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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract <p>This thesis investigates the <i>affective economies</i> present in Danish-Greenlandic encounters when the Danish-Greenlandic relationship is discussed, in order to understand how certain <i>feelings</i> are constitutive of Danish colonial aphasia. Moreover, inspired by <i>Indigenous research ethics and methodologies</i>, the author employs a reflexive research approach to scrutinize her positionality and to start a discussion about epistemic injustice within Danish academia. In the study, <i>colonial aphasia</i> is theorized as an occlusion of knowledge and a conceptual dissociation with coloniality, which results in the inability of previous colonial powers to link present postcolonial issues with colonialism. The sources consist of namely a recorded conversation as well as autoethnography produced throughout the thesis process. By employing <i>analytic autoethnography</i>, the study shows how feelings of protectiveness, entitlement, shame and guilt are circulated by the author, a Dane, vis-à-vis Greenlandic people when discussing the Danish-Greenlandic relationship. The study concludes that feelings of protectiveness, entitlement and shame are present as coloniality, but that the Dane perceives coloniality as existing through the struggles of the Other, or as structural, but not as present within us as individuals. Consequently, these feelings are constitutive of colonial aphasia. Finally, the study suggests that the absence of <i>researcher reflexivity</i> in Danish research focusing on Danish-Greenlandic contexts is ultimately sustaining epistemic injustice. Concludingly, the study argues that employing reflexivity and introspection to investigate the particular is not only apt in understanding Danish colonial aphasia, but also in scrutinizing our own <i>colonial complicity</i> as Danish students and researchers investigating Greenlandic or Danish-Greenlandic contexts.</p>			
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Colonial Aphasia and Unsettling Feelings in the Danish-Greenlandic Relationship

A Danish Autoethnography

*Revised edition**

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Content

1	Introduction	2
1.1	“The best colony in the world”: Danish colonial aphasia and ignorance	3
1.2	Greenland as a topic in Danish research	6
1.2.1	Unsettling research relations	7
1.3	Objectives and research questions	9
2	Methodology	11
2.1	The postcolonial Indigenous paradigm	11
2.2	Lessons in listening: perspectives on research ethics	14
2.3	Analytic autoethnography	16
2.5	Conversations	19
2.6	Sources	20
3	A Historical overview: 300 years of colonialism	21
3.1	From pre-colonial times to Greenlandic Self-rule	21
3.2	Danish information campaigns and Greenlandic decolonization efforts	24
4	Theory and key concepts	27
4.1	Affective economies	27
4.2	Colonial complicity and colonial aphasia	30
4.3	White innocence	32
4.4	Thematic analysis	34
5	Analysis	36
5.1	Danish feelings of protectiveness and entitlement	37
5.2	White tears: Danish feelings of shame, guilt and apathy	42
5.3	“We are culture bearers”: Danish researcher positionality and reflexivity	49
6	Discussion	56
7	Conclusion	60
8	Bibliography	63

1 Introduction

Since the Danish colonization of Greenland in 1721, Danish politicians, academics, authors and journalists have been writing, interpreting and imagining Greenland into a certain existence from a Danish perspective. However, a fairly new way of doing so is through the lens of circumpolar politics, which is a somewhat new discovery in the Danish public and more elitist spheres (Jacobsen, 2019, p. 7). In May 2016 circumpolar politics was cemented in the public discourse on Denmark-Greenland when the Danish diplomat, Peter Taksøe-Jensen, characterized Denmark as “the 12th biggest country in the World” due to Greenland’s size (Breum, 2016). Taksøe-Jensen argued that “[t]he biggest threat to our interests in the Arctic is not the Russians, but the prospect of a weakened cohesion within the Danish Realm¹.” (Breum, 2016). With that quote, a hitherto unseen focus on geopolitics was inserted into the Danish public discourse on especially the Danish-Greenlandic relationship, but it was nonetheless a focus which was already present outside the borders of the Unity of the Realm.

In the light of this, the former U.S. president Donald Trump proposed to purchase Greenland from Denmark in August 2019 (Jørgensen, 2019). The prime minister of Denmark, Mette Frederiksen, replied that Greenland is not for sale, since “Greenland is not Danish, Greenland is Greenlandic” (Jørgensen, 2019). However, this ‘big real estate offer’, as Trump called it, re-stirred a debate within Denmark about its relationship to Greenland that transcended circumpolar politics, and there was a broad consensus in the Danish society that Trump’s offer was absurd and ridiculous. It even made some Danes, me included, very uncomfortable – as if Greenland was ever Denmark’s to sell. However, according to Greenlandic Inuk² poet and activist, Aka Niviâna, “[the Danes’] response highlighted an important aspect [...]: Denmark still doesn’t see itself as a colonial power.” (Niviâna, 2019).

Within academia, what Niviâna articulates has been described as *colonial aphasia* (Stoler, 2011): the inability of former colonial powers to connect their colonial past with present

¹ The Danish Realm, in this thesis only referred to as The Unity of the Realm, consists of Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands and will be introduced further in chapter 3.

² Inuit are Indigenous members of the Inuit homeland recognized by Inuit, and includes the Inupiat, Yupik (Alaska), Inuit, Inuvialuit (Canada), Kalaallit (Greenland) and Yupik (Russia). Etymologically, Inuit means ‘people’ (pl) and Inuk means ‘person’ or ‘member of Inuit people’ (sing). (Inuit Circumpolar Council International, n.d.)

postcolonial issues. From that perspective, colonial aphasia inevitably plays a crucial role in how Denmark perceives both itself as well as the Danish-Greenlandic relationship historically and today, which ultimately affects encounters with the Greenland on macro as well as microlevels.

The fairly new focus on circumpolar politics, as well as Trump's purchase offer, have actualized the Danish-Greenlandic relationship. Consequently, this has moreover illuminated the colonial aphasia prevalent in Denmark. A phenomenon which is detrimental to any equal dialogue about the future Danish-Greenlandic relationship, be it within or without the Unity of the Realm, and which I have therefore decided to investigate further.

According to Kirsten Thisted (2018), Danish cross-cultural studies scholar, the historicity of feelings in the Danish-Greenlandic relationship ought to be taken into consideration in order to fully grasp the current political, economic, and cultural discussions between Denmark and Greenland. This thesis thus seeks to investigate how Danish feelings vis-à-vis Greenlanders influence and constitute colonial aphasia and will do so by employing analytical autoethnography within an affect theoretical framework.

On a parallel level, the autoethnographic approach will furthermore be used to enhance researcher reflexivity, in order to situate the thesis within a larger debate on Danish research on Greenlandic contexts.

In the following three introductory sections, I will present previous research on Danish colonial aphasia (1.1) and outline what I consider to be a general issue of lacking visible reflexivity in Danish research about Greenlandic contexts (1.2). Finally, I present the objectives and research questions (1.3).

1.1 "The best colony in the world": Danish colonial aphasia and ignorance

Faroese politician Høgni Hoydal (2006) argues that what has made Danish colonial policy in regard to Faroe Islands and Greenland so invisible, and thus clever, is the use of so-called soft violence. He argues that the name *Rigsfællesskabet*, the Unity of the Realm, has connotations of friendship and equality, which then diffuses the associations of colonialism. *Rigsfællesskabet* as a friendship has almost become a myth and therefore Denmark's relationship with Greenland and the Faroe Islands has for long managed to stay out of a geo-political perception internationally.

The exercise of soft violence refers to the context that there were "no slavery, no killings" in Greenland (Lyng, 2006, p. 1). Aviâja Egede Lyng (2006), Greenlandic social

anthropologist, argues that this perception of Denmark as a benevolent colonizer has created the harmful metaphor of Greenland as “the best colony in the world”. A metaphor that Greenlanders were taught in school by Danish teachers through Danish history books. As a consequence, Greenlanders were taught not only to be Danish, but to be grateful for it too. According to Lyng, attempts to articulate the need for decolonization have often been met with accusations of being racist, nationalist and ungrateful both within Greenland and in Denmark. However, as Lyng points out: “the question remains if one can discuss colonization in such terms as ‘good’ and ‘bad’. Is it better to take bodies or to take souls?” (Lyng, 2006, p. 6).

Research specifically about Danish colonial aphasia includes Bojsen et al. (2020) who investigate Danish students' encounters with colonial history through their school curricula, how they perceive and relate to colonial history as well as how this is linked to social and national identity formation. Their research was based on interviews, surveys and observations in 2016 and 2019. Bojsen et al. found that colonial aphasia was suitable for describing the students' lack of language and analytical skills to link present issues of migration, racism and globalization, as well as their own social and national identity, to Denmark's colonial history. They suggest that this colonial aphasia is systemic, since it is developed and sustained through a school curriculum which dominantly fosters an ethnocentric perspective on colonial history. In a survey with 1,000 students, 17% declared in the first section that they found “knowledge about former Danish colonies” relevant. However, later in the survey, 44% answered that “colonial history is highly relevant in order to understand the world and globalization today” and 59% answered that they would like to have more knowledge of Danish colonial history. Bojsen and colleagues suggest that the increase in the percentage throughout the survey is caused by the accumulation of information and increased reflection. When asked about their associations with ‘a colonial power’, 83% students answered “slavery”. To the same question, “European countries” (79%) and “trade” (77%) were however answered slightly more frequently than “oppression” (72%), “racism” (56%) and “war and violence” (53%) (Bojsen et al., 2020, p. 44).

Thus, Bojsen et al. suggest that Danish students are less prone to link ‘a colonial power’ to present issues such as racism, war and violence, and more prone to link it to geopolitics and imperialism. Additionally, Bojsen and colleagues argue that some students find a sense of pride in belonging to Denmark because of, and not despite, its colonial history. Despite that the students think that slavery is morally wrong, they naturalize slavery in the name of geopolitics

and trade, arguing that “It wasn’t just all the major countries, it was also ‘little Denmark’, who knew how to be a colonial power and execute slave trade and those kinds of things” (Bojsen et al., 2020, p. 46).

In 2018, the Danish research company Epinion published the report *Young Danes’ Knowledge of Greenland* for the National Agency for Education and Quality, Ministry of Education (Epinion, 2018). On average, the Danish students were able to answer correctly on 58% of the questions about Greenland, but the vast majority of these correct answers concerned climate and nature. The Danish students knew less about the contemporary Greenlandic society and culture. Moreover, out of 12 pre-chosen words, the students associated Greenlandic people with “humble” (71%), “strong” (70%), “civilized” (67%) as well as “untidy/messy” (49%) and “alcoholics” (49%). In terms of feeling social cohesion with Greenlanders, 12% of the Danish students felt much or very much social cohesion, 48% felt some social cohesion and 40% felt little or no social cohesion. In regard to this, the report shows a connection between the feeling of social cohesion and the level of knowledge; the more social cohesion the students feel, the more correct answers they have in the survey. In a focus group interview with some of the Danish students, it is concluded that the students mostly think of nature and geography when thinking of Greenland, and that a more nuanced focus on also culture and society, as well as the commonalities between Greenland and Denmark, might increase the feeling of social cohesion (Epinion, 2018).

An earlier survey shows that Greenlanders generally perceive Danish people living in Greenland as dominating and materialistic, and Danes perceive Greenlanders as friendly and tolerant but also primitive and ineffective (Gulløv, 2017, pp. 405–406).

Lynges (2006, p. 6) previously quoted question of whether colonization can be discussed in terms of good and bad emphasizes the objectives of this thesis, because the question of even discussing the degree of wrong doings in colonialism relates to colonial aphasia. As Aimé Césaire (2000[1950], p. 39) famously stated: “no one colonizes innocently, [...] a civilization which justifies colonization— and therefore force—is already a sick civilization, a civilization that is morally diseased.” Colonialism has thereby not only scarred the colonized but the colonizer as well, though in profoundly different ways. Following Césaire’s line of thinking, I suggest that these scars manifest in populations of previous colonial powers as racism, White supremacy and colonial aphasia.

Denmark's perception of its colonial past was further cemented in 2014, when the Greenlandic Self-rule government established a Reconciliation Commission regarding the colonial period of Greenland. Even before the commission was set up, the Danish prime minister at the time, Helle Thorning-Schmidt, argued that "we [the Danes] are not in need of a reconciliation, but I fully respect that it is a discussion which occupies the Greenlandic people." (Gaardmand, 2014). Thus, coloniality is perceived as something that concerns Greenland but is irrelevant to Denmark.

1.2 Greenland as a topic in Danish research

There exists an abundance of Danish research concerning Greenland and the Danish-Greenlandic relationship. In October 2020 during my background study for this thesis, I used the Danish Royal Library's online search engine to search for theses/dissertations and articles respectively from 2000 to 2021 containing the word 'Greenland' or 'Grønland' in either title and/or topic. The search engine presented 1,130³ results for theses/dissertations and 172.552 results for academic articles/papers. When I did the same with the words 'Faroe Islands' and 'Færøerne', I got 120 results⁴ for theses/dissertations and 11.324 for articles. These results also suggest that Greenland as a topic is well-researched. The research mentioned investigates topics such as Danish discourses and representations of Greenland in politics, literature, media and culture; Greenlandic identity formation in Denmark and Greenland; social issues in Greenland; colonial aphasia and ignorance; discrimination of Greenlanders in Denmark; Danish-Greenlandic power relations in politics and still counting. In the vast majority of the Danish research I have read prior to writing the thesis, reflection on the positionality of the researcher is non-existent or minimal, even when the scientific paradigm is critical postcolonialism in which power relations is an essential theme. This is interesting since, departing from the postcolonial or decolonial paradigm, us students and scholars are committed to investigate, illuminate and criticize asymmetrical power relations and social injustices that we are nonetheless benefiting from and often perpetuating ourselves. An Inuk I spoke to described to me how Danish researchers are often oblivious of how they benefit from the very structures that they criticize or become experts on Greenlandic ways of life.

³ To see result: <https://tinyurl.com/4npkxn7n>

⁴ To see result: <https://tinyurl.com/4d7ha4p2>

It is not my intention to undermine nor call into question the value of Danish postcolonial research that does not integrate researcher reflexivity. My thesis is indebted to that research. However, I argue that using autoethnography can foster more reflexivity, which will perhaps create more respectful and relevant research. My rationale behind using the autoethnographic approach is the hypothesis that revealing, and thus perhaps better understanding, the colonial aphasia within oneself as a researcher will transform one's research and thus oneself. Both in terms of understanding colonial aphasia, but also in terms of how one engages with postcolonial or decolonial research in general.

1.2.1 Unsettling research relations

During the past six months, Inuit activists in the current Greenlandic decolonization movement have, on their public Instagram accounts, urged Danish students to stop inquiring about research related topics (Hansen 2020; Paninnguaq Lind Jensen [@tunnitit] n.d.). Activist Aka Hansen wrote the following on her public Instagram-profile:

My personal and lived experience or opinions are no longer freely available for you to use in your strive towards eurocentric, academic progress. Honestly, I think you should take responsibility and write about Denmark and Denmark's history and Denmark's role and responsibility in Greenland in the past and today. (Hansen, 2020, my translation)

Hansen's reaction mirrors other Indigenous people's reactions towards non-Indigenous research in Indigenous contexts (Chilisa, 2020[2012]), which will be unfolded in chapter 2 on methodology and research ethics. During my own thesis process, I occasionally "burned my fingers" being a Danish student trying to build up a Greenlandic network in regard to this thesis. The process was messy and frustrating but necessary and much needed. However, this messiness rarely makes it to the final version of a thesis or article. By being transparent about the process, and including this messiness in the analysis, I hope to point to a needed discussion on research ethics and researcher positionality within Danish academia.

