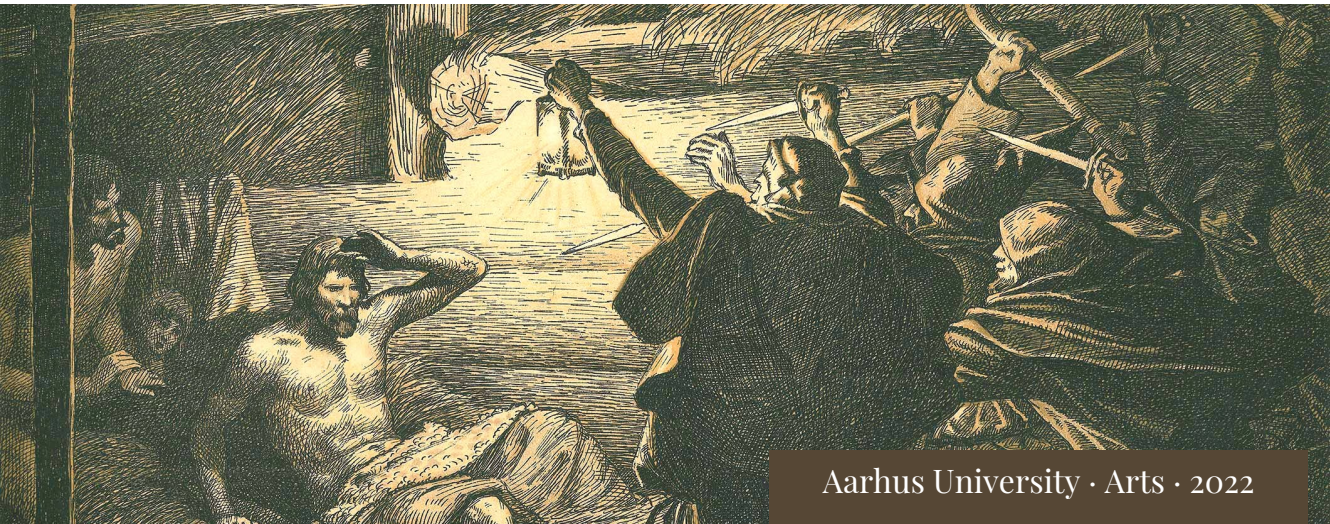
PhD dissertation

Tales of Bygone Kings

Discussions of Monarchy, Form of Government and Popular Sovereignty in Danish Medievalistic Literature c. 1789-1848

Berit Kjærulff



Aarhus University · Arts · 2022

Tales of Bygone Kings

Discussions of Monarchy, Form of Government and Popular Sovereignty in Danish Medievalistic Literature c. 1789-1848

Berit Kjærulff

Berit Kjærulff
Tales of Bygone Kings. Discussions of Monarchy, Form of Government and Popular Sovereignty in Danish Medievalistic Literature c. 1789-1848

PhD dissertation 2022
Comparative Literature, School of Communication and Culture
Faculty of Arts, Aarhus University

Supervisors:
Lis Møller, Comparative Literature, Aarhus University
Lone Kølle Martinsen, The Grundtvig Study Centre, Aarhus University
Karen-Margrethe Simonsen, Comparative Literature, Aarhus University

Cover images:
Detail from illustration in Niels Bache: *Nordens Historie, populært fremstillet* (1886)
Detail from Carl Bloch: *Christian II i fængslet på Sønderborg Slot* (1871), Wikimedia Commons
Detail from iIllustration in V. Mollerup: *Danmarks Historie i Billeder* (1898), reproduced with permission from danmarkshistorien.dk

ISBN: 978-87-7507-540-9
DOI: 10.7146/aulsps-e.482

Contents

Acknowledgments

During my PhD studies, I have been fortunate to receive help and feedback from a number of people. First, I want to thank the supervisors connected to the project. I wish to thank Lis Møller for her introduction to the research field of medievalism studies, her extensive help in starting up the project, without which it would never have been realised, and her continuous faith in the project. I am deeply grateful to Lone Kølle Martinsen for her help with all the historical aspects of the project and even more for her deep engagement in the entire project and process, eternal encouragement and invaluable support. I owe great thanks to Karen-Margrethe Simonsen for joining the project when it was faltering and helping bringing it to completion with her brilliant feedback, great advice and constant readiness to help out with all sorts of issues.

My deepest gratitude goes to Emilie Kellberg and David Hasberg Zirak-Schmidt. They deserve many thanks for their friendship, their many hours spent reading and commenting drafts, their support and faith in the project and their extreme patience in dealing with my insecurities about the project. Special thanks go to the PhD programme Art Literature and Cultural Studies and the wonderful colleagues at Forskerhuset. Particularly Sophus Helle, Julie Hastrup-Markussen and Stephanie Montesinos Volder are owed many thanks for their friendship, their general support and the many great hours spent in their company.

The dissertation greatly benefitted from feedback received at the thesis seminar held in the autumn of 2019. For this, I wish to thank Louise D'Arcens and Jakob Ladegaard for their close reading of drafts of the dissertation and their excellent feedback, which greatly helped improve the finished work.

I also wish to thank the editorial team at the journal Slagmark, who I have been fortunate to work with over the last couple of years. Working with everyone at Slagmark has been wonderful due to their great spirit of cooperation, dedication and excellent colleagueship.

Last, but not least, I want to thank my family and friends. This dissertation could not have been made without all the support they provided during the entire process.

Notes on translation

Most of the literary works treated in the dissertation are not translated into English, so unless otherwise stated, the English translations are my own. The original Danish quotes are in footnotes.

The translations are made into prose. Precise conveyance of the content of quotes are prioritised at the expense of metrics and rhymes, et cetera. In some cases of very tortuous sentence construction, the quotes are translated a bit more freely for them to be sufficiently understandable in English.

When the Danish word "fædreland" appears in analysed literature, it is translated into "fatherland" rather than "mother country". Although "fatherland" in English holds connotations to Germany and mother country in this respect is closer to the meaning of "fædreland", "fatherland" is chosen here as it is the direct translation of the term and often conveys the meaning of the sentence most precisely. "Fatherland" is used because it imparts the paternal aspects of the concept, but it has to do with Denmark, and not Germany, in this context.

Introduction

In the 1848 preface to his play *Valdemar Atterdag*[1] from 1839, Henrik Hertz writes:

> As I, in these times, some ten years since this play was first performed, decide to publish it in print, there are various reasons; but, in the main, I have supposed that it just now more than otherwise might count on the readers' interest. To a great extent, it depicts what affects our fatherland at this very moment: the subjects' insurrection against their rightful king, political and international tensions and strife between real and presumed rights; only the scene has changed, and the watchword of those times was another than that of the present (Hertz 1848: III).[2]

In the quotation, Hertz brings forward the connection between his medievalistic play and the contemporary, political conditions in Denmark in 1848. During the previous two decades, democratic ideas had gradually gained footing in Denmark, and when King Christian

1 Danish king reigning 1340-1375.

2 "Naar jeg i denne Tid, efterat omtrent ti Aar ere forløbne siden dette Skuespil første Gang blev opført, bestemmer mig til at udgive det i Trykken, da er der vel forskjellige Grunde dertil; men i Hovedsagen har jeg meent, at det for Øieblikket maaske mere end ellers turde gjøre Regning paa Læsernes Interesse. Det skildrer for en stor Deel hvad der netop nu bevæger vort Fædreland: Undersaatternes Oprør mod deres retmæssige Konge, politiske og internationale Spændinger, og Strid mellem virkelige eller formeentlige Rettigheder; kun Scenen har forandret sig, og hine Tiders Løsen var et andet end Nutidens"

VIII died suddenly on January 20th 1848, it brought about the end of the absolute monarchy and the beginning of the constitutional monarchy. In his preface, Hertz himself links his representation of the medieval king to the contemporary issues regarding royal power. Hertz was not the only author at this time to write about Danish medieval regents and use it to contemplate more contemporary political issues – far from it. It is the thesis of this dissertation that between the 1790s and the abolition of the absolute monarchy in 1848, literary representations of Danish medieval regents were used to contemplate the function of the regent in the contemporary Danish society and to reflect upon the democratic ideas flourishing in the period. It is the overall argument of the dissertation that the medievalistic literature examined here worked as an imaginarium in which authors and audiences could experiment with contemporary political ideas and work them into a Danish context. The aim is to demonstrate that fictional literature played a part in the debate on absolute monarchy, and that it provides a valuable source for historical insight into the ideas which formed the basis for the abolition of the absolute monarchy.

