in the western harbour of Tórshavn (Vestara Vág). The transit trade enabled Ryberg to smuggle products such as spirits, tea, tobacco and porcelain from the Danish colonies (the East Indies and the West Indies) to England, Scotland and Ireland through the Faroe Islands (Joensen 2017). The role of the Faroe Islands as a transit trade post contributed to making the Danish colonial trade highly profitable during the colonial wars when Britain put a high taxation on imported goods.

2 Today, the harbour is an abandoned tourist attraction. Literary scholars Malan Marnersdóttir (2021) and Bergur Rønne Moberg (2020) have put forward the Faroese colonial aspects reflected in the literature, the place naming and the conquest mentality of the Faroese harbor in Kangerluarsoruseq and the other areas that the Faroese eventually got access to on the southern west-coast and in the north by the east-coast of Greenland. Ole Wich (2013) has researched political documents concerning the negotiations of the Faroese access to the fishing areas.

3 Original quote in Danish: "[...] Prospektpostkort fra samtlige Kolonier og fra selve Udstillingen".

4 Here it is relevant to mention the national committees that took part in organising the exhibition. The Faroe Islands also had an organising committee; however, knowledge about the committee and its role in the exhibition is still very limited.

5 Southern Jutland has historically been an area of geopolitical dispute between Germany and Denmark. It was under German rule in the years between 1864 to 1920, which is likely the reason why it has been of political and cultural interest to invite women from this area to the summer courses at the Danish Crafts Association.

6 A selection of the images in the scrapbook is accessible at the online collection of the National Museum and some of the newspaper articles collected in the scrapbook can be accessed through digital sources such as "emmagad.dk", which entails a comprehensive and insightful collection curated by Tonny Hald.

7 Original quote in Danish: "[...] der har til Formaal at knytte Baandet bestandig fastere mellem Danmark og det Kolonier og nordlige Bilande".

8 According to the exhibition guide, Greenlandic fur, Icelandic antiquities, Danish basketwork, postcards and tombola were on sale. Photographs of the pergola indicate that other things were on sale or in the lottery like black dolls, conch shells and spirits from the West indies.

9 Original quote in Danish: "Den danske Bondehytte, der ligesom symboliserer Tilknytningen mellem Moderlandet og de danske Atlanterhavsøer".

10 Original quote in Danish: "Dette kunne lade sig gøre om formiddagen, når der ikke var ret mange besøgende, da gik medvirkende på de forskellige afdelinger ofte på besøg hos hinanden. Alberta og jeg gik også ud for at se, hvordan der så ud andre steder, både sammen og hver for sig. Jeg var særlig glad for den grønlandske afdeling. [...] Udstillingens ansvarshavende kunne imidlertid ikke tage på deres samvittighed, at naive gæster fik forkerte begreber om, hvilke mennesker der levede på Grønland (når jeg altid opholdt mig der), derfor måtte man ty til et middel, der kunne fastholde mig til den vestindiske afdeling på de fuldt besøgte eftermiddage og aftener. [...] Man anskaffede et bur!!! Her blev Alberta og jeg anbragt."

11 These are not the only impressions of the panoramas in the scrapbook. For example, the Faroese participants were photographed in front of Carl Lund's panorama of Tórshavn.

12 I use the concept "intimacy" based on Lisa Lowe's account in her book *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (2015). Focusing on the intimate connection between Africa, America, Asia and Europe, Lowe explores the interconnectedness of the world through colonialism, slavery, trade, and Western liberalism.

13 Original quote in Danish: "Denne interesse var hos nogen så stærk, at de befamlede os, vendte og drejede på os for at gøre os fotogene, før de tog deres billeder."