Among Danish researchers focusing on the Danish-Greenlandic context, Naja Dyrendom Graugaard (2020), Arctic studies scholar, is one of the few researchers I have encountered who uses autoethnography in regard to her positionality. Graugaard is both Greenlandic Inuit and Danish, and she often reflects about her own position in research and includes personal anecdotes. Graugaard (2020) suggests that using autoethnography can create a reflexive process which has the potential to challenge the relations of researcher-researched and Self-Other in

(post)colonial contexts, which is one of the key themes of this thesis as well. I was excited to discover her devotion to and utilization of autoethnography as a means to discuss research ethics, as well as her employment of Indigenous research ethics and methodologies. Another example is Naimah Hussain (2018), who in her doctoral dissertation on journalistic practices in Greenlandic news media continuously reflects on her own positionality as a Danish researcher, as well as how Danish and Greenlandic identities are negotiated in this context. A final example is Tess Sophie Skadegård Thorsen, Ph.D in media representation, and Mira Chandhok Skadegård, Ph.D in racism and discrimination, who presented their co-authored paper “Tharangambadi revisited: Diasporic capital and decolonial (re)turns” (forthcoming) at the 20th Nordic Migration Research Conference & 17th ETMU Conference held in Helsinki, Finland on January 11–14, 2021. They began their presentation with the following statement:

I'd like to begin by acknowledging that as Danish academics and employees of the Danish state effectively by working at Danish public universities, we are actively participating in state national violence, both through the detect [and, red.] detainment of asylum seekers and camps, and also through the colonial and continual colonial relationships, for instance, with Greenland. (Chandhok Skadegård & Skadegård Thorsen, 2021, excerpt from conference transcript).

Occasionally during my studies in Helsinki, international fellow-students asked me whether I would write my thesis in relation to Greenland, because I am Danish and have studied Indigenous studies. I always promptly answered that I had no connection nor relation to Greenland, no network there, and consequently had nothing to do in a research setting concerning Greenland. Then I, almost scornfully, distanced myself from other Danish thesis students writing about Greenland, whom I found uncritical and non-reflexive. I had a huge need to demonstrate that I was aware of never employing ‘the ethnographic gaze’ and that I was aware of Indigenous research ethics and methodologies. This need and behavior were, however, the result of being in a process of scrutinizing myself and my position as a non-Indigenous student studying Indigenous studies, on which I will elaborate in the analysis.

Having the previous section in mind, it might seem odd why I have chosen to write about the postcolonial relationship between Denmark and Greenland. During my studies, my academic interest was never targeted at a special Indigenous community or postcolonial relationships, but at epistemological pluralism and– injustice as concepts and phenomena. However, an exam assignment led me to focus on Inuit self-determination in Greenland, which consequently led me

to see that I, despite having no relation to Greenland as an individual, was undeniably embedded in the postcolonial context. Very little of the knowledge about Denmark's colonization of Greenland as well as the postcolonial issues was new to me; I had already during my studies in Denmark been presented with concepts like White innocence (Wekker, 2016) and colonial aphasia (Stoler, 2011), which I will address in detail in chapter 3. However, my reflections about my relation to Greenland, my role in the continuation of coloniality and the, in my experience, lack of focus on Indigenous research ethics in Danish Master's theses on the topic, led me to engage in the Danish-Greenlandic relationship anyway.

By employing reflexivity and autoethnography I seek to illuminate aspects of how a Danish researcher navigates her position in a specific postcolonial context, and how she engages with the supposed Other. By doing so, I also hope to make a contribution to research ethics at least among Danish Master's theses, by encouraging other White students to be more critical and reflexive about their positionality as they embark on their research journey in postcolonial contexts, as well as to dare to ask oneself the uncomfortable questions about privilege, power, interest and relevance.

1.3 Objectives and research questions

The aim of this thesis is two-fold: to contribute to the knowledge of Danish colonial aphasia and to ignite a critical debate around Danish research positionality – both in relation to Greenland and the Danish-Greenlandic relationship. The objective is to do so by putting myself and my research process on display by employing autoethnography and researcher reflexivity within an affect theoretical framework: What does the Dane reveal when speaking not about the (previously) colonized or the Other, but her own presumptions, privilege, colonial aphasia and ways to overcome it? Thus, I will be analyzing how certain feelings emerge in the Dane in the encounter with Greenlandic Inuit, how these feelings are navigated and negotiated, and finally how they can manifest as colonial aphasia. By simultaneously employing researcher reflexivity, these feelings will be linked to a critical discussion about the role of Danish researchers in postcolonial research contexts. This thesis then aims to answer the following research questions:

- **Which feelings, from an affect theoretical perspective, do a Dane circulate, navigate and negotiate vis-à-vis Greenlanders when discussing the Danish-Greenlandic postcolonial relationship?**
- **What new perspectives on Danish colonial aphasia can these feelings reveal?**
- **What impacts do researcher reflexivity have on a Danish-Greenlandic research context and beyond?**

Hawaii’an professor Manulani Aluli Meyer argues that “[k]nowledge that does not heal, bring together, challenge, surprise, encourage or expand our awareness is not part of the consciousness this world needs right now.” (Meyer, 2008, p. 221). I hope that my thesis will at least do one of those things.

2 Methodology

“We each have our own unique ways of contributing to, and expressing ourselves, in this world. Why, then, does academia try to stomp that into a mono-form? I wonder how much wisdom and insight is lost in the process?” (Guttorm et al., forthcoming)

In this section, I will present the methodology of the thesis. First, I present the postcolonial Indigenous paradigm as well as key methodological terminologies. I will then discuss research ethics as well as my reflections, my positionality and my research approach in general. Subsequently, I will present analytical autoethnography as my main methodology and finally present my sources.

2.1 The postcolonial Indigenous paradigm

This research is situated within the postcolonial Indigenous research paradigm. This paradigm is informed by postcolonial theory, decolonial theory, critical race theory, feminist theory and aspects of decolonialisation, resistance and emancipation. Postcolonial refers to the “continuous struggle of non-Western societies that suffered European colonization” (Chilisa, 2020[2012], p. 9). One of the aims of the postcolonial Indigenous paradigm is to decolonize and indigenize Euro-Western research and methodologies (Chilisa, 2020[2012], p. 93). This thesis has not been conducted directly within an Indigenous context per se, but Indigenous research methodologies have nonetheless been formative to the thesis in several ways.

Western research in Indigenous contexts has been described as a double-edged sword; it can illuminate and remedy but also violate, dehumanize and sustain social injustice (Löf & Stinnerbom, 2016). Historically, the three latter have been the most common outcomes of Western research, for which reason Linda Tuhiwai Smith, scholar in Indigenous education, has famously expressed that: “the term research is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself, research, is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary.” (Smith, 2012[1999], p. 30). Thus, Indigenous scholars have stressed the importance of the following ethical aspects when conducting research in an Indigenous context: respect, relevance, reciprocity and relation known as “the four R’s” (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Battiste, 2008; Wilson, 2008; Chilisa, 2020[2012]). *Respect* of Indigenous cultures, values and knowledge; *relevance* of the research for the Indigenous community as well as *reciprocity*

and *relation* in terms of mutually benefitting from the research and establishing and maintaining a relationship with the Indigenous community. The two latter are to prevent hit-and-run research that describes research approaches where researchers enter a community, collect data and then disappear. Consequently, the researcher benefits academically while denying the Indigenous community agency nor control over the dissemination of their stories and knowledge. Awareness of the four R's simultaneously foster reflexivity. The aim of reflexivity is to create sensibility and attention towards power relations –and dynamics, as well as positionality and purpose of one's own research. Researcher reflexivity should not be considered merely a theme to mention in one's methodological chapter, like ticking off a box. Rather, the reflexivity on positionality should be active in all stages of the research process and considered an integral part hereof (Snow et. al, 2016), which I will aim to display by employing autoethnography.

Despite that this thesis is situated within the postcolonial Indigenous paradigm, its purpose is also decolonial. Since the words decolonial and postcolonial are not synonyms, I will briefly clarify my use of the terminologies. Both postcolonial theory and decolonial theory are concerned with the politics of knowledge production and with contesting the Eurocentric world order but have emerged from and focus on different geographies. Postcolonial theory started as an intellectual movement emerging from the work of diasporic scholars from the Middle East and South Asia such as Edward Said (1995), Homi Bhabha (1994) and Gayatri Spivak (1988), and is focusing on the colonial enterprise from the 18th to the 20th century (Bhabra, 2014).

Decolonial theory emerged from the work of scholars from South America such as Anibal Quijano (2007) and Walter D. Mignolo (2000). One of the key ideas of decolonial thought is that modernity and coloniality is inextricably connected: the logic of modernity (progress, development) cannot be understood as detached from the logic of coloniality (inequality, poverty, oppression) (Quijano 2007; Mignolo 2000). In decolonial thought, coloniality is an epistemic concept that is rooted in the 15th century with the Spanish invasion of what came to be known as the Americas (Bhabra, 2014). A key point in decolonial thought is that despite that coloniality is inherent to colonialism, coloniality exceeds colonialism. This concept is also known as the *coloniality of power*, coined by Quijano (2007), to describe the structures of power and control over subjects, knowledge and every part of the social world rooted in the modernist era in the 15th century. Ultimately, the aim in decolonial thought is to detach from and critique social, cultural, political and economic epistemologies shaped by European modernity, and hence

coloniality. These Eurocentric epistemologies are among others scientific colonialism, which “refers to the imposition of the colonizers’ ways of knowing – and the control of all knowledge produced in the colonies” (Chilisa, 2020[2012], p. 7), which is still prevalent within academia today as epistemic injustice (Sousa Santos, 2007). By constructing new epistemologies situated outside the Eurocentric narrative, decolonial thought thus seeks to increase epistemological pluralism.

The etymology of the words also reveals a distinction. Postcolonialism is occupied with the legacy of colonialism and refers to a certain condition, a present, that is *post* colonialism. Decolonialism with the prefix ‘de’ refers to the departing from or dismantling of colonialism, since it is still present as coloniality, by being disobedient to and detached from the Eurocentric narratives and epistemes.

When I in this thesis use the word ‘postcolonial’ to describe the Danish-Greenlandic relationship, I refer to a present condition of coloniality shaped by the legacy of colonialism. I also use the word ‘postcolonial’ when referring to specific Danish research embedded in postcolonial, rather than decolonial, studies. When I use the word ‘decolonial’, I refer to anti-colonial, de-colonizing and dismantling practices.

Finally, since I am continuously talking about ‘the Dane’ and ‘the Greenlander’, I will briefly add a note on the theoretical understanding of identity. Although my approach could reveal an essentialist understanding of identity as stable, I do rely on a poststructuralist notion of identity as non-essential, performative and constructed through language, discourse and the Other (Baxter, 2016). I do not consider ‘Dane’, ‘Greenlander’, ‘Inuit’ or ‘White’ as fixed identity markers. Rather, I am aware of how I perform my identity as Danish, as White, as a thesis student/researcher, as a woman, as a (representative of the) colonizer and as an ally in different ways in accordance with the cultural setting and the spectators or the Other. Just as my interlocutors in this thesis do as well. Thus, when I speak about the Dane and the Greenlander, I am referring to the colonial legacy and historicity which have shaped the Danish-Greenlandic relationship, as well as identity markers, and how that is navigated and negotiated by the individual. The conversations I have entered with people are based on a premise that we will discuss the Danish-Greenlandic relationship. In this way, the context has been formative for our identity performance: we speak from a Danish and a Greenlandic perspective respectively. If I

had initiated a conversation about a completely different topic, unrelated to Denmark and Greenland, our performance of identity had looked accordingly different.

2.2 Lessons in listening: perspectives on research ethics

In the following, I will be reflecting on how the postcolonial Indigenous research paradigm has shaped my research process as well as research ethics.

During my bachelor's degree at Roskilde University and my master's degree at University of Helsinki, I have been lucky not to have been presented to an all-White curriculum. However, despite writing numerous essays and exams using BIPOC theory⁵, it stayed as such: theory. It was not until I was introduced to Indigenous studies that I learned to really listen to theory outside a Eurocentric narrative. How could I learn to listen, better understand and embody knowledge so inherently different from the paradigm of which I myself was a product? A pivotal moment was when I read Hawaii'an professor Manulani Aluli Meyer for the first time. While reading her article *Indigenous and authentic: Hawaiian Epistemology and The Triangulation of Meaning* (2008) I continuously had to stop and reflect. I was guided more than I had been previously by any university teacher: "How will this inspire your research? Well to begin with, check your breathing. Is it deep and aware or are you troubled and in a hurry?" (Meyer, 2008, p. 219). This led me to scrutinize my own position as a non-Indigenous student in Indigenous studies, as well as my interest in Indigenous studies in the first place. I felt that my mere presence within a class of Indigenous studies was harmful, and that me learning about Indigenous knowledges and methodologies was inherently appropriative. I reflected upon this in several assignments and learned to perceive reflexivity as a goal in itself, rather than a means to fixed answers.

In line with Indigenous research methodologies and ethics, I have been focusing on the aspect of 'relevance' in regard to my thesis. In the beginning of the thesis process, I contacted various Greenlandic organizations as well as several Greenlandic Inuit to assess whether my initial idea (a collaborative decolonization project) was relevant or not, and if it was, if there was any interest in collaboration. Among these were the organization Nalik, the Human Rights Council of Greenland, a professor at Ilisimatusarfik (University of Greenland), a student and two

⁵ Including Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Gayatri Spivak, Achille Mbembe, Homi Bhaba, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Kimberlé W. Crenshaw, Angela Davis, Bagele Chilisa, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, James Anaya

activists on Instagram, whom I had been following for a while. Nalik, the student and the two activists responded. Two respondents found the idea interesting and necessary. Two respondents argued the opposite and urged me to look only at Denmark instead. Nalik argued that “Greenlanders should take responsibility for their own decolonization, and that Danes should do the same in Denmark” (Nalik, personal e-mail correspondence, 2020)⁶. The activist also replied that I ought to focus on the Danes only.

These dialogues about the thesis topic stretched out for more than 1.5 months. The dialogues took the form of formal email exchanges, fast paced chats as well as continuous conversations on Instagram and as a 1-hour conversation on Zoom. Consequently, I changed my topic, research questions and methodology several times and finally abandoned the collaboration idea in favor of a focus on Danes. Taking other people’s opinions into consideration and being reflective about these opinions has been possible due to the academic freedom of University of Helsinki which has meant that I had no fixed deadline for the thesis. This allowed my initial thesis-phase to be slow-paced, reflexive and focused on research ethics as Meyer (2008) inspired me to aspire for. Additionally, the process transformed me as a student, researcher and individual, on which I will elaborate in the analysis

Like other Indigenous communities, Greenlandic Inuit have been the objects of Western research which the Greenlandic society has rarely benefited from (Strandsbjerg, 2014). Therefore, I will continuously be reflexive and articulate of how my position as a Danish, White, female thesis-student, manifests in my thesis as well as consider my privileges and what advantages this grants me within society and academia. My Danishness undeniably comes with a colonial baggage when I enter into a dialogue with Greenlandic Inuit. As much as I, as the researcher, can draw a line around the Other, to whom I speak, the Other is too “active in accepting, rejecting or modifying a researcher’s identity claims.” (Harrington, 2003, p. 617). Thus, within any research encounter a negotiation of roles and positions is always taking place, and this specific process in Danish-Greenlandic encounters is shaped by coloniality.