In order to approach an understanding of this process in as much nuance as possible and contribute to a more complete view of the considerations about forms of government, the dissertation does not only study literature which is still being read and researched today, but has attempted to uncover as much medievalistic literature about Danish regents published between the 1790s and 1848 as possible. The dissertation therefore examines both well-known literary works, but also a significant number of works which have not previously been treated academically. By surveying this literature, the dissertation wishes to contribute new insight into how fictional literature formed a part of the debate about absolute monarchy in late eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century Denmark and thereby expand the knowledge about the ideas which preceded the transition from absolute to constitutional monarchy in Denmark.

Scope of the dissertation

As stated by the title, the dissertation will deal with literature published between 1789 and 1848. The end point of the temporal

delimitation is given with the abolition of absolute monarchy, but the starting point of 1789 is less evident. 1789 is chosen as it is the beginning of the European Age of Revolutions (1789-1848). The year is prior to the publication of the oldest piece of literature examined in the dissertation, which is from 1797. The starting point could have been set at 1797 to correspond with the literary corpus analysed in the dissertation, or at 1784 to coincide with the coup d'état, one of the most important political events of the monarchy at the time. 1789 was settled on because it juxtaposed with 1848 evokes associations to the Age of Revolution, without claiming that Denmark underwent a revolutionary period. Denmark did not experience revolution in the way some other European countries did in this period, but reflections upon revolution and change of system were prevalent in this period and did eventually result in the institution of representative government. It is exactly these considerations, in their literary manifestations, that this dissertation wishes to throw light on.

The considerations in fictional literature about the Danish monarchy will be examined by looking into how medieval regents were refashioned for a contemporary audience. Of course, reflections on form of government can be found in much other literature without regents and without medievalism. Only looking into literary medievalism about regents will of course not cover all discussion about the Danish monarchy, but as the reflection on monarchy in Danish literature in this period is quite inadequately discussed by existing research, I believe stydying the medieval regents in literature is a valid place to begin. With its promise of the participation of a monarch in the narrative, there is a good chance that fictional literature about medieval regents will contain some reflection upon monarchy. Therefore, when seeking to discover how political issues regarding the monarchy were discussed in fictional literature, studying representations of medieval regents seems a fruitful place to begin.

But why only consider the medieval regents? As we shall see, they are particularly interesting because they flourish in this period. However, the contemporary regent, who for a great part of the period was Frederik VI, also figures often in literature. I have chosen to exclude literature about the contemporary king in this dissertation because it tends to fall into the same category. When Frederik VI or the other kings of this period appear in literature, it is often in poems of homage. There is much of interest to be found in such poems, but

when searching for considerations about royal power, the genre will probably comprise a bias as it prescribes a particular stance towards the subject matter. You could perhaps find examples of critique or covered critique in poems of homage, but it is not the most obvious genre to survey for reflections about monarchy. Also, poems of homage can be presumed to address one particular king and his reign more than the monarchical form of government more generally. Medievalistic representations of regents can of course also be comments to a real monarch – the medieval or the contemporary – but it can be assumed that there is a better chance to also find reflections on form of government in medievalism than in poems of homage.

The imagined Middle Ages also have the quality that they can function as an imaginarium. Medievalism as an imaginarium provides a neutral space for reflection. It can be used as a thin veil over contemporary political life, a simple manoeuvre to avoid censorship, but more often in the primary literature of this dissertation, we will see it used more as a room for reflection than a mere veil. Medievalism is used as a laboratory in which the writers do not necessarily express a certain stance to the political system, but opens up and invites to reflection on the subject. This condition of literature was for instance realised by one of the foremost authors of the period, Bernhard Severin Ingemann, who in an entry in his diary from 1827 notes:

> The realm of literature is a spiritual republic in which age, class, rank and other bourgeois relationships cease: here no other relationship applies than that between spirit and spirit; any other authority or superiority, one wishes to institute, is an arrogation, which should be dismissed as foolishness or insolence (Auken et al. 2008: 170).[3]

This dissertation wishes to examine the ways in which medievalism was employed as an imaginarium – as the "spiritual republic" described by Ingemann – for considering the function of the actual, Danish monarchy in the time leading up to the abolition of absolute monarchy. Hereby the dissertation will study medievalism in a

[3] "Litteraturens Rige er en aandelig Fristat, hvori Alder, Stand, Rang og alle andre borgerlige Forhold bortfalde: her gælder intet andet Forhold, end det, hvori Aand staar til Aand; enhver anden Myndighed eller Overlegenhed, man heri vil indføre, er en Anmasselse, der bør bortvises som Uforstand eller Uforskammenhed"

Danish context, which so far has only been done to a somewhat limited extent.

Method

The dissertation is situated in the intersection between the disciplines of literature and history. The analysed literature is approached as aesthetic pieces, but also as a historical factor or a kind of source of history. Historian Jon W. Iddeng has reflected upon how to approach literature as a historical source. His suggestion for doing so consists in a development of the historians' general division of sources into relics and accounts. Iddeng suggests to operate with categories on a lower level and distinguish relics into source reflector, speech-act and (aesthetic/stylistic) object. The first designates the use of the text as a source to knowledge about the situation of its origin or contemporary society, such as identifying typical characteristics of the author, the contemporary society, the zeitgeist or similar. The last, approaching the text as an aesthetic or stylistic object, means assessing the text by literary criteria and the artistic qualities. Considering the text as a speech-act means understanding it as a communicative historical act and the writer as a historical actor. The text is studied in its historical context, and focus is on the text's objective, reception and effect (Iddeng 2005: 432–434). Examining a text as a speech-act remedies some of the issues surrounding author intention. Iddeng states:

> Needless to say, it is not unproblematic to talk about intention in relation to literature, but exactly here, speech-act theory can lead us part of the way, precisely by not focusing on the author's motives or underlying opinions, but on the text as an active action. […] As any other historical action, speech-acts, too, are interpreted and understood by other involved parties and can of course also have consequences and effects – and as other actions, it is not given that these correspond to the actual intention of the actor (Iddeng 2005: 433).[4]

[4] "Det er selvsagt ikke uproblematisk å snakke om intensjon i forbindelse med litteratur, men nettopp her kan språkhandlingsteorien lede oss et stykke på vei ved nettopp ikke å fokusere på forfatterens motiver og bakenforliggende meninger, men teksten som en aktiv handling. […] Som enhver historisk handling blir også språkhandlinger tolket og forstått av andre impliserte og kan selvsagt også få konsekvenser og virkninger – og som andre handlinger er det ikke gitt at disse samsvarer med aktørens egentlige hensikt"

Iddeng's categories span a spectrum from a more historical focus to a more literary. While the situation of origin is also pertinent to the texts dealt with in this dissertation, and it could definitely be interesting to throw light upon the political agency of the authors, that will be left to the historians. Here, the latter approach will be prioritised, which is the domain of the literary historian, and the second, which is in the intersection between the fields of history and literature. Approaching literature as speech-acts opens up for understanding literature not only as an aesthetic object, but also as a part of the contemporary public conversation.

According to Paul Ricoeur – who Iddeng draws upon to discuss intention – in writing, the meaning of the text becomes separated from the author's intention: "With writing, the verbal meaning of the text no longer coincides with the mental meaning or intention of the text. This intention is both fulfilled and abolished by the text, which is no longer the voice of someone present" (Ricoeur cited in Iddeng 2005: 439). That the meaning of the text is divided from the author's intention does, however, not imply that the number of possible meanings are endless. Historian of ideas Quentin Skinner has argued that when dealing with historical texts, we have to investigate the historical context of the text in order to identify which meanings might have been possible to hold at the given time (Skinner 2002: 57ff.).