14 I choose to censor reproductions of historical quotes that include racist language.

15 Original quote in Danish: "I den store Rotunde, hvor Rundmaleriet fra St. Thomas danner Baggrunden, sidder de grønlandske og færøiske Kvinder i hyggelig Passiar ved en Kop Kaffe. Vi hilser paa de unge Damer fra Grønland, der sveder i deres originale Pelsdragter. Der er Frøken Johanne Nielsen fra Umanak, Frk. Lisbeth Andreas, hvis Fader er Fanger, Frk. Marie Kleist, der er Datter af en Bødker i Julianehaab og som endnu ikke er saa fuldt rutineret i det danske Sprog som de to andre. De forklarer, at trods alt det vidunderlige, de oplever hernede, har de intet kærere Ønske end snarest muligt at kunne vende hjem til Isfjældene med den kølige, friske Luft. De færøiske Damer er Frøken Rigmor Lüssen fra Klaksvig og Elgine Kruse fra Eide. Og endelig skal vi nævne de islandske Damer, Fru Ragnheidur Jónsdóttir, gift med Tømrermester Brynjulfsson fra Reykjavik, og Frøken Oktavia Grønvold fra Akureyri. En ung N****, klædt i skinnende Hvidt, har Plads ved Bufeten. Det er Fru Henriette Constance fra St. Croix gift med en derboende Tømrer Peter Jensen fra København. Den sorte Dame nærmer sig Gruppen. 'Jeg vilde saa gærne høre de unge Piger tale Grønlandsk,' siger hun. Grønlænderinderne standser pludseligt Samtalen og ser forundret paa deres sorte Landsmandinde. 'De bliver da vel ikke bange, fordi jeg er saa sort?' spørger N**** beskedent. 'Aa nej, vi er to ogsaa selv lidt mørkebrune,' svarer de grønlandske Damer leende. 'Kom og sæt Dem og drik en Kop Kaffe i vort Selskab,' tilføjer de venligt. N**** bænker sig i Kredsen ved den dampende Kaffe. Straks efter møder en Fotograf og tager en Plade af dette interessante Gruppebillede."

16 Original quote in Danish: "Det var let at forvandle hvide københavnere til færinger, islændinge og grønlændere ved blot at iklæde de respektive folkedragter. [...] Vanskeligere var det at få dem til at illudere som sorte indfødte vestindere."

17 I base this observation on my own research on historical photographs from the early 20th century of people working in the Faroese bacalao industry, found in the local archive of Sandavágs Fornminnisfelag and the National Museum of the Faroe Islands. These photographs do not indicate any daily use of the Faroese national costume. However, it is important to note that the national costume gained an important value during the Faroese national movement, which is considered to have started in 1888 and gained support throughout the 20th century. Ethnologist Jóan Pauli Joensen (2003), points out that the Faroese national costume was revitalised during this period as it turned into a national symbol.

18 Here it is important to note that there are significant differences between the cultural history of the Faroese and the Greenlandic women's use of so-called national or folk costumes. As pointed out by Rosannguaq Rossen, the West Greenlandic dress was not commonly described as a folk dress or national costume before later in history. The Faroese and the Greenlandic relation to "European fashion" has developed very differently, and the question of the "authenticity" of the folk costumes worn at the colonial exhibition is therefore not directly comparable.

19 Conversation with Malan Egilstrø on 4 May 2023 and Bogi Lützen on 11 April 2023.

20 Original quote in Danish: "I saa Tilfælde kommer vi til a blive endnu værre stillede – Alene sammen paa Bænk med E***** og N****!"

21 Original quote in Danish: "Nej åndeligt set har vi sandelig ikke Lov til at stille os fornemt-overlegne overfor "S**********" – for at bruge den så yndede islandske Betegnelse af Grønlands indfødte Befolkning. [...] Nogen Haan eller Bedragelse mod Grønlænderne i den Retning vilde være aldeles uretfærdig."

22 "Unge Piger fra Island, Færøerne, Sønderjylland og Vestindien".

23 Original quote in Danish: "Foran den Talerstol, der var rejst i Hallens Baggrund, sad som den mest karakteristiske og smukkeste Prydelse en Række af Foreningens Elever, unge Piger i Nationaldragter fra Island, Færøerne, Sønderjylland og Vestindien. De unge Islænderinder med de høje, hvide Silkehuer gjorde den festligste, og en n**** med rød Sløjfe i det krusede Haar, den ejendommeligste Virkning."

24 Original quote in Danish: "et tilklistret unaturligt Anhang til os – det er som om vi aldrig er kommet ud over, at de fjerne Øer engang er købte for Penge og ikke tilhører os med nogen indre Ret."

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