Finally, the research has been conducted in accordance with the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity-guidelines for research with human participants within the humanities and the social sciences (TENK, 2019). The main participant gave their informed consent prior to the

⁶ Published with Nalik’s consent

interview⁷, and was informed about their rights to refuse participation or withdraw their consent at any time. The Greenlandic population counts 57,000 people (Gulløv, 2017), and the Greenlandic community in Denmark has approximately 15,000 people (VIVE, 2015). To ensure anonymity within this relatively small community, the participant has been given only an alias but no other identity descriptions. The participant has moreover read through the thesis prior to submission and had no objections. Organizations and activists whom I communicated with about the thesis, and who are directly quoted, have given their consent as well.

2.3 Analytic autoethnography

My first encounter with autoethnography and the possibilities of this method was through the work of Hanna Guttorm (Guttorm, 2018, 2016, 2017), scholar in Indigenous studies, revolving around her experience of revitalizing her Sáminess. It gave me a conceptual vocabulary to understand my own continual reflections on positionality as legitimate rather than self-indulgent. Therefore, I begin this section with a quote of hers which captures a feeling I mirror completely:

In my academic writing I always want – or have the compelling need – to write in and with the struggling I go through, while doing different things: while writing a PhD report, while working as a teacher or an educator, while participating in the different academic happenings. In my head I always remember one dialogue between Foucault and Deleuze (1972/2006), where Foucault says that “the intellectual’s role is no longer to place himself ‘somewhat ahead and to the side’ in order to express the stifled truth of the collectivity; rather, it is to struggle against the forms of power that transform him into its object and instrument in the sphere of ‘knowledge’, ‘truth’, ‘consciousness’, and ‘discourse’.”⁸ (Guttorm et al., forthcoming).

Autoethnography was born out of the rise of identity politics in the 1960’s and 1970’s and the emergence of the crisis of representation within the humanities in the 1970’s and 1980’s (Adams et al., 2015, p. 10). The crisis of representation questioned the idea of the researcher as a self separated from the research field. Thus, it challenged the positivist ideas of universal truths, objective knowledge claims as well as (Western) academia’s refusal of local and personal knowledges. To argue that the self and the positionality of the researcher could be excluded from the field was simply to deceive oneself. Furthermore, autoethnography brought forth a focus on research ethics and representation:

⁷ This interview will be referred to as ‘conversation’ in the thesis, explained in detail in chapter 2.5

⁸ Find reference to the mentioned dialogue between Foucault and Deleuze in bibliography

Autoethnographers often foreground the ways in which social identities influence the research process, particularly in terms of what, who, and how we study; what and how we interpret what we observe and experience; and how we represent our observations and experiences of cultural life. (Adams et al. 2015, p. 19)

Autoethnography is a qualitative method which employs introspection. Thus, the author uses self-reflection –and reflexivity to explore personal experiences that are connected to wider cultural, social or political meanings (Adams et al., 2015, p. 2). Reflexivity is used as a methodological tool to investigate the intersections between the particular and the general by acknowledging the positionalities and relations between researcher and researched. Thus, proximity and particularity are at the epistemological locus of autoethnography.

Reflexivity means to be aware about one's own positionality and identity, experiences and presumptions as a researcher and to actively act by challenging and engaging accordingly. Additionally, it means to acknowledge the reciprocity in the encounter between the Self and the Other and illustrate the processes of sense-making processes throughout the research. No research is clean-cut and straightforward, and illustrating the messiness of research processes, how one makes certain choices over others and how one navigates in this complexity, can reveal aspects that are vital to the research. Being reflexive and embracing vulnerability and emotions can disrupt social taboos, illuminate privilege and prejudice, encourage dialogue and create individual and social transformations, and thus: “[s]elf-reflection is a catalyst for social change.” (Parkes, 2015, p. 11).

Since its arrival, autoethnography has, and to some degree still is, a contested method. Historically, embodiment, storytelling and emotions have been categorized as feminine, which has traditionally been the antithesis of rational, positivist, research. Today, most researchers within the humanities and the social sciences do not consider themselves completely detached from the field (Collins & Gallinat, 2014), but autoethnography is in some disciplines however still considered self-absorbed, illegitimate and narcissistic (Parkes, 2015). There are certainly perils of including the self into the research, and one must be able to account for the epistemological questions arising hereof. How do we guarantee that the self is trustworthy, and that inserting the self into the research is relevant for the outcome? This is done by focusing on the self which is situated in the intersection between the personal and the societal, so that the particular is continuously related to the general. Furthermore, scholars emphasize that including

the self “has to be essential to the argument, not a decorative flourish, not exposure for its own sake.” (Behar cited in Anderson, 2016, p. 385). What distinguishes autoethnography from autobiographies, diaries, memoirs and the like, is that autoethnographic research links the personal (particular) to theory (general) and aims to contribute to and renew scholarly conversation (Adams et al., 2015).

I will use a specific type of autoethnography defined as *analytic autoethnography* – an ethnographic method in which the researcher is a full member of the research group. The researcher is thus visible in the analysis and the final texts, and the research aims to improve understandings of certain phenomena by relating it to broader, social contexts (Anderson, 2016). The features and values of autoethnography in many ways overlap with Indigenous research ethics and methodologies by centering reflexivity, relation and storytelling as core methodological elements.

The choice of analytical autoethnography was not an easy one. I constantly questioned the method and myself as being unacademic, narcissistic and self-absorbed. However, my supervisor and other scholars at Indigenous Studies at University of Helsinki encouraged me to include my reflections and feelings into the thesis one way or another. Especially when these feelings were directly rooted in the complex (post)colonial relationship between Danes and Greenlanders. Revealing my own assumptions, prejudices, colonial aphasia and ways of navigating and negotiating it, has inevitably led to discomfort and embarrassment in me while writing the thesis. However, when this thesis is more than just a narrative of a White woman’s critical awakening to her own positionality and privilege, it is due to the existence of the general in the particular.

Thisted (2018) argues that the intermediate calculations and reflections in particular Danish-Greenlandic encounters are of general interest, because they are essential in understanding Danish-Greenlandic encounters on a macro level. Moreover, the reprimand of the three Inuit activists to Danish university students mentioned in the Introduction suggests that a focus on researcher reflexivity is needed within Danish academia. Danish researchers and students trained in postcolonial theory are hardly immune to colonial aphasia themselves, albeit it might manifest differently than in the general public. Finally, I could myself have benefited from a similar autoethnographic account during my own studies.

2.5 Conversations

“Remember, bear witness to your own thoughts now as you delve into these categories of knowing. How will you respond to the ‘exotic’ other?” (Meyer, 2008, p. 218).

Besides the unstructured conversations and dialogues I had with various Greenlandic people mentioned in chapter 2.2, I had a two-hour conversation with an Inuk/Kalaaleq from Kalaallit Nunaat⁹ (Greenland) in October 2020. The conversation can methodologically be characterized as an active and improvisational ‘interview’, because the participant and I took equal part in a dialogue facilitated by me, but with no premade questions (Brade, 2017, p. 116). I was also inspired by dialogical performance which is “a way of having intimate conversations with other people and cultures” which necessitate empathy and willingness to understand and learn from other people (Conquergood, 1985, p. 10). I had informed the participant that “I will not be having any fixed questions prepared, but I just hope that we can have a good conversation about the topic and see where that takes us.” (personal e-mail correspondence, 2020).

The initial purpose of the conversation was to discuss a specific artistic work of the participant, which I wanted to include as a theoretical framework in the thesis. The conversation however developed into an informal and personal conversation about the (post)colonial relation between Denmark and Greenland and Greenland’s decolonization efforts. It was only after the conversation was finished that I realized the analytical potential of it.

During our conversation, the participant described her experience with structural racism, discrimination, questions of identity and language as well as opinions about coloniality, decolonialism and the Unity of the Realm as a whole, which I am grateful for. Many of her experiences also coincide with existing research on the area. Despite the topics being of great importance and relevance, it is however not in the scope of this thesis to investigate them. These topics have already been investigated from a Danish research perspective to a large extent, and the focus of this thesis is particular and personal rather than structural. In order to emphasize the importance of these topics and their role in the Danish-Greenlandic relationship, they will however be accounted for in a historical overview in chapter 3.

⁹ The participant’s choice of representation

2.6 Sources

My sources consist of autoethnography and the recorded conversation presented above, as well as other non-recorded conversations and chats with Greenlandic people.

The autoethnography consists of my written and unwritten reflections during the thesis-writing process. These reflections are collected/experienced from September 2020 to March 2021, and are stemming from conversations, chats and encounters with Greenlanders, my reading– and writing process, contemporary media discussions about the Danish-Greenlandic relationship, discussions with fellow students, friends and family members, Inuit activists on Instagram, as well as numerous podcasts, documentaries and television-programmes about Greenland and the Danish-Greenlandic relationship from the past two years. The majority of these reflections have been noted in a notebook for the purpose.

My other source is the recorded conversation described in chapter 2.5. The conversation took place online on the application Zoom, we both had videos activated and the entire conversation was recorded. The participant will in this thesis be referred to as Anna. Anna is bilingual (Kalaallisut and Danish), and the conversation was conducted in Danish. The transcription of the recorded conversation was made by me and contains 16.958 words, and all quotations used in the thesis are translated from Danish to English by me. Anna was moreover given access to review the thesis prior to the final submission. During the writing process, the conversation was stored on my password-secured private laptop in a m4a-file (sound), as well as the transcription in a docx-file (text). After submission, the m4a-file will be deleted and only the transcription excl. personal data will remain.

3 A Historical overview: 300 years of colonialism

The Danish-Greenlandic relationship cannot be understood outside a colonial and postcolonial context. In the following chapter, I will attempt to make a brief and non-exhaustive outline of the 300 years-old relationship between Denmark and Greenland. I will however focus mostly on the period of official decolonization in 1953 and onwards.

3.1 From pre-colonial times to Greenlandic Self-rule

From 2,500 B.C.E. Inuit tribes from Arctic America and Northern Canada began settling in present day Greenland from the North and continuously throughout Greenland. The Inuit groups arrived in several migration waves and have all been named after the places/times in which their remains have been found: Independence I and II, Saqqaq and Dorset I and II. None of these five cultures however survived in Greenland (Grønnow & Sørensen, 2006). In 989, the Norse people from Iceland settled in inhabited South Greenland, and they remained independent until 1261 when they started paying taxes to Norway. When Norway in 1380 entered into a double monarchy with Denmark, soon ruled only by Denmark, Greenland became Danish territory (Sørensen, 2007). Around the year 1300, the Thule-culture, ancestors of Greenlandic Inuit, arrived in Greenland from Canada. There is little knowledge about the relationship between Inuit and the Norse, but in 1500 the Norse people died out supposedly due to a change in the climate (Sørensen, 2007). However, the extinction of the Norse people was unnoticed by the Danish crown until more than 100 years later, and the hope to find Norse descendants continued until the end of the 19th century (Sørensen, 2007).

The re-colonization of Greenland (Kalaallit Nunaat¹⁰) began in 1721, when the Norwegian-Danish missionary Hans Egede arrived in Greenland to Christianize the Norse people. However, since the Norse people had died out, he encountered the Inuit and thus decided to Christianize them instead. As the Danish King still considered Greenland as Danish territory, Denmark established mission and trading stations along the West coast to respectively ‘civilize’ the Inuit and diminish Dutch whaling competition in Greenlandic waters (Sørensen, 2007). Denmark ensured further territorial control through the establishment of The Royal Greenlandic

¹⁰ The Greenlandic name for Greenland, meaning ‘The land of the Greenlanders’. Inuit Nunaat is also sometimes used, meaning ‘The land of the people’.

Trading Company in 1776, which until the official decolonization of Greenland in 1953 secured the Danish state colonial profits (Petersen, 1995; Sørensen, 2007). The services of trade and mission disagreed on how to administrate the colony. The mission considered shamanism heathen and therefore wanted to prohibit Inuit spiritual practices. The trade service however wanted to encourage and protect Inuit hunting traditions, because the primary colonial profit came from selling whale and seal products to Europe. This resulted in a paternalistic and protectionist colonial policy where the Inuit, considered as “the Noble Savage”, had to be isolated and protected from European culture in order to remain profitable for Denmark (Sørensen, 2007).

After World War II, the United Nations initiated a decolonization process focusing on the right to self-determination, and thus Denmark was pressured to abolish Greenland’s colonial status (Gulløv, 2017). Through a referendum, Denmark made a constitutional change, which meant that Greenland was annexed into Denmark as a higher-level county (*Amt*) and hence de jure equal (Strandsbjerg, 2014). This decision became the dawn of the Unity of the Realm which includes Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands. However, the referendum only took place in Denmark and not in Greenland (Petersen, 1995, p. 13), and in the negotiations leading up to the annexation, Greenland was only given two out of three possible options: annexation or independence. If a third option of free association had been presented and chosen, Greenland could potentially have had more autonomy in its relation to Denmark today (Gulløv, 2017, p. 310).

Despite that Greenland’s colonial status officially ended in 1953, it was de facto the beginning of a neo-colonial period where colonization was stronger than it had been before the constitutional change (Sørensen, 2007; Petersen, 1995). A modernization effort led by Denmark and the bilingual Greenlandic elite resulted in a Danisation strategy focusing on increasing the living standards in Greenland, but de facto assimilating Inuit culture into Danish culture (Grydehøj, 2016). One example was the so-called Experiment in 1951 where 22 Greenlandic children were sent to Denmark to live in Danish families, in order to return to Greenland as a new Greenlandic elite (Jensen et al., 2020). The Danisation process increased the living standard in Greenland but was based on a Danish model and did neither include the Greenlandic people in the decision-making nor the implementation (Loftsdóttir & Jensen, 2012). Greenlandic people were spectators rather than actors within their own country, and consequently, a Greenlandic

opposition against the Danish administration accelerated. The political mobilization was among others led by a Greenlandic elite studying in Denmark. With an awakened Inuit consciousness and political awareness, and along the rock tunes of the Greenlandic anti-colonial band Sume, the anti-colonization effort led to a referendum in 1979. The referendum resulted in the Home-Rule System (*Hjemmestyre*) with 70.1% Greenlandic voters in favor (63,3% voter turnout), thus granting Greenland with its own parliament (Grydehøj, 2016). With the Home Rule System, Greenland was granted internal autonomy, and the Danish county grant for Greenland was transferred to the Greenlandic administration. Denmark, however, retained control over defense, mineral sources and several public institutions (Graugaard, 2009, p. 15). The county grant is the contested block grant (*bloktilskud*) of DKK 3,7 billion (approximately €498 million) that Greenland receives from Denmark each year and which, along with grants for various political areas governed by Greenland, constitutes half of Greenland's GNP (Grydehøj, 2016).

The introduction of the Home-rule was followed by fast political developments in Greenland. Inatsisartut, the Greenlandic parliament, was established, Greenland became a part of the Nordic Council in 1984, left the European Economic Communities in 1985 and raised their own flag, Erfalasorput, the 21st of June the same year (Gylløv, 2017). The Home-rule was twenty years of hard, preparatory work of negotiations and diplomacy for further increased self-determination.