By investigating the historical context of texts, we might also discover discrepancies between what is stated in the text and what might have been meant. Historian Øystein Lydik Idsø Viken has investigated political opposition in the Norwegian news media between 1807 and 1814. While subservience to the king and state was common in public utterances of the time, Viken argues that we should not accept these political remarks at face value. We have to take into account censorship and other restrictions for political comments when assessing public opinion in this period. He therefore argues that there exists a rhetorical manoeuvre which he has named *submissive opposition*. Submissive opposition designates critique underlying seemingly praising statements regarding the men of power. A way to uncover these veiled critiques is – in line with Skinner – by considering as much what could be said as what was actually said (Viken 2011).

Determining whether a given utterance is sincere or a covered critique might be difficult to ascertain, but it is worth keeping in mind that public comments may have been intended, and may have been received, in another meaning than what appears from the wording. To accommodate this circumstance, the literary analyses in this dissertation are accompanied by overviews of the historical context of their publication which among other things describe the delimitations of the freedom of the press. As it will be described, the limits of the freedom of the press changed significantly trough the period treated here, and the different literary pieces are therefore published under quite different conditions, and with quite different limits of what could be said.

Selection of primary literature

As representations of Danish historical regents in Pre-romantic and Romantic literature is a fairly unexplored field of research, the starting point of the project was to uncover what literature was published at all. Therefore, I made an overview of representations of historical regents in fictional literature by searching library catalogues and literary histories. The list, which can be found in the appendix, constitutes the foundation for the dissertation. Before turning to the list itself, there are therefore some issues regarding the data collection that should be addressed.

The list is based in part on Danish literary histories (Auken et al. 2008; Auring et al. 1984; Billeskov Jansen and Albeck 1976; Fjord Jensen et al. 1983) and particularly on the catalogues *Bibliotheca Danica. Systematisk Fortegnelse over den danske Litteratur fra 1482 til 1830* [Biblioteca Danica. Systematic Record of the Danish Literature from 1482 to 1830] (1902), its supplement for the years 1831-1840 and *Stikordsregister til den danske Skønlitteratur for Aarene 1841-1908* [Subject Index of Danish Fiction for the Years 1841-1908] (1918). *Bibliotheca Danica* is a series of catalogues listing all the books in the Great Royal Library in Copenhagen, the University Library in Copenhagen and Karen Brahe's Library in Odense. *Bibliotheca Danica* is therefore an extensive, but not complete, record of Danish literature published until 1840. This means that the list in the appendix may be incomplete as well. *Stikordsregister til den*

danske Skønlitteratur for Aarene 1841-1908 carries with it another possible source of error. The literature in this catalogue is registered under the publication year of the latest edition of the given book. This means that if a work was first published between 1841 and 1848 and reissued between 1848 and 1908, it might be missing on the list. I do, however, find it unlikely that a significant number of works will have been missed this way. Also, if a work is published in several editions, and the given library only owns a second or later edition, the publication date appearing on the list in the appendix might not be the original publication year.

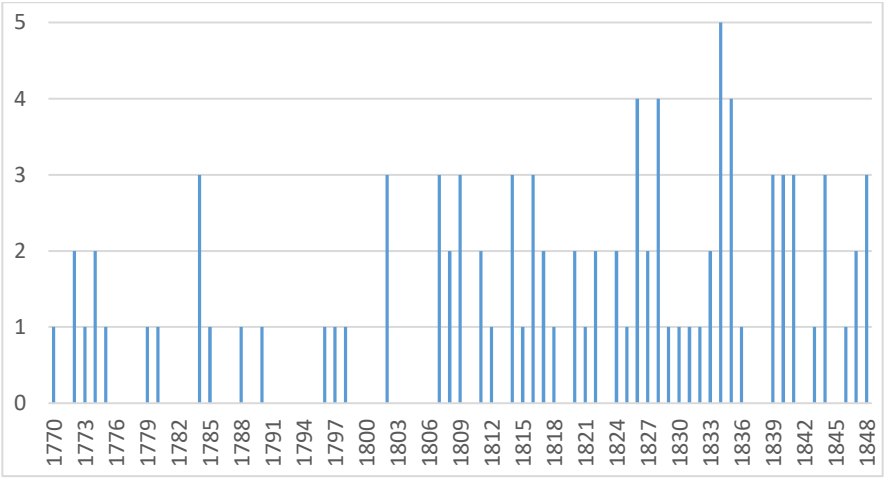
Relevant literature, which is listed in *Biblioteca Danica* and *Stikordsregister til den danske Skønlitteratur for Aarene 1841-1908*, may still have been missed because of the catalogues' format of information. The information given in *Bibliotheca Danica* and *Stikordsregister til den danske Skønlitteratur for Aarene 1841-1908* pertains to the title, author and publication year of the works. The list in the appendix therefore only includes publications where the appearance of the historical regent is indicated by the title. The information format also causes a generic distortion in the list, as poetry tends to be published in collections whose titles do not reveal the titles or content of the individual poems.

The limitations outlined above naturally imply that some relevant pieces of literature will have been overlooked and that the list will not be comprehensive. The list therefore cannot be used to extract exact data, but it can be helpful in bringing to attention some works which have rarely, if at all, been treated by previous research. It can also be used as an indication of some tendencies to which we shall return shortly. First, a comment on the selection criteria applied in the process of compilation.

In the list is included all works whose title indicates the presence of a historical regent in the text. Therefore titles referring to historical characters in close proximity to a regent or strongly associated with Danish royal history – as for instance King Gorm the Old's queen Thyra Danebod; the ancient hero Starkad who is associated with the kings of Lejre; King Valdemar the Great's bishop Absalon; the murdered pretender and later saint Canute Lavard; and Niels Ebbesen whose killing of the German Count Gerhard ended the 1332-1340 interregnum – are also included in the list.

Likewise, as the project examines representations of Danish historical regents, Norwegian regents have been excluded in works published after the separation of Denmark and Norway in 1814, even though Danish and Norwegian ancient history intertwine and share myths. This overlap also means that in some cases it can be difficult to determine whether a given regent should be considered Danish or Norwegian. In those cases I have chosen, to the extent possible, to follow Saxo Grammaticus' account in *Gesta Danorum*, as this was one of the Romantics' primary sources for ancient and medieval Danish history.

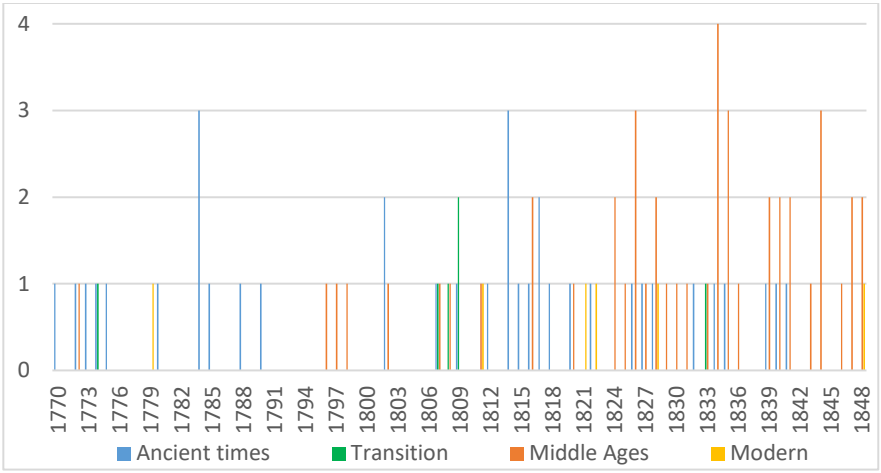
With these criteria, the list amounts to 95 works. The diagram below shows the distribution of publications over time.



Publications of fictional literature with historical regents

The diagram shows the publications to be fairly evenly dispersed over the period, with an increase in the latter half of the period. The diagram becomes more interesting if the data is separated into categories according to the historical period of the regent. This is the result when the data is divided into literature about regents from Norse Antiquity, the Middle Ages and modern times:[5]

[5] Literature taking place during the transition period between Antiquity and the Middle Ages – the reigns of Harald Bluetooth (958-c. 987), Sweyn Forkbeard (c. 987-1014) and Harald II (1014-1018) – is marked with green in the diagram, as it could both be argued to belong to be pagan and Christian periods. The term 'modern' here is used as a designation for all narratives taking place after the Middle Ages.