In 2009, the Home-rule was replaced with the current Self-Rule after a referendum with 75% voters in favor, which increased the internal autonomy and the policy areas governed by the Greenlandic government, Naalakkersuisut (Grydehøj, 2016). In the Act on Greenlandic Self-Government, Self-rule is granted on the basis of the Greenlanders being a people with the right of self-determination under international law: “[r]ecognising that the people of Greenland is a people pursuant to international law with the right of self-determination, the Act is based on a wish to foster equality and mutual respect in the partnership between Denmark and Greenland.” (Act no. 473 of 12 June 2009). Importantly, the system also means that Greenland can decide whether and when to become independent. Within the scope of the Self-rule the following political areas cannot be repatriated and governed by Greenland: State administration, Foreign, Security and Defense Policy, Supreme Court, Citizenship and Valuta – Policy (Gulløv, 2017).

According to Ulrik Pram Gad (2008), Danish global studies scholar, the union of Greenland and Denmark is paradoxical for two reasons. Firstly, the success of the union is based

on a common goal of Greenland's independence and thus the union contains its own termination. Secondly, the union rests on an idea of equality yet there is a clear hierarchical, paternal relationship between Greenland and Denmark due to the block grant. Former prime minister of Denmark, Lars Løkke Rasmussen, has on several occasions explained how Greenland should not count on the block grant if they choose secession and independence (The Danish Parliament, 2018, January 23).

As mentioned in the Introduction, the Danish-Greenlandic relationship has, especially the past five years, been situated within a geopolitical discourse and agenda nationally and internationally. If Greenland were to leave the Unity of the Realm, Denmark would lose 98% of its territory and its significant geopolitical position in the Arctic, since it is only through Greenland that Denmark has a seat at the Arctic Council (Gulløv, 2017).

3.2 Danish information campaigns and Greenlandic decolonization efforts

As a response to the lack of Danish knowledge of Greenlandic culture and society described in chapter 1.1, as well as the discrimination of Greenlanders in Denmark (The Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2015), the Danish government at the time decided to allocate approx. € 3,4 mil. on the Finance Act 2019 to initiatives increasing the knowledge of Greenland in Denmark as well as the feeling of social cohesion (The Prime Minister's Office, 11.12.2018). These initiatives include documentaries, thesis –and essay competitions about the Unity of the Realm, school teaching materials, study trips to Greenland and a new North Atlantic High School class for Danish, Greenlandic and Faroese students with travels to all three countries. Additionally, in 2018 the Danish student organization –and solidarity movement Operation Day's Work (OD) launched a campaign for students focusing on Greenland, Greenlandic culture, society, youth and common history with Denmark (Operation Day's Work, 2018). As a part of this campaign, OD published teaching materials for high schools in the subjects Danish, History, Psychology, Geography and Social Studies, as well as a podcast series focusing on the discrimination and prejudices that Greenlanders face in Denmark (Operation Day's Work, 2018a). After the campaign, OD and nine other organizations raised a citizen proposal about including the Unity of the Realm on the Danish school curriculum (Kalaallit Meerartaat, 2018), and in September 2019 the government and the majority of the opposition agreed (The Danish Ministry of Children and Education, 2019). To establish what parts of the history of the Unity of the Realm should be

included in the curriculum, a commission was established and today the initiative still has not been enacted.

The past two years, the geopolitical discourse on Greenland and Denmark has been accompanied by a decolonization discourse fueled by young, Greenlandic Inuit. In Denmark in 2018, a group of Greenlanders established the organization Nalik, which aims to start conversations about and support a mental decolonization process based on Greenlandic values, and to work towards equal worthiness and equality for Greenlanders (Nalik, 2020). A sister organization, Nalik Kalaallit Nunaat, was established in Greenland in November 2020 (Kristiansen, 2020). In 2020, the documentary “The Fight for Greenland” was screened on Danish and international film festivals which intensified the discussion of decolonization in the Danish and Greenlandic media. One of the documentary’s protagonists, Paninnguaq Heilmann, explained in an interview how she

get[s] so deeply angry, when we host Nordic this or Nordic that in Greenland. We are not a Nordic people; we are an Arctic people. [...] Our language, our traditions, our culture, our history [...], we have lost so much of our identity. Now we are taking it back. (Schmidt, 17.3.2020, my translation).

This decolonization effort entered the wider public debate in Denmark and Greenland in June 2020, when the statue of Hans Egede in Nuuk, with inspiration from the Black Lives Matter movement, was painted red with the word ‘decolonize’ (Sommer, 2020). Subsequently, the so-called Eskimo-debate began when a Danish ice cream-company decided to change the name of their Giant Eskimo ice cream (Kæmpe-Eskimo), due to several inquiries from Greenlandic people (Baunsgaard, 2020). A number of Danish ice-cream companies have had a variant of the Eskimo ice cream for more than 100 years, but the word ‘eskimo’ is among many Greenlandic Inuit considered derogatory, because the name was given by the colonizers and is directly linked to racism and Arctic orientalism (Lynge, 2010; Graugaard, 2020a). For weeks during the Summer of 2020, the issue covered all the Danish and Greenlandic news platforms with articles, interviews, polls and debates as well as on social media (Agger, 2020). Most recently, the debate was re-actualized when another ice cream company decided to change the name (Brøns, 2021) According to Frank Sejersen (2004), Danish scholar in Greenlandic and Arctic Studies, Indigenous rights have politically been absent issues in Greenland and Denmark, compared to for example in North America. The characterization of Greenlandic people as an Indigenous people

was new in the wider Danish public debate, and rather than associating the word Eskimo with colonialism, the Danes associate it with nostalgia because of the ice cream (Graugaard, 2020a). Consequently, the word Eskimo is for the majority-Danes dissociated from colonialism altogether, and thus a word that Danes insist on using without expecting to be called out as a colonialist or racist.

After a year with increased focus on Denmark's colonial past in Greenland, the Danish prime minister, Mette Frederiksen, officially apologized to the 22 so-called Experiment-children in December 2020 (The Prime Minister's Office 2020). An apology that the Greenlandic political parties Siumut (2019) and Inuit Ataqatigiit (2019) respectively had been encouraging for years.

In a poll from 2018, 57 % of the Danes partly or fully agreed that Greenland for the time being ought to stay within the Unity of the Realm (Nielsen & Petersen, 2018). Now, in 2021, it is the 300th anniversary of Hans Egede's arrival in Greenland. 300 years of colonization, resistance, relationship, collaboration, shared history, cultural encounters, oppression and resilience. The Danish Broadcast Corporation (DR) is currently producing a big scale documentary drama about "Denmark's and Greenland's shared history" which will air this year (Gylstorf, 2020). The 300-year anniversary will hopefully serve as a momentum to continue the increased focus on Denmark's colonial past and Greenland's decolonization process of recent years.

In 2019, a survey asking Greenlandic people about a hypothetical referendum on full political independence showed that 37 % would vote "yes", 35 % would vote "no", 20 % would vote "I don't know" and 8 % would not vote (Agneman, 2020, p. 20). However, when presented with information regarding the economic dependencies (the block grant), 35 % votes "yes", 43 % votes "no", 15 % votes "I don't know" and 6 % would not vote.

Despite the fact that Greenland's status as a colony officially ended in 1953, there is a broad consensus that colonialism continued, albeit in different shape, until at least the introduction of the Home rule in 1979 (Petersen, 1995; Sørensen, 2007). Due to the continued asymmetrical power relations between Denmark and Greenland today, and the fact that Greenland is not independent, some postcolonial scholars argue that colonialism never ceased (Loftsdóttir & Jensen, 2017; Hansen 2017, p. 34).

4 Theory and key concepts

In this chapter, I will first outline the affect theoretical framework of the thesis, more specifically Sara Ahmed's theory of affective economies. Then, I will present research that focuses on affect within the Danish-Greenlandic relationship. Finally, I conceptualize colonial aphasia in Denmark through the concepts of Nordic exceptionalism and White innocence respectively. These concepts will all be applied in the analysis, when I investigate the affective economies present in Danish-Greenlandic contexts.

4.1 Affective economies

Using affect theory became relevant for the thesis during and after my conversation with Anna, where I found myself *feeling* several complex and conflicting feelings. My feelings seemed to transcend the particular context of our conversation, but I nonetheless found them difficult to articulate academically. Employing affect theory gave me a vocabulary to do so.

In the first decade of 2000, an "affective turn" emerged within critical theory in the humanities and the social sciences, centering emotions, feelings and the body in relation to politics, culture and the social sphere (Clough, 2007; Andreassen & Vitus, 2016). In this thesis, I will draw theoretically on Sara Ahmed's work in affect theory, namely through her works *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004) and *The Promise of Happiness* (2010). More specifically, I will employ Ahmed's theory of *affective economies*.

Ahmed is critical towards any clear distinction between affect, emotion and feeling because the world is, she argues, generally messy and thus it is not helpful to construct clear-cut distinctions. Her reasons for using the word emotion is two-fold: that movement is etymologically explicit in the word and that it is more commonly used in everyday language than affect (Schmitz & Ahmed, 2014, p. 97). Her reason for not using the word feeling is the commonly used expression "I have a feeling", which is exactly what Ahmed challenges in her theory: rather than perceiving emotions as something internal which resides in the individual, something that the individual *has*, she argues that emotions emerge and circulate between bodies and signs, subjects and objects, and that the emotions exist as a means of that circulation. Thus, emotions accumulate in the relational as a social practice. To reiterate, shame, happiness, sadness or anxiety do not exist in the individual but emerge in the relation between the individual and the

other subject, object or sign. According to Ahmed, emotions accumulate over time by circulation between certain subjects (bodies) and objects. Emotions are moving sideways and backwards through subjects and objects like rippling water:

This is what I would call the rippling effect of emotions; they move sideways (through “sticky” associations between signs, figures, and objects) as well as backward (repression always leaves its trace in the present—hence “what sticks” is also bound up with the “absent presence” of historicity). (Ahmed, 2004, p. 120)

The more an emotion circulates, the more this emotion “sticks” to a certain subject or object. It is the sticking effect of emotions, which accumulates as rippling water, that makes the past appear in the present through historicity. Consequently, certain emotions stick to certain bodies due to past histories of association. When entering the world, the individual does not have certain emotions towards certain objects which then enter the collective. Rather, it is through the individual’s alignment with the collective that certain emotions are linked to certain objects. It is the accumulating and circulating character of emotions which makes Ahmed talk about affective *economies*.

Ahmed uses the concept *affect alien* to describe subjects who experience a “gap between the promise of happiness and how [they] are affected by objects that promise happiness” (Ahmed, 2010). Ahmed exemplifies this by describing the situation where you are the only one in a room not laughing of a joke, or if you are not feeling happy on your wedding day which society has otherwise defined as the happiest day of your life (Ahmed, 2010). In the analysis, I argue that this concept can also be used in the Danish-Greenlandic context when Greenlandic subjects are rejecting the harmonic character of the Unity of the Realm.

Even though Ahmed uses the term ‘emotions’, I will, inspired by Ahlstedt (2016), use ‘feelings’ in the thesis instead. As Ahlstedt, I too “enjoy the intentional impreciseness of ‘feeling’ and the fact that it spans the (sometimes very rigid) theoretical divisions between ‘emotion’ and ‘affect’” (Ahlstedt, 2016). The impreciseness of the word ‘feeling’ allows for it to also cover intuition, assumptions and beliefs which however manifest as feelings. In that sense, the impreciseness of ‘feeling’ emphasizes the discursive character of feelings which circulate and accumulate between subjects and bodies.

Drawing theoretically on Ahmed, Thisted (2018) argues that affective economies established during colonialism are still dominating the Danish-Greenlandic relationship today.

Thisted is analyzing a mail-correspondence from 2015 between Danish Else Lidegaard and Greenlandic Makka Kleist, which Lidegaard herself has published in her memoirs¹¹. In the mail-correspondence, Kleist is commenting on Lidegaard's analysis of an interview she did with her. Lidegaard (in Thisted, 2018, p. 76) has chosen to publish this mail-correspondence, including her own answers to Kleist's comments and objections, because they serve as an example of "a vulnerability in her [Kleist] and a missing responsiveness in me [Lidegaard] which is otherwise difficult to demonstrate." According to Lidegaard and Thisted, with whom I agree, it is the intermediate calculations and reflections in the conversation between Lidegaard and Kleist that is of general interest. Whenever Danes and Greenlanders step into a given context, be it geopolitical, cultural, personal or academic, certain feelings rooted in colonialism are always-already present (Thisted, 2018).

One specific affective economy investigated in the Danish-Greenlandic context is that of shame. Katrine Kladakis (2012), researcher at KVINFO¹², has analyzed how Greenland is represented in Danish newspapers and finds that shame is sticking differently to Danish and Greenlandic bodies. Shame is sticking to the Greenlandic body through shameful descriptions such as "social problems, alcohol abuse and promiscuous behaviour" and specifically to Greenlandic politicians through descriptions as "greedy" and "irresponsible" (Kladakis, 2012, p. 33–34). Denmark however is represented as just the opposites and as "on the highest cultural level with modern democracy and legitimate politicians –and once more Danishness appears as the norm by which Greenlanders are judged." (Kladakis, 2012, p. 33). Shame is also sticking to the Danish bodies due to Denmark's colonial history, but differently from the Greenlandic bodies. Whereas the Greenlandic body reacts by turning away from the shame, the Danish body can mobilize the shame into something positive because the "White, Danish subject occupies a privileged position as a subject that is not otherwise associated with shame." (Kladakis, 2012, p. 40). By mobilizing the shame into something positive, Kladakis is referring to Ahmed's argument that shame can be used in nation-building (Ahmed, 2004), which I will also unfold in the analysis.

¹¹ Published in "Med nordlys i øjnene – Genskin fra et liv med Grønland som ballast" ["With Northern lights in the eyes - Reflections from a life with Greenland as ballast"] (2016)

¹² Denmark's knowledge centre for gender and equality

4.2 Colonial complicity and colonial aphasia

Along with the rest of the Nordic countries, Denmark has managed to brand itself as a small, just and equal country, priding itself with its welfare-state and its happy citizens (Andreassen & Vitus, 2016). The myth of the benevolent Nordic void of colonial complicity (Keskinen et al., 2009) has been referred to as Nordic exceptionalism. Nordic exceptionalism has “internally and globally produced an image of the Nordic countries as mono-cultural and homogenous predominantly white nation-states, dominated by cultural norms of unmarked whiteness” (Andreassen & Vitus, 2016, p. 11). It also expresses the idea that the Nordic countries were located in the periphery of European colonialism (Loftsdóttir & Jensen, 2012, p. 2), and thus they hold “no colonial hangover of cultural oppression, economic exploitation and political repression” (Palmberg, 2009, p. 75). Common for the Nordic countries is also an ethnic homogeneity which has created a normativity of whiteness that has resulted in racism being perceived as an exceptional, heinous behavior rather than as a fundamental and inherited ideology (Palmberg, 2009; Rastas, 2019). Albeit a well-preserved and steadfast myth, Nordic exceptionalism is historically inaccurate. Denmark was the seventh largest slave nation based on the number of enslaved people embarked during the trans-Atlantic slave trade (Gøbel, 2001; Blaagaard, 2010). Denmark established trading posts at Tharangambadi and Puducherry on the east coast of India in 1620, a colony on the Gold Coast (Ghana) in 1685 and on St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix (today US. Virgin Islands) in 1665 (Jensen, 2016). In 1721, Denmark colonized Greenland.