Publications of fictional literature with historical regents

One of the most striking features of the diagram is the distribution of publications of literature about medieval regents, both with respect to magnitude, but also to the staggering towards the later decades.

In the diagram, the limit between ancient times and the Middle Ages is defined as roughly the year 1000 with the introduction of Christianity. This might seem late compared to the European periodization which has the Middle Ages covering approximately the period 500-1500. In Danish history, however, it is generally agreed upon that Antiquity (*oldtiden*) lasts until the introduction of Christianity around 1000 and that the Middle Ages (*middelalderen*) span the years 1000 till the reformation in 1536 (Hermann 2019: 48). For instance, on their website dedicated to the period, the Danish National Museum defines the Middle Ages as the years 1000-1536 ("Middelalder (1000-1536)" n.d.). The online encyclopaedia on Danish history danmarkshistorien.dk, which is run by Aarhus University, employs a more fine-grained division with Antiquity lasting the years until c. 800, the Viking Age spanning c. 800-1050, the high Middle Ages covering c. 1050-1340 and the late Middle Ages ranging 1340-1536 (Bøgh 2009b, 2009c). Even though danmarkshistorien.dk divides the Middle Ages into two subpages, they consider the Middle Ages as one unit from 1050-1536 as these years have in common the major influence of the Western European Catholic church on Danish culture (Bøgh 2009b). The main reason for separating Antiquity/Viking Age and the Middle Ages around the first half of the eleventh century

pertains to religious, military and agrarian reasons. King Harald Bluetooth, and thereby technically Denmark, had converted to Christianity around 965, but it was not until the middle of the eleventh century that Christianity began to gain footing in Denmark. Other important societal changes happening at this time were the end of the expansion from plundering, trade and colonisation, which had characterised the Viking Ages, and the transition from animal husbandry to agriculture (Bøgh 2009b).

My reason for locating the temporal divide between Antiquity and Middle Ages around the year 1000 is not only that it is the custom among historians now, but also because it seems that the Danish writers and historians of the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries located the periodic divide around this time. For instance, in a letter from 1828, Ingemann writes: "Many of the finest legends from heathen times with images of our mythic warrior childhood, Øhlenschlæger has recalled with life and power in the remembrance of the people: Our Middle Ages has so far lain obscure and forgotten in the dusty annals" (Ingemann cited in Rerup 1991: 342).[6] At this point in time, Oehlenschläger had published *Palnatoke* (1809), which takes place in the year 991. As Ingemann begins his own cycle of medieval historical novels with Valdemar the Great (reign 1157-1182), it can be deduced that he considers the periodic divide to lie somewhere between 991 and 1157.[7] Likewise, in the introduction to the second edition of *Valdemar den store og hans Mænd* [Valdemar the Great and his Men] (1824), Ingemann identifies the time of Valdemar the Great as the beginning of the Middle Ages. Describing the events around Valdemar the Great as the people's most important accomplishment, Ingemann writes:

> It is in Saxo with immortal saga writing described as our first national historical work of the spirit of the people in the Christian

[6] "Mange af de ypperste Hedenoldssagn med Billeder af vor mythiske Kæmpebarndom har Øhlenschlæger med Liv og Kraft kaldet tilbage i Folkets Erindring: Vor Middelalder har hidtil ligget dunkel og forglemt i de støvede Annaler"

[7] It should be mentioned that Oehlenschläger by 1828 had also published *Eric and Abel* (1820, *Erik og Abel*), which takes place in 1250. As Ingemann repeatedly refers to the time of Valdemar the Great as the Middle Ages, it is inconceivable that he should have thought of *Erik and Abel* as ancient (and no less heathen). He must simply not have had *Eric and Abel* in mind when noting that Oehlenschläger had retold ancient history, but not medieval.

> time, while Canute the Great's brilliant conquests and colossal British-Scandinavian dominion more is described in the annals of the people as a great but fleeting epilogue of the Nordic warrior drama of heathen times on the world historic stage (Ingemann 1913: 5).[8]

Here, Ingemann more precisely places the divide between Nordic Antiquity and the Middle Ages within the reign of Canute the Great (1018-1035).[9]

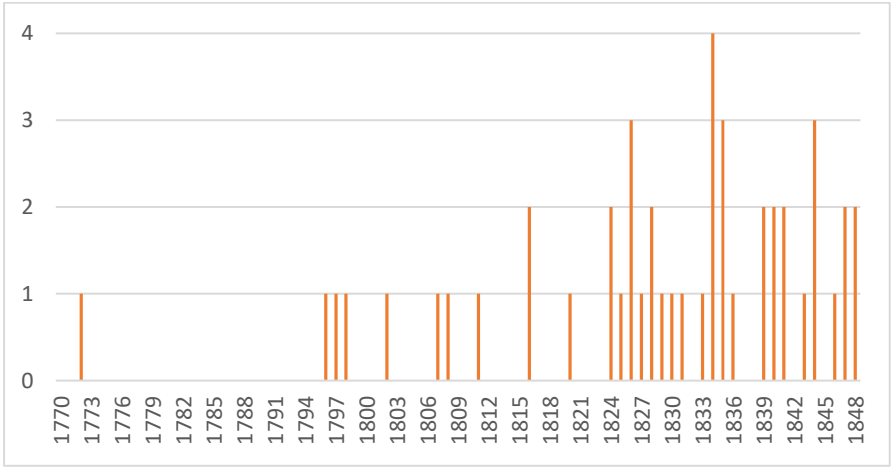
A further reason to operate with a division between ancient and medieval times is that the distinction is employed by the historian Carl Ferdinand Allen in his influential *Haandbog i Fædrelandets Historie med stadigt Henblik paa Folkets og Statens indre Udvikling* [Handbook in the History of the Fatherland with Constant View of the Inner Development of the People and the State] (1840). In this book, Antiquity is associated with the religion of Norse mythology (Allen 1840: 1 ff.), and Thyra Danebod's funeral around 950 (Tanderup 2014) is ascribed to late antiquity (Allen 1840: 52). Allen's division between Antiquity and the Middle Ages thus also seems to be comprised by the transition to Christianity and lie around the year 1000. Of course, Allen's book is published later than much of the literature treated in this dissertation, but there is no reason to believe that his division was divergent. Rather, it has been demonstrated that Allen's perception of Danish history was in line with the general perception at the time and that his fundamental principles draw upon the earlier well-known historians Tyge Rothe and Rasmus Nyerup (Paludan 1980: 11).

This dissertation will adapt the periodical understanding of Ingemann, Allen, the Danish National Museum and the researchers behind danmarkshistorien.dk and operate with the periodical divide between Norse Antiquity and the Middle Ages around the institution of Christianity and the end of Middle Ages at the reformation in 1536.

[8] "Den staar hos Saxo med udødelig Sagaskrift betegnet som vort første nationalhistoriske Folkeaands-Værk i den Kristelige Tid, medens Knud den Stores glimrende Erobringer og kolossale britisk-skandinaviske Herredømme mere staar i Folkets Aarbøger som et stort men flygtigt Efterspil af Hedenoldets nordiske kæmpedrama paa den verdenshistoriske Skueplads"

[9] Ingemann's division of ancient times and the Middle Ages around the year 1000 has also been noted by literary historian Flemming Conrad. According to Conrad, Ingemann operates with a concept of Danish history as divided into four phases: the heathen period before 1000, the Catholic period from 1000 to 1536, the Lutheran period between 1536 and 1800 and an undefined period after the year 1800 (Conrad 1996: 141).

To return to the the diagram of the distribution of the works about historical regents, an interesting feature of it is that while the representations of ancient regents[10] are relatively evenly distributed over the period, the representations of medieval regents are mainly published from the 1790s and onwards, with a significant increase after c. 1824.[11] That becomes a bit more clear if all other literature than that about medieval regents are removed from the diagram:



Fictional literature with medieval regents

The literature in this corpus roughly falls into two clusters; the 1790s and 1824 onwards.[12] This distribution prompts the questions of why

[10] These literary works are part of what is known as the Norse Renaissance, which emerged in last half of the eighteenth century and consisted in increased interest in Norse Antiquity, Norse mythology and the Viking Age (Fjord Jensen et al. 1983: 309–319; Glenthøj 2012: 253–255).

[11] The one piece about a medieval regent published before the 1790s is Johan Nordal Brun's play *Einer Tambeskielver* (1772). The play, which was rejected for performance because it was considered too expressive of Norwegian nationalism (Michelsen 2012), is about the royal advisor Einer Tambeskielver and the Norwegian King Harald Hardrada. As Einer Tambeskielver died c. 1050/1055 and Harald Hardrada reigned from 1046 (Krag 2009), the play takes place during the period which is here defined as the Middle Ages, but that for instance danmarkshistorien.dk partly defines as the Viking Age. As this play lies close to this dissertation's division between the periods of Norse Antiquity and the Middle Ages, and this periodical divide by no means is clear cut, the categorisation of the play as belonging to the Middle Ages should not be given too much weight.

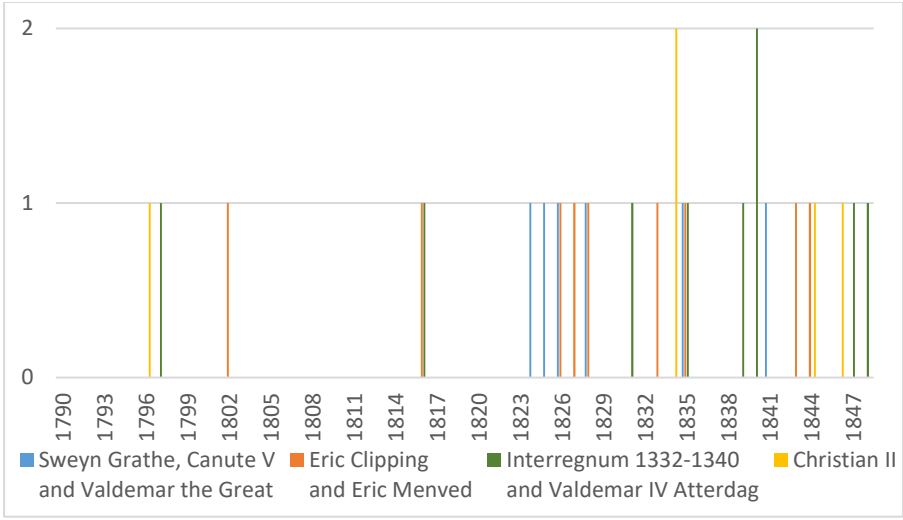
[12] The 1802 data point is Salomon Soldin's *Marshal Stig* (*Marsk Stig*), which is adapted from a draft outlined by Ole Johan Samsøe in the 1790s.

these works appear when they do. Why does the interest in medieval regents emerge in the 1790s, and why does it increase around the 1820s? What did the medieval regents represent to the late nineteenth and eighteenth-century writers that regents of other periods might not? By examining some of the fictitious representations of medieval regents, this dissertation will attempt to provide some answers to these questions.

As is shown by the diagram, there is published quite a lot of fictional literature about Danish medieval regents in the period 1789-1848. In order to limit it to suit the scope of this dissertation, I have decided to focus on the medieval regents which are most often depicted in literature. This is based on an assumption that these regents in particular could have represented something which resonated with the Danish authors writing between 1789 and 1848. From the list in the appendix, it appears that in particular four regents or groupings of regents are represented significantly more often than the rest, and they will therefore comprise the primary literature for the dissertation.

The first regents to stand out this way are Valdemar the Great (1131-1182, reign 1157-1182) and Sweyn Grathe (d. 1157, reign 1146-1157) who appear in five works each. As their stories are closely intertwined with that Canute V (d. 1157, reign 1146-1157), he will be studied as well. The next is Eric Clipping (1249-1286, reign 1259-1286), whose story spills into that of his son Eric Menved (1274-1319, reign 1286-1319). Third is the Interregnum 1332-1340 and Valdemar Atterdag (c. 1321-1375, reign 1340-1375) with five representations each, which are linked through Valdemar Atterdag being the king to resume the monarchy after the Interregnum. It might not be self-evident that the Interregnum should be addressed in this dissertation about depictions of regents, as it is given that it will not deal with a reigning Danish monarch. That is true for many narratives taking place during the Interregnum as they in most cases are about the freedom fighter Niels Ebbesen. Niels Ebbesen is, however, closely connected to the Danish monarchy as he was an important factor for ending the Interregnum and thereby providing the conditions for the Danish monarchy to re-establish. Even though the dissertation treats depictions of regents, I have therefore decided to include the Interregnum and Niels Ebbesen, but only to the extent that the literature considers royal power in some way. That implies that some

of the literature on the Interregnum and Niels Ebbesen will not be relevant to the dissertation. The last king to be studied in the dissertation is Christian II (1481-1559, reign 1513-1523) with five appearances, which, notably, primarily occurs late in the period.[13] In a diagram, the distribution of fictional literature about these periods in Danish royal history are distributed in this way:



Distribution of literature with respect to regents

During the research process, I found more literature about these four passages of Danish royal history from the Middle Ages. These works were not added to the diagram, as they would distort the results. A complete list of the studied fictional literature about these kings and the Interregnum can be found below, and this corpus comprises the analytical objects of this dissertation.

[13] Litterature on the ancient king Helge could also have a claim to be treated. With four appearances, there is not much statistically significant difference between him and the kings appearing in five pieces of literature. In addition to him being an ancient regent, he will not be treated as three of the four pieces is published as connected works by the same author, Oehlenschläger, so Helge cannot be said to be as widely represented as the other kings listed above.

Sweyn Grathe, Canute V and Valdemar the Great

Author	Title	Year	Genre
Bernhard Severin Ingemann	*Valdemar den Store og hans Mænd*	1824	Lyric poem
Caspar Johannes Boye	*Svend Grathe*	1825	Drama
Balthasar Bang	*Valdemar og Absalon. Et historisk Drama i 5 Akter*	1826	Drama
Otto Ferdinand Bræmer	*Slaget paa Grathehede*	1828	Novel
August Bournonville	*Valdemar*	1835	Ballet
Carsten Hauch	*Svend Grathe eller Kongemødet i Roskilde*	1841	Drama

Eric Clipping and Eric Menved

Author	Title	Year	Genre
Salomon Soldin	*Marsk Stig eller Sammenrottelsen mod Erik Glipping, Konge af Danmark. Et romantisk Skilderie fra det trettende Aarhundrede*	1802	Drama
Thomas Christopher Bruun	*Erik Glipping*	1816	Drama
Peder Dybdahl	*Marsk Stig eller Feldmarskalk Stig Andersen Hvides Levnetsbeskrivelse. En sandfærdig Historie*	1826	Novel
Caspar Johannes Boye	*Erik den Syvende*	1827	Drama
Bernhard Severin Ingemann	*Erik Menveds Barndom*	1828	Novel
Bernhard Severin Ingemann	*Kong Erik og de Fredløse*	1833	Novel
	Marsk Stig. Tragedie i fem Acter	1834	Drama
Christian Winther	"Vaabendragerens Eed"	1835	Lyric poem
August Bournonville	*Erik Menveds Barndom*	1843	Ballet
Adam Oehlenschläger	*Erik Glipping*	1844	Drama

The Interregnum 1332-1340 and Valdemar Atterdag

Author	Title	Year	Genre
Levin Christian Sander	*Danmarks Befrielse eller Niels Ebbesen af Nörreriis*	1797	Drama
Malthe Conrad Bruun	"Niels Ebbesen. Tyrandræberen"	1797	Lyric poem
	Hædersminde over Jyden Niels Ebbesen	1797	Lyric poem
Niels Christian Øst (ed.)	*Hædersminde over Jyden Niels Ebbesen*	1798	Lyric poem
Bernhard Severin Ingemann	"Kong Valdemars Jagt"	1816	Lyric poem
Adam Oehlenschläger	"Ridderen ved Kulsvierhytten"	1823	Lyric poem
Steen Steensen Blicher	"Bautastene"	1824	Lyric poem
Otto Ferdinand Bræmer	*Valdemar Atterdag*	1831	Novel
Bernhard Severin Ingemann	*Prins Otto af Danmark og hans Samtid*	1835	Novel
E. Petersen (ed.)	*Ebbesen, Niels, af Nørreriis eller: Danmarks Befrielse* (fragment)	1839	Novel
Niels Frederik Severin Grundtvig	"En ganske ny Vise"	1839	Lyric poem
Hans Vilhelm Kaalund	"En Bautasten.."	1840	Lyric poem
Johan Gunløg Gunløgsen Briem	*Ridder Niels Ebbesen*	1840	Drama
Johan Ludvig Heiberg	*Syvsoverdag*	1840	Drama
Hollard Nielsen, Johan Moses Georg	*Niels Ebbesen, Danmarks Befrier. En historisk romantisk Skildring fra Middelalderen*	1847-1848	Novel
Henrik Hertz	*Valdemar Atterdag*	1848	Drama