In continuation of the above, political scientist and historian Benedict Anderson described Denmark excruciatingly clear in 2005, when he argued that:

All historians know that Denmark was once an empire. But I understand that it is not something that your children learn in school. Instead, they learn about this little friendly, harmless country with its kind people. Well, out of this kindness is growing a malignant intolerance which is quickly aimed at its own opposite. (cited in Kaarsholm, 2005, my translation).

Anderson’s quote both points to Nordic exceptionalism as well as colonial aphasia; a firm belief by the Danes that they are exempt from colonialism sustained through a systemic ignorance. A year later in 2006, the Danish curatorial collective Kuratorisk Aktion curated the exhibition project *Rethinking Nordic Colonialism: A Postcolonial Exhibition Project in Five Acts* for the

Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art (Kuratorisk Aktion, 2006). The project consisted of exhibitions, workshops and conferences during seven months in 2006 across the Nordic countries (Denmark, Faroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden). Fifty-six international artists, theorists, politicians and activists participated in investigating why and how the colonial past has been forgotten in the Nordic and how it seems to be reproducing itself as xenophobia and nationalism (Kuratorisk Aktion, 2006). Consequently, a postcolonial debate started to manifest within Danish academia.

However, the interest in Denmark's colonial past was first mainstreamed around and after the 100-year commemoration of Denmark's transfer of the islands Saint Thomas, Saint John and Saint Croix (known as the Danish West Indies at the time) to the US in 1917. In 2017, the five-volume popular history work *Denmark and the Colonies* (Gulløv, 2017) was published. According to the authors, the volumes concerning each colony are written from the perspective of the colony, whereas the fifth volume is from a Danish perspective (Gulløv, 2017). In this regard, it is interesting to note that five out of the six authors of the volume about Greenland are Danish (the sixth is Greenlandic). Nonetheless, the five-volume publication, a series of museum exhibitions and the emergence of academic scholarship at the time of the commemoration show that Denmark's colonial past is not entirely forgotten. It has also found its way into the public through news articles and recurrent public discussions on apologies (The Prime Minister's Office, 8.12.2020). This is why colonial aphasia (Stoler, 2011), rather than colonial amnesia (Blaagaard, 2010), is perhaps a more fitting concept to explain the mainstream Danish perception and knowledge of the colonial past, which I will now elaborate on.

The national ignorance and neglect of Denmark's colonial past can be conceptualized as colonial aphasia, a term coined by Ann Laura Stoler, scholar in anthropology and history (2011). Aphasia is, in the clinical definition, a cognitive deficit in the brain which causes "a dismembering, a difficulty of speaking, a difficulty generating a vocabulary that associates appropriate words and concepts with appropriate things." (Stoler, 2011, p. 125). Thus, which is important for Stoler's conceptualization, it is the occlusion of knowledge as well as a lexical and conceptual dissociation, which is the main effect of aphasia. When coined with the word 'colonial', Stoler (2011, p. 153) aims to explain the national "political disorder and troubled psychic space" which characterizes matters concerning the colonial past and legacy of Western

Europe¹⁴. Similar concepts within postcolonial theory include collective amnesia¹⁵ and colonial amnesia¹⁶. Stoler however argues that the issue is neither

stubborn ignorance nor sudden knowledge. It is the confused and clogged spaces in between [...] It reflects on the conceptual processes, academic conventions, and affective practices that both elicit and elude recognition of how colonial histories matter and how colonial pasts become muffled or manifest [...]. (Stoler, 2011, p. 122).

Thus, colonial aphasia describes a political disorder in which the nation is incapable of articulating its colonial past and legacy in contemporary society. Whenever the colonial past is referred to, it is either muffled, not recognized as a colonial past or as belonging to the national history. Instead, “endless replacements of categories with incomprehensible associations that collapse into incommensurability” are produced (Stoler, 2011, p. 154). This impaired vocabulary of the colonial and postcolonial then impairs knowledge, knowledge production and historical consciousness. In the Danish context, scholar in intercultural studies, Lars Jensen (2016, p. 15), argues that despite the fact that the contemporary is close to the colonial moment through postcolonial structures, “it continues to be seen either as a phase we have always already passed through, or as a moment we have always already lost.” Although not offering a remedy for this political disorder, Stoler offers colonial aphasia as an analytical tool to identify the places in which occlusions of knowledge are produced and incommensurably maintained through “the irretrievability of a vocabulary, a limited access to it, a simultaneous presence of a thing and its absence, a presence and the misrecognition of it.” (Stoler, 2011, p. 145).

4.3 White innocence

As mentioned above, Nordic exceptionalism is closely linked to whiteness. Gloria Wekker (2016), cultural anthropologist specialized in gender, race and colonialism, has coined the concept *White innocence* to describe the normativity of whiteness in West-European countries and how that informs their national self-understanding¹⁷. Wekker draws on Edward Said's

¹⁴ Stoler however specifically works with colonial aphasia in relation to France (Stoler, 2011).

¹⁵ See Noiriél, G. (1995). Immigration: Amnesia and Memory. French Historical Studies, 19(2), 367-380. doi:10.2307/286777

¹⁶ See Donadey, A. (1999) "Between Amnesia and Anamnesis: Re-Membering the Fractures of Colonial History," Studies in 20th Century Literature: Vol. 23: Iss. 1, Article 8. <https://doi.org/10.4148/2334-4415.1457> ; Blaagaard, B. (2010). Remembering Nordic Colonialism: Danish Cultural Memory in Journalistic Practice. KULT.Postkolonial Temaserie, 7, 101-121. <http://www.postkolonial.dk/>

¹⁷ For more scholarship on whiteness, see Bonilla-Silva 2013, Yancy 2015

(1993) concept ‘the cultural archive’ to explain the well from which the European self-representation, and White innocence, stems. The cultural archive is a reservoir “which foregrounds the centrality of imperialism to Western culture. The cultural archive has influenced historical cultural configurations and current dominant and cherished self-representations and culture.” (Wekker, 2016, p. 2). I suggest that Nordic exceptionalism is situated in the cultural archive alongside White innocence. Wekker argues that the cultural archive cultivates a Dutch self-understanding as “being a small, but just ethical nation; color-blind, thus free of racism; as being inherently on the moral and ethical high ground, thus a guiding light to other folks and nations.” (Wekker, 2016, p. 2). A self-understanding that can easily be transferred to the Danish context where whiteness is the implicit norm against which everything else is measured (Andreassen & Ahmed-Andresen, 2014). To Wekker, White innocence is the answer to the paradox of claiming to be color-blind but simultaneously othering and racializing everyone that diverges from whiteness. Together with Nordic exceptionalism, White innocence is thus at the very core of the Danish self-understanding.

Wekker refers to Toni Morrison¹⁸ who in an interview with Paul Gilroy in 1993 famously argued that “they [European colonizers] had to dehumanize, not just the slaves but themselves. They have had to reconstruct everything in order to make that system appear true.” (cited in Wekker, 2016, p. 3). This raises the questions of what colonization has done to not only the colonized, but the colonizer as well, and how justifying colonization has affected the self-understanding of Europeans. Wekker suggests that White innocence is one of the myths that smaller former colonial powers cling to in order to legitimize their colonial past. In situations where the secret is revealed and the myth challenged, the White innocence is thus threatened. This is devastating to the White majority whose self-understanding is premised on the legitimization of colonialism. American author Robin DiAngelo¹⁹ (2018) has coined the term *White fragility* to describe the discomfort and defensiveness that often appear in White people when faced with questions of race and racism. The discomfort relates to having one’s otherwise supposedly neutral whiteness pointed out, and the defensiveness is related to, I would argue, having one’s White innocence challenged. One example is how Danish students react with

¹⁸ Afro-American acclaimed author, scholar and Nobel laureate (Princeton University, n.d.)

¹⁹ DiAngelo has received criticism for being a White woman profiting off of what Black people have been articulating for years, by coining the concept White fragility. I nonetheless use the concept because I have not come across other terms that encapsulate this issue, and because it merely serves a minor role in the thesis.

skepticism, discomfort and nervous laughter when their White innocence is faced with historical accounts of the cruelties of colonialism (Andersen, 2017, p. 251)

The concepts White innocence and White fragility are useful in analyzing how the Dane navigates her whiteness and colonial complicity in a dialogue on postcolonialism, which will be investigated in chapter 5. The capitalization of 'White' emphasizes that White is not the neutral position to a racialized other, but a distinct perspective.

4.4 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is a qualitative method employed to identify patterns of meanings in data sets, which the researcher then generates into themes. Through subsequent analysis, these themes illuminate meanings relevant for the research (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is not fixed to one scientific paradigm and is thus theoretically and epistemologically flexible (Braun & Clarke, 2019). That does however not equal the realist assumption that the analysis is independent from the researcher. It solely means that the researcher has the flexibility to choose the paradigm because it is not already given. Thus, no themes simply emerge from the data in a vacuum but are all informed by the theoretical or epistemological lens chosen by the researcher, which in this case is the postcolonial Indigenous paradigm. Thematic analysis is therefore an analytical tool rather than a method or methodology (Braun et al., 2015). The type of thematic analysis I have employed has five steps: 1) familiarizing with the data, 2) generating initial codes, 3) searching for themes, 4) reviewing themes and 5) defining and naming themes (Clarke & Braun, 2006). My thematic analysis was semi-inductive in the sense that I did not look for pre-existing theoretical concepts, but nonetheless had a slight idea of topics that might occur from my familiarization with the sources. My thematic analysis was moreover conducted on a latent rather than a semantic level, because I looked for patterns of meanings not necessarily explicit in the sources (Braun et al., 2015).

Step 1 and 2 of the coding processes I did manually. Step 1 of the coding process began by transcribing the recorded conversation. In step 2, I read through the transcription to familiarize myself with the data and subsequently started generating initial codes by writing in the margins. I used the software Atlas.ti for step 3 to 5 of the coding process. In Atlas.ti, I transformed my initial codes into 22 code groups, which I then merged into six themes. I then

reviewed the themes by revisiting the data, and then finally ended up with the three following themes:

1. Danish feelings of protectiveness and entitlement
2. White tears: Danish feelings of shame, guilt and apathy
3. “We are culture bearers”: Danish researcher reflexivity and positionality

5 Analysis

“The aim of dialogical performance is to bring self and other together so that they can question, debate, and challenge one another.” (Conquergood, 1985, p. 9).

The analysis will be guided by the three themes that I developed from my sources through the thematic analysis, and is theoretically grounded in affect theory, more specifically *affective economies*. By employing *analytic autoethnography*, I will in chapter 5.1 and 5.2 analyze how feelings emerge and are being circulated by me vis-à-vis Anna, as well as other Greenlanders I have spoken to, when the context is concerning the Danish-Greenlandic relationship. I will also be analyzing my reflections before, during and after these conversations and throughout the thesis process. These individual and particular feelings will be related to a broader Danish context, and thus allow me to investigate how these feelings are connected to colonial aphasia. Moreover, I will in chapter 5.3 analyze how the employment of reflexivity affects the thesis itself, as well as how my positionality plays into the research context. The themes I developed through the thematic analysis are:

- 5.1: Danish feelings of protectiveness and entitlement
- 5.2: White tears: Danish feelings of shame, guilt and apathy
- 5.3: “We are culture bearers”: Danish researcher reflexivity and positionality

Thisted argues that “in the Danish-Greenlandic set up the roles are divided so that it is primarily the Greenlanders who feel and the Danes who analyze and reason.” (Thisted, 2018, p. 78, my translation). As an example, Lidegaard does not explicitly reveal her own feelings in her analysis of her e-mail correspondence with Kleist, but reasons about Kleist’s feelings on more occasions. By using analytic autoethnography, my aim is to reveal my own feelings in the postcolonial meeting with Anna, and other Greenlanders, in order to find new perspectives to the phenomena of colonial aphasia as well as to employ reflexivity on my positionality. Researcher reflexivity can not only illuminate privilege and prejudice but also helps embracing vulnerability. Doing so can encourage conversations on sensitive topics, social taboos and consequently create social transformations (Parkes, 2015), which I find highly relevant in the Danish-Greenlandic postcolonial relationship which is immersed with feelings.

5.1 Danish feelings of protectiveness and entitlement

In my thematic analysis, I found that feelings of entitlement and protectiveness are emerging in me while speaking to Anna. Feelings that are according to Thisted (2018) sticking to Danish bodies in general. In this section, I will analyze how and why these feelings emerge, how I navigate them and how reflexivity plays a role in that process.

Danes and Greenlanders have – despite historical asymmetrical power positions – for long been entangled in close, personal relations with one another and still are today in terms of friendships, marriages, working relations etc. However,

there is a line which both parts are guarding zealously. In a split second the individual can go from being just oneself to suddenly incarnate ‘the Dane’ or ‘the Greenlander’ with all the baggage that these figures carry. (Thisted, 2018, p. 72, my translation).

In that split second, the affective economies come into play and negotiations of historicity, identity and power relations begin.

I suggest that an example of the so-called split second in which the transformation from individuality to nationality occurs is when Danes visit Greenland for the first time, as here explained by Anna:

when they [Danes] come here, they know nothing, and they support us [Greenlanders] in our strive to become more free. But the more they are here and realize what is at stake, the harder it is for them to let go of. They start to feel ownership.

Once, Anna guided a Danish TV-production crew to the icefjord in Ilulissat, Greenland. She told a Danish man something similar to the quote above and asked him to take notice of his feelings when visiting the icefjord. After the visit, the man told Anna that he could recognize what she had told him, and that he could feel it growing within him. Anna recalls:

And then he continued to speak about the role of the Unity of the Realm [...] He got this urge to protect Greenland: ‘If we did not have this relation, what would happen to Greenland in regard to geopolitics?’ He almost situated himself in the position of a protector. But Denmark could not do without NATO either. The Dane in him was awakened up here. He arrived as a human, but he left as a Dane.

The feelings activated in the Danish man mirror the parental metaphor of the Danish-Greenlandic relationship in which Denmark is the mother and caretaker of the child Greenland (Gad, 2008). This metaphor has been established discursively through the coloniality of power

established at the beginning of Denmark's colonization of Greenland. Since coloniality transcends colonialism, feelings such as generosity, compassion and responsibility are today still circulating and sticking to Danish bodies, whereas inadequacy, gratefulness and submissiveness are sticking to the Greenlandic body (Thisted, 2018, p. 85). Generosity and compassion are often associated with a matriarch, whereas control and protectionism are associated with a patriarch. Therefore, I find it important to note that the Mother-Child metaphor is a part of a Danish discourse, created from a Danish perspective. It reveals something about Denmark's self-understanding as well as how control and protectionism is disguised as compassion and generosity.

We cannot know the actual feelings of the Danish man mentioned but standing in front of the spectacular icefjord did make him initiate a conversation on the importance of the Unity of the Realm and hence Denmark's "protection" of Greenland geopolitically. The feelings of both entitlement and protectiveness emerging in him as a Danish subject vis-à-vis the natural wonders of Greenland can be related to colonial nostalgia: the retrospective desire and longing for a time when Denmark was an empire (Lorcin, 2013). The feelings of protectiveness and entitlement were established during colonialism but accumulated over time and thus present in the postcolonial context as coloniality of power.