Christian II

Author	Title	Year	Genre
Ole Johan Samsøe	*Dyveke*	1796	Drama
Carsten Hauch	*Vilhelm Zabern. En Autobiografi fra Christian den Andens Tid*	1834	Novel

Wilhelm Conrad Holst	*Christian den Anden*	1834	Drama
Agathe Suhr/S. Jørgensen (pseudonym for Lucie Henriette von Suhr)	*Christian den Anden*	1834	Novel
Hans Christian Andersen	*Kongen drømmer*	1844	Drama
Niels Hoyer	*Christian II von Dänemark*	1845	Drama
Sören Norby (pseudonym for Ole Bang)	*Kongen vaagner*	1846	Drama
Carl Bernhard	*Krøniker fra Kong Christian den Andens Tid*	1847	Novel

Background

Medievalism – definition and taxonomies

Medievalism is usually defined along the lines of (re)creation, (re)interpretation, reception and use of medieval culture in post-medieval times (e.g. D'Arcens 2016: 1). Within medievalism studies, however, there is no consensus to the exact definition and scope of the concept. At the heart of the dispute is the delimitation of medievalism from medieval studies. A basic distinction is that medieval studies have as its object the 'real' Middle Ages and subjects from within this period, while medievalism is a designation for post-medieval (re)constructions of the period. This distinction has, however, turned out to be unstable. It was in particular unsettled by the publication of Norman Cantor's book *Inventing the Middle Ages. The Lives, Works, and Ideas of the Great Medievalists of the Twentieth Century* in 1991. The book made the contention that medieval studies researchers' work was influenced by the subjectivity of the researcher, thereby challenging the striven for objectivity of medieval studies research. The implication was that the medieval studies researchers' work had to be regarded as reconstructions of the period dependent on the researcher's interpretation. As a post-medieval reconstruction of the Middle Ages, medieval studies could thus be understood as a subcategory of medievalism. Many scholars of medievalism have adopted this notion and understand medieval studies as a subcategory of medievalism. One disadvantage of letting the term medievalism

designate both scholarly engagement with the Middle Ages and imaginative creations drawing on the Middle Ages is that the term becomes rather broad. A way to address this problem is by creating taxonomies of the concept, of which there are multiple attempts, both from before and after Cantor. Below will briefly be outlined three of the taxonomies, which are most often referred to within the research field of medievalism studies.

The first taxonomy was proposed by Umberto Eco in his influential 1986 essay "Dreaming of the Middle Ages". Eco notes that the Middle Ages have been "messed up" by later periods' appropriating of it and that they therefore must be messed up in different ways. He classifies ten different "dreams" of the Middle Ages, which he has termed "Ten Little Middle Ages". These conceptions comprise the Middle Ages as simply a decorative background; the Middle Ages used with an ironical stance; the Middle Ages as a barbaric period; the Middle Ages as portrayed in Gothicism; the Middle Ages' influence on modern theoretical approaches such as structuralism; the Middle Ages of nineteenth century nation building endeavours; the Middle Ages of decadentism; the Middle Ages of philological reconstruction; the Middle Ages of quest romances and the like; and the expectation of the millennium (Eco 1998: 68–72). Eco's taxonomy is a hodgepodge of categories and levels. I have omitted to unfold his categories in detail here, because the seminal aspect of Eco's taxonomy is not so much his exact categories, but the fact that he identified and attempted to categorise medievalism. While Eco's taxonomy might not be very useful in practice, it is important for drawing attention to the different possible functions of medievalism.

In their article "The Reception of the Middle Ages in Germany. An Overview" (1991), German studies scholars Francis G. Gentry and Ulrich Müller identify four models of medieval reception. These are 1: The productive reception of the Middle Ages or creative reception of the Middle Ages. Hereby they mean the ways subject matter, works, themes and medieval authors are refashioned in new works. 2: The reproductive reception of the Middle Ages, which covers reconstruction of an original form of medieval work in a way that appears "authentic". Gentry and Müller give as example musical productions and renovations. 3: The academic reception of the Middle Ages; that is academic research on the Middle Ages. 4: The political-ideological reception of the Middle Ages, which designates the ways

medieval works, themes, concepts or persons are used for a political purpose. An example is the way the word "crusade" is employed in modern politics. Most often, Gentry and Müller find that these forms will be mixed. However, they note that different categories of assessment must be used for the different forms. Model 2 and 3 requires expert knowledge to determine "right" from "wrong" to the extent, of course, it is possible to reach historical truth. The remaining two categories have to do with productive or creative reception of the Middle Ages. Here, the assessment must rely on contemporary historical context and the inherent quality of the work rather than its relation to a medieval source (Gentry and Müller 1991: 401–402).

The last taxonomy to be introduced here is by medievalism researcher David Matthews. He suggests to understand medievalism as a discourse and classifies medievalism in the following spectrum: 1: The Middle Ages "as it was". This is the attempt to recreate a medieval setting in for instance a historical novel, a film taking place in the Middle Ages, Neo-gothic architecture or the playing of medieval music. 2: The Middle Ages "as it might have been". This designates the Middle Ages represented as legend-like, as in fantasy literature, Pre-Raphaelite painting or different renditions of the Arthurian myths. 3: The Middle Ages "as it never was". This is the use of medieval elements in a non-medieval setting such as Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* series or Georg Lucas's *Star Wars* films. 4: A cultural production primarily based on medieval elements which includes elements of or references to something modern. Matthews gives as an example Jan Garbarek and the Hilliard Ensemble's recording of *Officium* from 1994 in which Georgian chants are infused with jazz saxophone. 5: A cultural production markedly modern incorporates something medieval. Matthews gives as one of his examples T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and its references to Arthurian myth (Matthews 2015: 37–19).

Eco's ten Middle Ages are less an actual taxonomy and more an act of drawing attention to how widespread and multifaceted a phenomenon medievalism is. Gentry and Müller's taxonomy and Matthews's taxonomy are more serious attempts at categorising the concept of medievalism, which are both based on how close to the historical rendering of the Middle Ages that an instance of medievalism is. But that is not the only interesting aspect of medievalism, and as medievalism scholar Louise D'Arcens has pointed

out, the distinction between "found" and "made" medievalism is not viable (D'Arcens 2016: 3).

Another interesting aspect of medievalism – and the one to be treated here – is how medievalism can function in different ways. This dissertation is less concerned with whether a detail in a piece of literature has a precedent in medieval history or has been invented by the author. It is instead focused on how medievalism is used, to what effect and what it can facilitate. For that reason, although attempts at taxonomising the concept of medievalism is at the heart of the research tradition, it will not be a part of this dissertation. As this dissertation is historically focused, it will instead study medievalism as a case of use of history. Medievalism will be studied for how it is used and to what effect or purpose. Medievalism is thus here considered as a sub-category of use of history in line with the reception of and recreation of other historical periods. This implies a non-universal understanding of medievalism, as the specifics of the concept will be particular to each culture.

Research on medievalism in Danish literature

While medievalism is a well consolidated field of research in countries such as Australia, Britain, France, Germany and the United Stated, by the beginning of this project, it was quite a new field in Danish research. So far, the work done on Danish medievalistic literature in the period 1789-1848 includes the following contributions:

Literary historian Svend Erik Larsen has contributed a chapter dealing with medievalism to an anthology on the Middle Ages entitled *Middelalderens Verden. Verdensbilledet, tænkningen, rummet og religionen* [The World of the Middle Ages. The World View, the Thought, the Space and the Religion] (2010). His chapter concludes the anthology with a later perspective on the Middle Ages about the afterlife of the period in Romantic and later literature. Larsen does not use the term medievalism, but the concept is inherent as he treats the Middle Ages as cultural memory (Larsen 2010).