When hearing Anna's anecdote, I felt distanced from the feelings that according to Anna (re)emerged in the Danish man. I had never been to Greenland myself and I had so far never felt any inclination to protect Greenland either. While discussing another Danish person's relation to Greenland, I realized how I felt rather safe. I was participating in the conversation as an individual and not as a Dane per se. However, within the so-called split second, the affective economies present in our relationship were activated by Anna:

You should almost make a trip up here [to Greenland], and then be extremely observant of yourself and see what it does to you. But you're a woman. I don't know if that makes a difference.

Anna challenges me and the affective negotiations are again active. This is a negotiation in the sense that Anna is challenging my position; am I, despite my decolonial agenda, any different than most Danes she has encountered? At first, I felt nervous and uneasy but then relieved when she alleviated my complicity by mentioning my gender. I felt uneasy because Anna addressed me directly and positioned me in the same role as the Danish man. A man who I do not know

and whose feelings and behavior I do not identify with. Anna reminds me that we might talk about “the Dane”, but I should not forget that I am included in that category too. She insists on me not escaping the Danish marker and becoming just an individual, and I am reminded of the feelings that stick to my Danish body.

I elude her challenge by only responding to her remark about my gender: “I don’t know [if my gender has an effect], perhaps to some degree”, and then I quickly redirect the conversation. Despite feeling distanced from the Danish man in the anecdote, I nevertheless retrospectively know that the feelings of protectiveness and generosity do in fact appear in me during the conversation. Discussing the Danish arguments pro the Unity of the Realm, I say to Anna:

There is also this kind of condescending, paternalistic [Danish argument that] ‘the USA doesn’t want what is best [for Greenland]’, and perhaps it’s about—hmm. Perhaps Denmark really *is* the lesser of two evils, or perhaps it’s not, but I don’t know.

I am criticizing and distancing myself from what I call a paternalistic argument about the USA, but at the same time suggesting exactly the same in regard to Denmark. The reason for my wavering and my imprecise formulation is that I am aware that what I say is problematic from a decolonial perspective. Problematic, because no one colonizes innocently (Césaire, 2000[1972], p. 39) and that (neo)colonialism cannot be divided into good and bad (Lynge, 2006). Anna actually responds to my comment with similar words of Césaire and Lynge. Knowing this, and aware of the fact that the very premise of the ‘lesser-evil argument’ is colonialist, I nevertheless *do* feel that Denmark is the lesser of two evils in regard to the present-day geopolitical context in Greenland. When I after the conversation reflected about my conflicting feelings, I wrote the following in my thesis notebook:

I do think that Greenlandic affairs should not be Danish business, and that Greenland should of course decide whomever they want to incorporate with. But it seems that I cannot disagree with Denmark being the lesser evil [in regards] to geopolitics and Greenland. I wonder if this is a feeling of protectiveness towards Greenland or a general nationalistic and Eurocentric behavior since I, in most contexts, would regard Denmark (and Europe) as the lesser evil in comparison to USA (and Russia and China). I know my opinion as a Dane is irrelevant in terms of the Greenlandic future.. The goal is to realize that what Greenland should and should not do is not for me to judge nor comment on. I should just listen. So is my behavior neocolonial and protectionist or “just” generally nationalistic? It’s easier for me to disregard the argument [about lesser evils] as nonsense all together because of its colonial premise.

In my reflection, it is visible that there is a discrepancy between what I know in terms of my postcolonial and decolonial training and how I feel as a Dane. What I at the time articulated as a question of protectionism and neocolonialism vs. nationalism and eurocentrism, I can now collapse into the concept of Nordic exceptionalism, which is shaped and sustained by the myth of Denmark as the “gentle colonizer”. I think that Greenlandic affairs are not Danish business, I support the increase of Greenlandic self-determination and I do not feel any protectiveness towards Greenland. However, these opinions seem to only exist in a vacuum. In the moment that Greenlandic geopolitics are discussed I insert Denmark as a reference point. Thus, despite my postcolonial training I circulate feelings of protectiveness towards Greenland. My (and the Danish man’s) feelings are not arbitrary and coincidental. They have been circulating and thus accumulating in accordance with historical patterns shaped by the asymmetric power relations between Denmark and Greenland established during colonialism. These feelings however continue to accumulate through Danish bodies and in this way neither I nor the Danish man are situated outside the colonial context as innocent subjects. We are inevitably entangled in coloniality and thus have a responsibility to work against it. My strategy for navigating and not circulating those feelings are, as described in my reflections earlier, to actively engage with my own position, to be reflexive and to dismiss questions with colonial premises like “who is the lesser evil?” all together.

At a time during our conversation, I mentioned how the Unity of the Realm is not on the Danish school curriculum, how Danish people know little about Greenland in general and how, if they do, know only about climate and nature (Epinion, 2018). I also addressed how this ignorance has been explanatory of the Danish prejudices of Greenlanders (Mino Danmark, 2020):

Sofie: However, if we should know more about Greenland in Denmark, I also think that the media’s role is important in that, because—

Anna: —but I also don’t know if... To whose benefit should that be?

Sofie: That what?

Anna: That Danes know more about Greenlandic affairs. The more they know, the more ownership they want. Because we [Greenlanders] are so innate to the Danish identity and history.

By saying that Greenland plays a role in Danish identity, Anna is referring to the anecdote of the icefjord and the Danish man. This also reminds me of something Martin Breum, Danish author and journalist focusing on the Arctic, has said about Greenland's role to the Danish people: "We [Danes] have more than a thousand years of history in Greenland. Of course, that has an effect on the soul of the Danish people." (Nielsen & Petersen, 21.4.2018).

Returning to Anna's remark, I was puzzled by the paradox that knowledge from an educational perspective was increasing understanding, but from a Foucauldian perspective increasing power. On several occasions and from both Greenlanders as well as Danes working with learning material on the Danish-Greenlandic relationship, I have heard that knowledge is key. I have also read how ignorance plays a crucial role in sustaining colonial aphasia. Also, Anna herself has earlier explained how Danes in Greenland "compliment nature [...] but they never say anything about the culture." Later in the writing process I, however, started to notice a change in my feelings in accordance with the accumulation of my knowledge of Greenland. From never having had a special interest in Greenland before starting my thesis work, I had developed an intense interest in Greenlandic affairs be it cultural, social or political. Of course, working intensively with a self-chosen topic often increases interest, but this had an affective dimension as well. Besides familiarizing myself with research on the Danish-Greenlandic relationship, I was attending several talks and events, listening to several podcasts, watching documentaries as well as exhibitions all on Greenlandic history and culture. I would "decolonize" my Instagram-account by mostly following Greenlandic Inuit (mostly activists and/or artists) and other Indigenous peoples to get a (curated) perspective into daily lives in Greenland as well as current political topics. I would share Greenlandic content and amplify Greenlandic voices, conversate with Greenlandic people, comment on contemporary Danish-Greenlandic issues and fiercely discuss these issues with friends and family members. I was completely immersed into the topic of Greenland. Again, I saw how the feeling of protectiveness was emerging in me. Twice, friends of my friends wanted to get in contact with me because they were writing assignments or exams about Greenlandic topics, and my friends had told them that I was aware of interesting research to read and interesting Greenlandic Inuit to follow (on Instagram). It gave me some very conflicting feelings. I felt that I had spent months engaging with Greenlandic history, politics and culture as well as Indigenous research methodologies in order to be as informed and reflective as possible while doing the research. Therefore, I was

reluctant to just give them what had taken me months to gain and understand. At the same time, I thought that they were reproducing exactly what I was trying to help dismantle by not engaging in the field and by writing about Greenlandic topics such as identity, self-determination or other political issues. I wanted to challenge them on why and for whose benefit they were doing that research. Retrospectively, it is excruciating to see how protective of Greenland I became and how I almost perceived myself as a gatekeeper. Even though my intentions were related to undoing colonial harm, my behavior retrospectively gives me associations of the paternalistic and protectionist character of Danish colonial policy in Greenland (Graugaard, 2009, p. 10). In this way Anna had been right in her argument that increased knowledge about Greenland can lead to increased feelings of protectiveness in Danes, exactly because these protective and paternalistic feelings are already circulating between Danish bodies and past associations of history.

In this chapter 5.1, I have shown how feelings of protectiveness and entitlement are circulated by me when discussing with Anna. Prior to the analysis I did not expect these feelings to emerge because of my schooling in postcolonial studies and decolonial studies. They were however activated when we discussed the postcolonial relationship within a geopolitical context. With Anna's excruciatingly clear words, one can say that I "arrived as a human and left as a Dane". I suggest that these feelings are linked to Denmark's protectionist colonial policy during colonialism. This is still present today as coloniality of power which ultimately sustains Danish feelings of protectiveness and entitlement towards Greenland. It was difficult for me to address and accept these feelings because I had been clinging to the myth of Nordic exceptionalism. In this way, feelings of protectiveness and entitlement towards Greenland are so ingrained in the Dane, and in the Danish self-understanding, that we cannot recognize it as coloniality. Ultimately, this manifest as colonial aphasia.

5.2 White tears: Danish feelings of shame, guilt and apathy

In this section, I will analyze how feelings of guilt and shame are circulated by the Dane when discussing the Danish-Greenlandic postcolonial relationship as well as questions regarding the current Greenlandic decolonization effort.

As mentioned in the methodology section, I among others contacted an Inuit activist through Instagram in regard to choosing my thesis topic. I was nervous of contacting her,

because I knew of the frustration of Indigenous people being contacted by non-Indigenous students and scholars. Moreover, as a decolonization activist, she had been vocal about her critical view on Denmark on her Instagram profile. Supportive of her work and her opinions, I was nonetheless nervous of offending her with my non-Indigenous and Danish presence. Feelings which are mirrored by Lidegaard, who retrospectively asks: “The question was if we came off as overbearing when we took initiatives.” (Lidegaard in Thisted, 2018, p. 183, my translation). However, I chose to contact her anyway because my purpose was not to ask her to take part in a research but to ask her about the relevance of a research idea. The activist was polite, open and interested in commenting on whatever research idea I had. I immediately felt ashamed for having thought anything else, since all Greenlandic Inuit I had spoken to had been kind.

When I pitched my (very preliminary) research idea, a collaborative project between Greenlandic and Danish youth, she turned it down immediately. She answered in a direct manner that I ought to look at the Danes only, since it is the Danes who do not understand the postcolonial problems, and therefore the solution is not found in a collaboration but among the Danes alone. She moreover wrote that it could feel like a waste of time for Greenlanders to enter a dialogue which premise was already unequal²⁰. Seeing the activist’s reply made me feel ashamed, embarrassed and frustrated. Ashamed of having failed to reach out in a good way despite my countless reflections about how to do so, embarrassed for losing face and frustrated for feeling misunderstood. The experience left me feeling devastated and I felt paralyzed in moving forward with the thesis. This was nonetheless a tremendous overreaction fueled by my White fragility (DiAngelo, 2018): the discomfort and defensiveness that often appear in White people when faced with questions of whiteness, racism and colonialism. As White, and in this specific context also a Dane, I am not used to my intentions being questioned. In the Danish-Greenlandic context, I belong to the group who majorly analyses and reasons about Greenland and whose intentions, be it during colonialism or in the present, are in the mainstream discourse always portrayed as good. The cultural experiment with 22 Greenlandic children sent to Denmark in 1951, as mentioned in chapter 3, is one example. Both at the time of the experiment (Walling, 2004; Jensen et al., 2020) as well as in the recent official apology made by Danish

²⁰ I do not insert a direct quotation here, since this conversation was originally not meant to be used for data. I have however retrospectively received a consent to summarize it.

prime minister Mette Frederiksen (The Prime Minister's Office, 2020), the good intentions are emphasized. The emphasis on Denmark's good intentions is a way of maintaining our self-understanding, our White innocence (Wekker, 2016), as a small, just and ethical nation. Frederiksen and previous prime ministers (Helle Thorning-Schmidt, Lars Løkke Ramussen) have continued to focus on Denmark's intentions in the Danish-Greenlandic relationship to diffuse the focus of the impact, and I do exactly the same. I know that my intentions are well-meant and thus I feel misunderstood and frustrated by the activist's reply. However, because I am so fixated on my intentions, I do not recognize my impact. The impact of well-meaning Danes swamping Greenlandic people with research proposals, which I was myself criticizing in the first place.

When the activist refuses to circulate the feelings of generosity and helpfulness that historically have been, and are, sticking to Danish bodies, and thus to my body, she is what Ahmed defines as an *affect alien* (Ahmed, 2010). After her reply, we exchanged a couple of messages on the topic, but it was mostly me trying to explain myself to regain my face. I had reached out to hear her opinion and even asked her to tell me if the idea was rubbish, but my White fragility could not bear her honesty.

In her dissertation, Naimah Hussain (2018) shares a story of similar feelings of shame and frustration. As a journalist intern in Greenland, she had made a phone call to Greenlandic Aqqaluk Lyng²¹ in order to interview him about a report which was "only published in Greenlandic", as she formulated it. Lyng²¹ laughingly repeated her remark and answered, "we are in Greenland." Hussain recalls:

I become ashamed, offended and simultaneously sad. Ashamed, because I suddenly become embarrassingly aware of being positioned in the role of a Dane and for having made a 'postcolonial blunder'. But simultaneously offended by being placed in that position by a man I do not know and who does not know me. The seemingly small word 'only' and a linguistic misunderstanding points to an issue within the Greenlandic context which is not about me. Or the man in the other end of the phone line. But about historicity and some strong feelings about the relationship between Denmark and Greenland, and about positions in the composition of the Greenlandic society that are connected to strong feelings. From both sides. (Hussain 2018, p. i)

Hussain's experience is a perfect example of the split second (Thisted, 2018) where individuals are transformed into Danes and Greenlanders respectively. Like me, Hussain feels ashamed for

²¹ Former president of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, former member of the Inatsisartut (Parliament of Greenland) and one of the founders of the political party Inuit Ataqatigiit.

unconsciously having made ‘a postcolonial blunder’ and thus activating the notorious postcolonial machinery. She feels offended for being positioned in the role of a Dane, whereas I feel frustrated for being ‘misunderstood’ as such. Despite manifesting in different unwanted feelings, the root of these feelings basically comes down to having one’s position, identity and intentions questioned. A position that Danes in the Danish-Greenlandic context is not often situated in, and which therefore invokes our White fragility. White innocence keeps us fixated on our intentions rather than our impacts and White fragility keeps us from being reflective and reflexive when being challenged. In that sense White innocence, White fragility and colonial aphasia have a mutual reinforcing effect.

Hussain defines her experiences as a ‘linguistic misunderstanding that points to something in the Greenlandic context’ that transcends her as an individual. That specific ‘something’ is the affective economies accumulating through past histories of association, and to that extent I agree with her that it transcends her as an individual. It also reminds me of something an Inuk told me in a conversation once, that when Greenlanders react with frustration in a Greenlandic-Danish context, the frustration is rooted in the postcolonial structures and rarely the individual Dane. That comforted me and my fragility, just as I can imagine that perceiving her experience as a ‘misunderstanding’ that ‘was not about’ her, comforted Hussain. However, I think that this perception can be problematic because it can become an excuse to not work against the postcolonial structures as an individual. Even though the feelings of protectiveness, superiority, generosity and entitlement have been accumulated by Danish subjects vis-à-vis Greenlandic subjects since the beginning of colonialism, we are as individual accomplices in circulating them. When Hussain says that the specific ‘something’, what I call affective economies, are pointing to an ‘issue within the Greenlandic context’, and when I am nervous of how to navigate my Danishness only when entering a dialogue with a Greenlandic person, it shows that we consider the postcolonial, and coloniality in general, to only exist in a Greenlandic context. As something that exists *over there*, but not really *here*. There seems to be a complexity as to who and what constitutes and continues ‘the postcolonial’ between individuals. This manifests in colonial aphasia because us Danes only consider coloniality as something related to and formative of the Greenlandic person, but not as something inherent in us as well.