Historian Sverre Bagge has examined national revival within fiction and history in Norway and Denmark in the romantic period in his article "Oehlenschlaeger and Ibsen: National revival in drama and history in Denmark and Norway c. 1800-1860" from 2013. His

comparative reading of Ibsen and Oehlenschläger comes to the conclusion that both countries lived through a national revival drawing on medieval background, but that this current assumed a more political expression in Norway than in Denmark (Bagge 2013: 87).

With place as his starting point, Scandinavian studies scholar Jan Rosiek has written about Gurre, the castle of the medieval King Valdemar Atterdag and the literature associated with that location. With a focus on place and landscape, Rosiek has among other things described and analysed some romantic literature featuring Valdemar Atterdag's Gurre (Rosiek 2015, 2017).

Literary historian Lis Møller has published various articles on Danish, Romantic medievalism. Her focus is the circulation of Danish, medieval ballads in later literature, in particular the ballads' presence in Danish, Romantic Literature (Møller 2015, 2017a) and their dissemination into German and English literature (Møller 2017b, 2017c, 2017d). In 2018, she began a collective research project on Danish Romantic medievalism. The output so far consists of a number of articles: a comparative study of painter Agnes Slott-Møller's series of pictures of the medieval king Valdemar the Victorious and Ingemann's historical novel about the same king (Møller 2019); an article about Grundtvig's staging of himself as a scald in his reconstruction of Anglo-Saxon literature (Grosen Jørgensen 2019a); a comparative study of the recreation of Norse literature in a poem by Oehlenschläger and Michael Hirst's TV-series *Vikings* (Grosen Jørgensen 2019b); an article looking into the different perceptions of ancient times in two plays by Johann Elias Schlegel and Johannes Ewald (Hjort Møller 2019b); an article about the reception of Germanic medieval literature in Friedrich Schlegel's early writings (Hjort Møller 2019a); and a PhD dissertation studing the representation of the scald in the medievalistic writings of Oehlenschläger and Grundtvig (Grosen Jørgensen 2020)

In 2019, the Danish journal for the history of Ideas *Slagmark* published a special issue on medievalism. The issue contained some articles about Danish literary medievalism in the pre-Romantic and Romantic period, including an article on memory in the works of Oehlenschläger by scandinavian studies scholar Pernille Hermann (Hermann 2019), a queered analysis of one of Ingemann's historical novels by historian Lone Kølle Martinsen (Martinsen 2019) and an

article about republicanism in two Niels Ebbesen adaptations from 1797 (Kjærulff 2019).

Politics in Danish literary history c. 1789-1848

The existing research on Danish eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literary medievalism is somewhat sparse, in particular with regard to the political function of medievalism. The concept of medievalism as such has not really been treated in the volumes on Danish literary history, but the nineteenth century's fascination of the medieval have of course been addressed. In Danish literary historiography, fascination of the medieval is associated with the nationalisation processes of Romanticism and its search for the roots of the nation. In the Danish tradition, the beginning of Romanticism is very exactly dated to the year 1802. The events which are largely agreed upon as the initiation of Romanticism are Adam Oehlenschläger's publication of his collection of poems *Digte 1803* [Poems 1803] (1802) and Henrich Steffens's influential lectures on Romantic philosophy given during the winter 1802-1803 (Auken et al. 2008: 21, 107; Billeskov Jansen and Albeck 1976: 399).

Danish Romanticism is much characterised by the crisis taking place during its early years. The severe defeats Denmark suffered during the Napoleonic wars brought an end to the country's status as a major maritime commercial power, which it had held in the eighteenth century. Even though it initially retained a policy of neutrality, Denmark was eventually drawn into the wars when France and Russia decided to establish a Continental System to shut off all continental ports for British ships. On account of its geographical location, Denmark was forced to take sides between on the one hand Russia and France and on the other Great Britain. Afraid of losing Russia's support to its keeping of Norway – on which Sweden also made demands – Denmark sided with Russia and France. This resulted in an attack from Britain, the Battle of Copenhagen on April 2nd 1801, in which the Danes were defeated. After the battle, Denmark resumed its policy of neutrality, but in 1807, France commenced a new Continental System against Britain. Denmark was again forced to take a stance. Great Britain demanded Denmark to either enter into an alliance or to surrender their fleet as security.

Denmark refused Britain's demands, as complacence would have led to war with France, whose army were at the time located at the southern border of the Danish composite state. In response to the refusal of their demands, the British bombed Copenhagen from September 2nd to 7th 1807. The result of the Bombardment of Copenhagen was a Danish surrender and the British taking away the Danish fleet.

The end of the wars entailed further crisis for Denmark. The country found itself much reduced in geographical size after the Vienna Congress where it was decided that Norway should be ceded to Sweden. Moreover, the Continental System had paralysed the Danish trade and led to bankruptcy, poverty and unemployment. In 1813, a monetary reform known as the State Bankruptcy had been implemented in order to remedy the inflation caused by the war with Britain, but financial crisis continued with recession and falling prices on agricultural produce. Prices reached a low point in the 1820s as part of the agricultural crisis. By the end of the agricultural crisis, however, a cyclical rebound followed in form of the Cereal Selling Period (*kornsalgsperioden*) in which the country experienced an economic, cultural and political recovery (Auken et al. 2008: 43–46; Busck 2012).

The defeats and severe reduction of the country's size led to cultural introspection. The country began reinventing itself as a nation, and, like other European countries at that time, that meant looking back to the national past. Inspired by Herder's notion of the *Volksgeist*, the Danish Romantics considered the Middle Ages as a higher level in history and a time when the popular spirit was more prevalent than in their present. The Middle Ages were the time in which to find the sources of national identity. The Romantics collected and edited popular ballads, translated and rewrote the sagas, studied the Danish language and reproduced stories from ancient and medieval Danish history in an attempt to reawaken the dormant national spirit (Auken et al. 2008: 50–56; Rerup 1991: 331).

One of the central Danish Romantic authors, Oehlenschläger, has already been mentioned. Two other central authors were Niels Frederik Severin Grundtvig and Bernhard Severin Ingemann. Between them, these three authors have been instrumental in constructing the foundations of Danish Romantic nationalism. To a great extent they did so by refashioning ancient and medieval Danish

history. After *Digte 1803*, Oehlenschläger went on to publish a number of dramas based on tales about Danish and Norwegian antiquity. Grundtvig studied, translated and retold ancient Danish literature. One of his major works is his translation into Danish of Saxo Grammaticus' Latin history of Denmark *Gesta Danorum*. Saxo's history was written around the year 1200 and tells the history of Denmark from the earliest ancient myths until his own time, and it was one of the primary sources to medieval history for the Romantics.

His translation finished, Grundtvig encouraged his friend Ingemann to continues Saxo's history and narrate the subsequent history of Denmark. Ingemann complied and wrote a cycle of epics and novels spanning the reigns of Valdemar the Great to Margrete I (1353-1412, reign Denmark 1376-1412, Norway 1380-1412 and Sweden 1389-1412) published between 1824 and 1836. The novels became immensely popular and were some of the most read literature in Denmark in the nineteenth century. They were instrumental in forming the Danes' conception of their history and for a long time constituted the primary source of history for the majority of the people (Martinsen 2012b, 2015).

Oehlenschläger's, Grundtvig's and Ingemann's interest in Nordic Antiquity and the Middle Ages were by no means unique – these periods dominated Danish Romanticism, in particular in association with nation building efforts. Nationalism is one of the subjects within the political aspects of Danish Romanticism which has received a fair amount of scholarly attention. Some of the foremost contributions to the research on Danish national identity will be outlined here: The historian Rasmus Glenthøj has in his book *Skilsmissen. Dansk og norsk identitet før og efter 1814* [The Divorce. Danish and Norwegian Identity before and after 1814] (2012) described the intertwined Danish and Norwegian national identities in relation to the separation of the two countries. When describing cultural identity, he also addresses literature, in particular the ways in which literature contributed to the nationalisation processes. As Glenthøj approaches literature from the point of view of a historian, literature is often dealt with on a fairly general level with focus on its role as a conveyor of national identity and less concern with the textual level. An aim of this dissertation is to supplement this perspective.