In my analysis I also identified how feelings of shame turned into guilt. During the conversation I addressed my indignation of the unequal relationship between Denmark and Greenland, when Anna commented:

Anna: You have inherited something that you don't want to inherit [laughing].

Sofie: Some kind of, I don't know if it's shame or guilt. I think that guilt, or the like, that does not help either —

Anna: — you really shouldn't — because then you again change the focus to yourself

Sofie: Yes, exactly, because—

Anna: —because then it's getting really difficult for us! Because then it becomes even more of a taboo

Sofie: Yes, because—

Anna: —because then we activate the bad consciousness of the Danes and it is not at all their bad consciousness that this is about. Again, they change focus to themselves.

Sofie: Yes, and—

Anna: —and then it ends with us too, we who call out for more [economic] self-sustainability and sovereignty, start to hold back a bit.

Sofie: I really agree, and I also think that this among other things is what I have learned from [the] Black Lives Matter [movement], we cannot use the tears of the White for anything [...] and I also became really frustrated of myself for being frustrated in the first place, and frustrated from not doing anything, and I didn't want to just sit and feel guilty because then we will not go anywhere either.

Ahlstedt (2016) notes that the feelings that circulate between bodies in a conversation are not always visible in text. I therefore find it relevant to mention that no matter how excruciating and awkward the dialogue above looks in text it did not feel that way to me in that moment.

Evidently, my response above is in no means sophisticated, but by communicating in an open and friendly manner, Anna did not allow me to lose face. Returning to the quote, there seem to appear a form of discrepancy between what I know theoretically and how I then react in practice (as also discussed in chapter 5.1). Even though I am theoretically perfectly aware that I take up space to reconcile my own White (settler) guilt (Katz 2003, [1978]; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Gunew, 2017), I have a pressing need to express my indignation in order to position myself as an ally and

to distance myself from Danes who do not acknowledge coloniality. As seen in the quotation, I continuously try to explain myself in between Anna's sentences, instead of stepping back and just listen. Even after Anna clearly argues why I should not take up this space, I continue to express my frustrations of the situation and then, only after that, conclude that it is unproductive and problematic to do so. Thus, I end up centering myself in a conversation while trying to navigate the feelings of shame and guilt.

Kladakis (2012) argues that shame sticks to Danish bodies in different ways than to Greenlandic bodies. In Danish representations, shame sticks to Greenlandic bodies in chains of associations informed by social problems and Arctic orientalism. It sticks to Danish bodies because of Denmark('s past) as a colonial power. However, "the White, Danish subject [holds] a privileged position as a subject which is otherwise not associated with shame. Therefore, it can embrace the shame and mobilize it as a positive, transforming strategy." (Kladakis, 2012, p. 40, my translation). This transforming strategy can be mobilized into alleviating shame and White settler guilt in the Danish individual as well as the Danish nation: "those who witness the past injustice through feeling 'national shame' are aligned with each other as 'well-meaning individuals'; if you feel shame, you are 'in'." (Ahmed, 2004, p. 109). That is exactly what I aim to do when explaining myself to Anna. In their popularized essay *Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor* (2012), Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang (2012, p. 10) discuss various non-Indigenous and settler/colonizer attempts to undo the harm of colonization as *settler moves to innocence*. These moves are

strategies or positionings that attempt to relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility without giving up land or power or privilege, without having to change much at all. In fact, settler scholars may gain professional kudos or a boost in their reputations for being so sensitive or self-aware.

When I first read the quote above it made me cringe with embarrassment because my implication is obvious. Based on my analysis I do not think that settler moves to innocence are as conscious and calculative as Tuck & Yang insinuate, but I nonetheless argue that Danish postcolonial research fits well into that category.

Besides the feelings of shame and guilt, I have also experienced apathy throughout this process. When I told Anna of my experience of "burning my fingers" when contacting the Inuk activist about a collaborative research idea, she said:

Anna: That is also my immediate thought. Don't. You [Danes] should just stay away. Sometimes it does more damage [not staying away].

Sofie: Yeah?

I had an urge to ask: but then what do you want us to do? What I did not realize in the moment was that Anna had never asked me to do anything. We were having this conversation and I was writing this thesis because *I* had a need: to alleviate my guilt.

For a long while after the conversation, I felt paralyzed and apathetic: I am complicit and I should take responsibility for my complicity, but also stay away. I could not figure out how to transcend mere “passive” empathy, and I got the sense that undoing colonial harm seemed like an inherently impossible task for the individual Dane. I have discussed the feeling of apathy with friends and fellow-students engaged in postcolonial and decolonial theory and work as well. As an example, I discussed with Danish friends whether or not they should take a job in Greenland. On the one hand, they did not want to be yet another Dane going to Greenland for a couple of years to boost their career, but on the other hand the work power is needed, it could be a great experience and at least they are reflective of these postcolonial issues and their own privileges. Issues that were also problematized by Anna in our conversation:

Anna: The Danes go to Greenland and act as Danes and use their privileges as Danes, even though they try to ignore it. They focus on [the idea] that it was solely their competences that gave them access, like it is something inherent to them.

The conversations with my Danish friends always ended with no answers or solutions but a feeling of helplessness and apathy. I do not suggest that those feelings should invoke sympathy, but I nonetheless argue that they should be investigated further. Based on my analysis, my feelings of apathy increase exponentially with my self-reflection and reflexivity. The more I critically scrutinized my position, privileges and White fragility, the more helpless and apathetic I felt. The feeling of apathy or internal conflicts are by no means idiosyncratic among non-Indigenous and/or White students engaging critically with topics such as colonialism and racism (Aveling, 2004). However, the inevitable discomfort of coming to terms with one's own complicity, power and privilege can never be as hard as enduring the effects of those: colonialism, racism, discrimination. The transformative potential of the reflexive approach is then located in learning how to inhabit ambiguity and internal conflict and accepting that those

feelings are a part of being self-aware and critical²². Beverly Daniel Tatum (1995, p. 465), author and scholar in the psychology of racism, argues in relation to being a good ally that:

We all have a sphere of influence [...] For students, the task might be to identify what their own sphere of influence is (however large or small) and to consider how it might be used to interrupt the cycle of racism.

In this chapter 5.2, I have been analyzing how I circulate feelings of shame, guilt and apathy. When I am being confronted with my colonial complicity, I feel shameful because I am not used to being associated with coloniality as an individual. Coloniality is something that I have been associating with Denmark, the nation. I consequently navigate my shame by focusing on my intentions rather than my impact, which is also a common strategy used by Danish politicians to sustain White innocence. Another strategy I use to navigate my shame is by mobilizing it into something positive by drawing a line around me and other well-meaning Danes against other “less critically aware” Danes. A strategy that can be categorized as a settler move to innocence, because it serves to alleviate my own shame and guilt, rather than changing the conditions that make me feel shameful in the first place. I argue that these feelings, and the following strategies, play a crucial role in colonial aphasia because the focus on redirecting shame or alleviating guilt keeps us from understanding our colonial complicity. The feeling of apathy emerges when the strategies to navigate the shame fail, and the acknowledgement of my own complicity sinks in. A feeling that I could not navigate but had to learn how to inhabit, which will be further discussed in chapter 6.

5.3 “We are culture bearers”: Danish researcher positionality and reflexivity

In the following, I will analyze how I position myself as a researcher and a Dane in the conversation with Anna, and how my employment of research reflexivity reveals a cognitive distinction in me between myself as a Dane and an individual respectively. A distinction which I argue plays a crucial role in colonial aphasia. Finally, I analyze the role of my research approach, in order to understand how researcher reflexivity can affect not only research in general, but the relation between Danes and Greenlanders. This will then be further discussed in chapter 6.

My excessive need to explain myself and legitimize my research agenda in front of Anna resulted in me starting our conversation rather clumsily with a 5.30 minutes long monologue.

²² For investigation of such feelings, see Regan, P. (2010). *Unsettling the Settler Within*. Vancouver: UBC Press

Rather than merely presenting myself and the study, I continued by going into details of the thesis process as well as my personal indignation about the unequal relationship between Denmark and Greenland. Consequently, I was taking up a lot of space. I was also revealing the complexity of doing research within a postcolonial context, in which I am embedded myself, and thus the complexities and limitations of Danish, postcolonial research in general. The following quote is from the beginning of our conversation:

Sofie: I have this feeling that I don't want to make another thesis focusing on the Other, on my premise. [...] I spent quite some time trying to figure out what could be relevant, and I spoke to a handful of Greenlanders about what could be interesting. [...] I think that it is quite typical that one as a Dane has some kind of good idea about how things should be in order to change things, but then one has not asked the people that it concerns. [...] And besides this I will use autoethnography, in which I use myself as a part of the thesis and – um, because I cannot strip off my Danish identity.”

It is clear how I seek to position myself by, in an almost infantile way, distancing myself from Danish researchers and thesis students whose research *does* focus on the Other and/or who *does* assume their research idea to be relevant despite not consulting the implicated people. Here, I refer both to the numerous Danish researchers who are ‘specialists’ or ‘experts’ on Greenlandic topics (are there any Greenlandic experts on Danish culture?) as well as hit-and-run research approaches which are research *about* rather than *with* Greenland(ers). My reason for distancing myself from that is obviously rooted in my familiarity with Indigenous research ethics as mentioned in the methodology chapter. When I however disclaim that I eventually and undeniably am Danish, and thus experience the world from that point of view, it is due to my focus on reflexivity. It however also has a more personally instrumental dimension: to position myself as an ally and ‘not like the others’ in front of Anna by mobilizing the feelings of shame. In Thisted’s (2018) affect-theoretical analysis of Lidegaard’s memoirs this is exactly what Lidegaard does as well. Lidegaard characterizes herself as progressive and not like the other Danes who believe they are better than the Greenlanders. According to Thisted, Lidegaard thereby situates herself outside or above the colonial context (Thisted, 2018, pp. 81–82). However, Lidegaard does acknowledge colonialism as “a poison on the blood” that still influences both Danes and Greenlanders (Thisted, 2018, p. 82). It therefore seems that there is a complexity as to what and who constitutes ‘the postcolonial’ in the Danish-Greenlandic relationship between individuals. Based on my own experiences, I suggest that Lidegaard

distinguishes, perhaps unconsciously, between the colonial on a national level and on an individual level. She thinks of herself as an individual as outside the colonial contexts because she does not consider herself as having a colonial mindset. She does however recognize the (post)colonial relationship between Denmark and Greenland, as nations, and its current implications. Thus, Lidegaard and I draw a circle around us as “well-meaning individuals” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 109) against Denmark, the nation, as a (post)colonial power.

The distinction between being an individual and a Dane respectively, I unconsciously made myself several times during the conversation. This became visible to me particularly through Anna’s following remark in regard to my thesis topic:

Anna: It [my thesis] is like having the interest in decolonizing one’s mindset from the inside. As the colonizer, right. Or as a representative of the colonizer. Do you know what I mean? [smiling]

Anna appreciates how I put myself in the position of the representative of the colonizer. She obviously refers to the decolonial dimension of my thesis, but ‘representative of the colonizer’ is nevertheless a category that she herself introduces into the conversation and not me. In my initial email inquiry to her I mentioned ‘the colonizer’ but never directly situated myself in that category, and in this point of the conversation, I had not used the word ‘colonizer’ either. From Anna’s smile it is evident that using the word ‘colonizer’ within a postcolonial encounter is sensitive. Nevertheless, despite my attempts to be reflexive about my positionality I had not yet considered myself as a representative of the colonizer. I was surely aware of the postcolonial attributes attached to my identity as a Dane. Hence, I had no problem comprehending the postcolonial on a national level, as earlier described. Until then I had however not linked the postcolonial to me as an individual, so when Anna perceived me, as an individual, as a representative of the colonizer, it was new to me. However, I am both directly and indirectly implicated in the continuation of the coloniality of power which characterizes the Danish-Greenlandic relationship, through possessing certain privileges and power positions which perpetuate racist and discriminative structures. Even though Lidegaard and I distance ourselves from other Danes, be it “bourgeois” or “hit-and-run researchers”, we are still benefiting from colonial privileges. One example of how the colonial is directly linked to me as an individual is

that all my conversations with Inuit were in Danish²³. To reiterate, both Lidegaard's and my perceptions of the (post)colonial seem to end at a national level; we acknowledge that we are postcolonial subjects because the colonial is tied to our nationality. Coloniality is perceived as the practice of the nation, or others, not us. What we seem to miss, and which manifests as colonial aphasia, is that the colonial is also tied to our individuality in the present as privileges and power.

The difficulty of linking the postcolonial to my individuality was evident more times during the conversation. Returning to the feelings of protectiveness in chapter 5.1, I felt safe because I saw myself as an individual as opposed to the Danish man by the icefjord, who I perceived as a Dane. Moreover, in chapter 5.2. I showed how both Hussain (2018) and I felt frustrated by being positioned as “the Dane”, which we in that specific context associate with coloniality. Evidently, we consider our personal presence in the postcolonial context (Hussain vis-à-vis Aqqaluk, I vis-à-vis Anna) to be neutral: we are there as individuals. However, oppositely and quite ironically, we insist that Aqqaluk and Anna are Greenlanders. In fact, the encounter itself is essentially premised on their nationality: Hussain calls Aqqaluk, because he is Greenlandic as well as I speak to Anna, because she is Greenlandic. This again reveals the difficulty with perceiving the postcolonial as something attached to the individual, and not only the national. In this specific case it also illuminates the White privilege of considering oneself as an individual, by being “so at ease with one's environment that it is hard to distinguish where one's body ends and the world begins.” (Ahmed, 2007, p. 158).

At the end of Anna's and my conversation, I excitedly addressed that the conversation had developed into something else than I had anticipated. She replied that she had actually forgotten the initial topic, and when I mentioned her artistic work piece again, she answered:

But I also think that I had so much focus on...because I sit here and look at you, right, and when I do, I know where you are located. And again, who does one talk to– the context...[...] It is constantly in the back of my head that this is about decolonization of you [the Danes], right? So I try to get behind your brain all the time.”

²³ For research discussing power relations and language use in Greenland, see Kleemann-Andersen, C. (2020). Plastic Flowers and Tongue-less Greenlanders - Feelings in the Language Debate in 2009-2019. Ilisimatusarfik - University of Greenland

Anna mentions the decolonization of Danes because I wrote to her in my first email that my thesis would investigate a “kind of [mental] decolonization process of the Danes”²⁴. This agenda makes Anna act accordingly by actively trying to “get behind my brain” and she is therefore highly aware of testing the researcher-researched positions and power balances. Anna almost takes responsibility for the conversation by focusing on ways that she can challenge me in order to ignite a sort of mental decolonization process in me. Moreover, she is deeply conscious of the postcolonial and geopolitical contexts we are situated in and articulates the importance of location and positionality. As Tonselli et. al argue (2008, p. 350), even though I bring the research agenda, she has the power to define me just as I define her. This reciprocity is not necessarily equal but it emphasizes the agency of research subjects - and participants.

Having used reflexivity actively as a research approach has been formative for both the research itself as well as for me personally. One example of how it also influenced the conversation is evident in the following exchange which begins with me reflecting back on our conversation:

Sofie: I really think that what just happened in our conversation — a lot of things are happening with me right now [mentally, through the conversation], and it’s all a part of a process.

Anna: But I also have to tell you that, for example, this approach that you have — that is not my generation’s approach. I have never met anyone who had the approach that you have.

Sofie: What is that approach?

Anna: That is, how can I say it, on giving me the premise to be allowed to take up space [...] You don’t come to me as a White and ask as a White, or, you do, but you are aware of it. [...] And the curious thing is that in this context you are also honest and situate yourself as the representative of the colonizer’s descendants [...] And I think that this is what actually characterizes your generation and the younger ones. Another approach. That you are aware of this Black-White culture... Black Lives Matter— you verbalize it and have concepts about it. I haven’t seen it before. I think there is a new tendency on the way, which means that I can be a lot more open. We can both be humans in front of each other, but we know that we are also culture bearers. And not only that, but our ethnicity carries historicities and affiliations and complexities, and I think it is becoming easier to walk into these discussions, especially with younger people— students, academics.

²⁴ A phrase and topic which I abandoned after the conversation

The fact that Anna finds it ‘curious’ that I am open and honest about not being able to elude my Danishness and the (post)colonial positionality attached to that supports my own experience that Danish academics are not often addressing their positionality in their own postcolonial research, and if doing so, it is merely a short disclaimer in the final product rather than an integral part of the research. Another aspect is that being openly reflexive creates a space where Anna, as she says, can be more open. As Thisted (2018, p. 84) argues, it is essential to consider the affective economies omnipresent in the Danish-Greenlandic relationship in order to understand its present economic, social, political and cultural questions. If the Dane is always the one analyzing the feelings of the Greenlander while being unreflective and non-reflexive about her own feelings, the question is if research fails to see important remedies, solutions or aspects of Danish-Greenlandic postcolonial questions and issues.

In continuation of the above, the impact of reflexivity also creates a space where “[w]e can both be humans” but also acknowledge that we are “culture bearers”. I argue that Anna points to the distinction between individual (“human”) and national (“culture bearers”) as discussed in chapter 5.3: the inability to link the colonial and postcolonial to oneself as an individual rather than only as a national, and the Danish tendency to believe that in Danish-Greenlandic contexts one can merely be an individual, a neutral subject, distinguished from one’s nationality. By fostering openness, the reflexive approach created an environment in the conversation for both Anna and I to discuss sensitive topics. I am deeply grateful that Anna was willing to not only enter this dialogue with me, but to moreover share her stories and even actively challenge me and my perceptions. For me specifically, I felt that I was allowed to learn and make mistakes which I evidently did several times. Embracing vulnerability and emotions can disrupt social taboos, encourage dialogue and create individual transformations. I walked out of the conversation overwhelmed with a myriad of complex feelings and encouraged to investigate them.

Besides the transformational character of the dialogue, it is moreover important to note the instrumental character, because the dialogue ultimately took place as a part of a thesis research. I was the one asking something of Anna, and I was the one leaving the dialogue with a concrete outcome: the data, and eventually a thesis diploma. This is not to suggest that my thesis was exploitative or to undermine Anna’s agency but to remind myself about the inevitably instrumental character of research despite well-meaning purposes. Afterall, reciprocity is one of

the key aspects in Indigenous methodologies. For Anna, it however made sense to participate due to the transformational and decolonial potential of investigating the feelings of a Dane, in order to further the understanding of the phenomena colonial aphasia.

In this chapter 5.3, I have shown how I fail to understand how coloniality is not only attached to my nationality but also to me as an individual. I argue that this distinction can also be seen in how Lidegaard and Hussain perceive coloniality. Coloniality is perceived as the practice of the nation, or the Other, and as something that we are ourselves detached from. What we seem to miss, and which manifests as colonial aphasia, is that the colonial is also tied to our individuality in the present as privileges and power. The reflexive approach however contributed to creating a transformative space where Anna also felt that she could be open and safe, because the conversation was premised on the acknowledgement that I as a researcher is certainly not void of colonial complicity.

6 Discussion

“The only way to find a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular.” (Haraway, 1988, p. 590)

In the following, I will be discussing my results from the analysis as well as the role of reflexivity within research concerning Danish-Greenlandic contexts. In the analysis I have investigated how I circulate protectiveness and entitlement in the conversation with Anna, and how shame, guilt and apathy emerge in me when confronted with my colonial complicity. These are feelings that my Danish friends and fellow-students are also recognizing in themselves, but that we have nonetheless never discussed before I wrote this thesis. Danish students and researchers of postcolonial studies investigate the Danish-Greenlandic relationship in discourses, representations and practices across all spheres; in media, culture, society and in politics. Our individual ways of perpetuating the structures of coloniality that we are criticizing are however rarely addressed. I argue that this is connected to our tendency to distinguish between the national (“culture bearer”) and the individual (“human”), as shown in the analysis in chapter 5.3. We situate coloniality outside of ourselves, either as manifested through the struggles of the Other or as structures in the society. Never within ourselves. I therefore find it important and necessary to discuss the ambiguous role of Danish researchers as accomplices, allies or something in between, as well as how increased researcher reflexivity inspired by Indigenous methodologies can increase epistemological pluralism. What happens if we turn our research interest towards ourselves; not towards the Danes as a group, but towards us, as individuals?

Hans Jakob Helms, Danish former politician and author born in Greenland, explains in an interview with Thisted (2011) how he as a part of idealistic, socialistic university students²⁵ travelled from Denmark to Greenland in the 1960’ies: “we were *so* upset about how unjust the world was and how imperialist we, the White, were. In Greenland we could do something good!” (Thisted, 2011, p. 3). The familiarity of Helm’s quote is striking: are those not exactly the feelings that us Danish thesis students have today, when embarking on our research venture on the Danish-Greenlandic postcolonial relationship? Since we by now are perfectly aware that “the Master’s tools will never dismantle the Master’s house” (Lorde, 1984, p.2), this raises the

²⁵ The group of Danish idealistic academics was called “kajak-RUC’er”. RUC is an abbreviation of Roskilde University, and “RUC’ere” are students from RUC. The term “kajak-RUC’er” is a spin on the slur “kajak-rockers” used by Danes against marginalised Greenlandic people in Denmark (Thisted, 2011, p. 3).

question of where the aim of undoing colonial harm ends and settler moves to innocence begins. This leads me to the question I have asked myself throughout this thesis process: how can us Danish students undo colonial harm without reproducing the harm we criticize? When I in the end of our conversation revisited Anna's statement that Danes "should just stay away", she said that she "just think[s] one should be responsive. It's not more difficult than that."

To me, Anna had articulated something very profound in the simplest manner, and by doing so pointing to an important aspect in the Danish-Greenlandic relationship: Danes are always expressing opinions, discussing, analyzing, researching and reasoning about Greenland. If not in an overbearing way, then in a paternalizing or well-meaning one. That, which Anna argued was something near to the simplest thing in the world, was however puzzling to me: Responsive how? Responsive when? Responsive to what degree? What about action? As a White Dane, I am not used to just listening without being ready the second after to call out colonial structures or acknowledging my privileges in order to alleviate my White guilt. In chapter 2, I described how I during my courses in Indigenous studies had had "lessons in listening" guided by, among others, Meyer (2008, p. 221) who reminded me that "it is not about how well you can quote theory; it's whether those ideas affect how you act." In my previous studies in postcolonial theory, I often got the feeling that we had to dismantle all Western systems and realize our complicity and privilege, period. I did not experience the same guidance in doing so or learning how to inhibit the un-ease and ambiguity that followed. I was able to quote and employ BIPOC theory, criticize unjust and oppressive structures and call out Denmark's colonial complicity and racist tendencies. But it stayed as theory and as something not inherent to me but to Denmark, or to other "less critically aware" individuals.

From my own and fellow-student's experiences, Danish students schooled in postcolonial theory are not oblivious to asymmetrical power relations nor their positionality in research and beyond. In line with Meyer's (2006) thinking, I, however, suggest that we ought to start a discussion on how we turn that theory into practice. I have aimed to do so by employing autoethnographic reflexivity throughout the entire thesis process. Being reflexive is daring to ask oneself uncomfortable questions about privilege, power, interest and relevance and then act accordingly. The action is what distinguishes reflexivity from reflection. In my analysis I saw how the reflexive approach, inspired by Indigenous methodologies, had a direct impact on me, as a researcher and individual.

Because I realized that I am directly linked to coloniality and thus complicit in colonial structures, it placed a responsibility on me as an individual to act in resistance. Previously, I had perceived coloniality as something purely structural which I could criticize but ultimately not change myself. Understanding that I, as an individual, circulate feelings of protectiveness and entitlement that ultimately perpetuate coloniality, made me realize that I, as an individual, is also the only one who can end that circulation. Similar revelations emerged in my Danish friends when we discussed my thesis.

In this sense, a reflexive and introspective approach might also have a decolonial potential by alleviating epistemic injustice and consequently cultivating epistemological pluralism. When us Danish thesis students and researchers are analyzing and reasoning about Greenland or Greenlanders (Thisted 2018), I suggest that we ultimately reproduce coloniality. As Mignolo argues (2000), coloniality is expressed by the vocabulary of modernity. And as such, Danes position themselves as the rational, neutral researcher-self that analyses and reasons about the feelings of the emotional Greenlander, and as the ones that propose solutions and remedies to Greenlandic issues in the name of development, progression and growth.

Investigating the feelings of ourselves, as individuals, not only has the potential to alleviate epistemic justice, as described above. It also has the potential to further epistemological pluralism by emphasizing the scientific importance of the particular. In this thesis, autoethnography has not only served as an asterisk but as both a main source and methodology. Rather than considering it a navel-gazing, I consider it as a sincere attempt to take my colonial complicity seriously. This leads me to what Anna said when we were ending our conversation:

It is also important that we have the ability to believe that we can be human. And have a humanistic approach. But you know, the minute I turn this off [the Zoom meeting] then I will be Anna the Greenlander again. Because that is my reality. Especially when there is so much at stake up here, I cannot just be a human. It is not enough. We are culture bearers. I live in a certain geography where there is something at stake. And I cannot just act like I am an amoeba who merely exists.

I find Anna's words incredibly beautiful and profound, but also unsettling. In the quote, she again mentions our positionality as the human and the cultural bearer respectively. Although she emphasizes the importance of meeting each other as humans, she describes how she can only briefly afford to leave her position as culture bearer, as Anna the Greenlander. This is ultimately because of the power of coloniality and the geopolitics of knowledge (Quijano 2007; Mignolo

2000), against which Anna has to act in resistance. Differently, I can after the conversation choose to never engage in the Danish-Greenlandic question again, because the power of coloniality is constructed to protect and benefit me as a White Dane. That fact incarnates the very foundation of the Danish-Greenlandic relationship. Being reflexive does not by and of itself resolve the 300-year-old unequal relationship between Denmark and Greenland, but it has a transformative potential to remind and teach us that we as individuals are complicit of coloniality and ought to work actively against it.

7 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been two-fold. First, to investigate which feelings I as a Dane circulate vis-à-vis Greenlandic subjects in conversations about the Danish-Greenlandic relationship, and how these feelings are constitutive of colonial aphasia. Second, to enhance researcher reflexivity by using analytic autoethnography which will be related to a larger debate on Danish research on Greenlandic contexts.

I employed analytic autoethnography to analyze my sources consisting of namely a conversation with Anna, a Kalaaleq Inuk, and autoethnography in the shape of written and unwritten reflections throughout the thesis process. Grounding the analysis theoretically in affect theory allowed me to investigate my circulation and negotiation certain feelings vis-à-vis the Greenlandic subject. Feelings that I based on my analysis argue are all constitutive of colonial aphasia.

Colonial aphasia creates an inability to link present postcolonial issues with colonialism within the Danish society, which consequently muffles or obscures any attempt that Greenlandic people make to address these issues.

In my analysis, I show that I circulate feelings of protectiveness and entitlement vis-à-vis Anna and Greenland in general. These feelings are not arbitrary but have been circulated by Danish bodies the past 300 years as coloniality of power. Thus, feelings of protectiveness and entitlement towards Greenland are so ingrained in the Dane, and in the Danish self-understanding, that we do not recognize them as coloniality. These feelings are intensified in geopolitical contexts, where protectiveness and entitlement are legitimized in the name of development and growth. This is in line with Mignolo's (2007) argument that the logic of modernity (development, growth) cannot be detached from the logic of coloniality (inequality, oppression). Consequently, I suggest that feelings of protectiveness and entitlement are constitutive of colonial aphasia.

The awareness and acknowledgement of the Danish colonial complicity, historically and today, brings forth feelings of shame, guilt and eventually apathy. When confronted with coloniality, I tend to focus on my well-meaning intentions rather than on the actual impact in order to maintain my White innocence. A strategy which is also evident on a societal level whenever the question of Denmark's colonial past is discussed within Denmark. Another

strategy, in line with Ahmed's (2004) thinking, is to mobilize the shame and transform it into nation/group-building by drawing a circle around the 'well-meaning' individuals who acknowledge coloniality, and those who do not. I argue that the feelings of shame and guilt, as well as the strategies of alleviation, are constitutive of colonial aphasia because the focus on redirecting shame or alleviating guilt keeps us from understanding our colonial complicity.

Based on my analysis I can moreover conclude that I, as well as other Danes, have a tendency to perceive coloniality as something distinct from ourselves as individuals. Rather, we situate coloniality outside of ourselves, either as existing through the struggles of the Other or as structures in the society. What we do not realize, and which manifests as colonial aphasia, is that the colonial is also tied to our individuality in the form of privileges and power. This is a realization we need to make if we are to realize how we, as individuals, can work against our colonial aphasia.

This last argument is relevant to a discussion about researcher reflexivity and positionality within Danish research in postcolonial or decolonial contexts. As Thisted (2018) argues, Danes are most often, in the Danish-Greenlandic setup, the ones analyzing and reasoning, whereas the Greenlanders are feeling and experiencing. In the vast majority of the Danish research, I have read either about Greenlandic contexts, or about Danish contexts related to Greenland, reflexivity on researcher positionality is non-existent or minimal. In the name of development, scientific knowledge production or critical scrutinization of postcolonial, asymmetrical power relations, us Danish students and researchers are oblivious to the fact that we are benefiting from and perpetuating the very structures that we are criticizing. I argue, in line with Indigenous scholars, that our double role as knowledge producers and accomplices is perpetuating coloniality and epistemic injustice.

I therefore argue that using reflexivity and introspection to investigate the particular is not only apt in understanding Danish colonial aphasia, and how to possibly alleviate it, but also in starting a discussion about epistemic injustice within Danish academia. I do not write this to denigrate other Danish students or researchers or to claim that I hold the truth to the complexities of ethical research or the Danish-Greenlandic relationship. My reason for using autoethnography in this thesis is partly to decipher my own puzzles with these exact questions, and to put that on display. Hopefully, it can inspire other Danish students to be more reflexive about their

positionality as well as to dare to ask oneself the uncomfortable questions about privilege, power, interest and relevance.

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