A major work on Danish national identity is historian Ole Feldbæk's *Dansk Identitetshistorie* [Danish Identity History] (1991-

1992) an anthology in four volumes. Particularly relevant here is historian Lorenz Rerup's contribution "Fra litterær til politisk nationalime. Udvikling og udbredelse fra 1808 til 1845" [From Literary to Political Nationalism. Development and Spreading from 1808 to 1845], which is an in-depth description of the history of Danish national identity in the first half of the nineteenth century. Rerup explains how Danish nationalism took off in Romantic literature and from that diffused into political life. The literary foundation of the article is Ingemann and Grundtvig and in particular their interest for the national past as described above.

From the earlier part of the dissertation's period, ethnologist Tine Damsholt has described Danish identity towards the end of the eighteenth century from the perspective of patriotism. This cultural study also includes literature, but as in Glenthøj on a more general than textual level. In a passage dealing with the idea of the ancient peasants' freedom (which will be explained in detail in chapter one), she mentions literature as a "legitimate medium for discussing the organisation of the state" (Tine Damsholt 2000: 93).[14]

These three works nicely describe the historical developments of national identity of which the literature formed a part, but their focuses are naturally on history. This dissertation aims to supplement the historians' account with a literary perspective containing more in-dept analysis of the literature and including other literature than the most canonised.

The dissertation studies political aspects of Romantic literature, which is still a somewhat less studied area of Danish literary history. The most recent literary histories treat the subject sporadically. The newest one is *Dansk litteraturs historie* [The History of Danish Literature] (2008). The first volume, which covers the period 1000-1800, treats political literature in connection with the club culture emerging in the eighteenth century. These clubs were discussion forums characterised by a democratic nature. Political literature is found in the form of drinking songs composed for the club meetings, in particular those by Peter Andreas Heiberg, who became notorious for his repeated encounters with the authorities on account of the political content of his songs and satires. Likewise, the volume

[14] "et legalt medium til diskussion af statens indretning"

emphasises the political satires of Malthe Conrad Bruun, who like Heiberg clashed with the regulations of the freedom of the press.

The clubs and their democratic organisation are also the focus of the late eighteenth century in the second most recent major literary history, *Dansk litteraturhistorie* [Danish Literary History] from 1983-1985, a number of quite contextually and politically orientated volumes. Like the newer literary history, its focus is on political satire, in particular Heiberg and Niels Ditlev Riegels. In addition, it has dedicated three pages to the political novel, in which it explains how there after the political change in 1784 emerged political themes in the novels and authors began experimenting with political utopias (Fjord Jensen et al. 1983: 562). The political novel is here represented by works of Christen Pram and Knud Lyne Rahbek.

When turning to the nineteenth century, this literary history argues that there existed close interaction between politics and literature between the mid-1820s to mid-1830s (Auring et al. 1984: 175–176). The authors identify a gradual transition from aesthetical to political discussion in the belletristic periodicals published from the late 1820s and onwards. However, they contend that the political interest in literature ceased after the first meetings of the Assembly of the Estates (*stænderforsamlingerne*) in 1835, from when on political themes did not have to 'hide in literature' any longer (Auring et al. 1984: 176). Nationalism also holds a prominent position in this volume with a whole section dedicated to the idea of the people, the transition from patriotism to nationalism, the link between history, people and nation and the time-honoured connection between king and people (Auring et al. 1984: 502–506).

Dansk litteraturs historie also emphasises the nation and the people in its account of the first half of the nineteenth century. It treats nationalism both as a political concept and as a cultural concept. In the literature from the 1820s and onwards – with Grundtvig's and Oehlenschläger's patriotic songs, Ingemann's historical novels and Johan Ludvig Heiberg's drama *Elverhøi* [Elf Hill] (1828) as the most canonised – the literary history detects a recurrent idea of a special connection between king and people bypassing the aristocracy and civil services (Auken et al. 2008: 52). This is an idea which we will see is very prevalent in the non-canonised literature of the period as well. In this literary history, the political aspects of literature is mostly associated with nationalism, but it does address

another kind of politics in a chapter on the works of Carsten Hauch. Hauch's interest in the systems of power is emphasised along with the way his novels discuss democratic rights and freedom (Auken et al. 2008: 154). We will return to Hauch and the politics of his medievalistic novel in chapter four. Commenting on Hauch's novel *En polsk Familie* [A Polish Family] (1839), it is stated: "But in comparison to the local [vs. the rest of Europe] literary milieu in Denmark in 1839, the political engagement of the book is unique" (Auken et al. 2008: 158).[15] Thus, this literary history expresses an understanding of political literature as uncommon in this period.

One important contribution on politics in Danish Romantic literature is the works of historian Lone Kølle Martinsen on Ingemann's historical literature. In her PhD dissertation and various articles, Martinsen has demonstrated the presence of the myth of an ancient peasants' freedom in the novels and epics and how it is connected to republican ideas (Martinsen 2010, 2012a, 2012b, 2015, 2018). Martinsen's work provides an important foundation for this dissertation, and it will be introduced in more depth in chapter three.

A further aim of the dissertation is to continue Martinsen's work on identifying political aspects in literature in other literary pieces of the period than those by Ingemann. The wish is to supplement the historians' account of the political and national developments in the period, which they have already noted in literature, with a more textually founded perspective that also includes literature which has now been forgotten. A complementary aim is to contribute to the incipient field of Danish medievalism studies by identifying medievalistic works and examining the political function – in particular those in addition to nationalism – of Danish medievalism in the time of the European revolutionary era.

Theoretical contexts

Literature and politics

This dissertation takes as its starting point that fictional literature may be studied in order to gain insight into its historical context. This

[15] "Men i forhold til det lokale [vs. resten af Europa] litterære miljø i Danmark i 1839, er bogens politiske engagement enestående"

approach to Danish nineteenth-century literature has also been employed by historian Bertel Nygaard in his work on the politics of one of the nineteenth century's most central Danish playwrights, Johan Ludvig Heiberg. In this connection, Nygaard has provided some reflections on how literature functions as a source for historical knowledge in practice, which are also quite apposite for the literary works treated here. He writes:

> To work as intended, the popular cultural product has to incorporate ideals and cultural 'codes', which in one way or another can appeal to the audience. Thereby such products may function as sources to historical insight – of course not to the empirical audience's specific preferences or a kind of 'average perception' of this audience; but nonetheless to a symbolical terrain in which the producer of culture can cherish a founded hope of reaching their audience. Through this focus, a cultural-historically oriented analysis of function and content in Heiberg's vaudevilles can point to historical ideals, values and relations, which we can have difficulties getting a good grasp of in other ways (Nygaard 2013: 28–29).[16]

Here, Nygaard draws attention to the advantages of fictional literature as a historical source; that it can reveal historical ideas which might not be available through other sources. Including fiction as a historical source thus opens up for considering as political products which may have not been considered as political previously. This broadening of available sources, however, also calls for a delimitation of what is defined as political.

In this dissertation, the concept of politics is rather broad. The approach of this dissertation for studying the cross field between literature and politics is in many respects congruent with that of the German school of *Neue Politikgeschichte*. *Neue Politikgeschichte* operates with a wide definition of the concept of the political and

[16] "For at kunne virke efter hensigten må det populærkulturelle produkt indarbejde idealer og kulturelle 'koder', der på den ene eller anden vis kan appellere til publikum. Dermed kan sådanne produkter fungere som kilder til historisk indsigt – selvsagt ikke i det empiriske publikums specifikke præferencer eller en art 'gennemsnitsopfattelse' hos dette publikum; men dog til et symbolsk terræn, hvor kulturproducenten kan nære et begrundet håb om at kunne nå sit publikum. Gennem dette fokus kan en kulturhistorisk orienteret funktions- og indholdsanalyse af Heibergs vaudeviller pege på historiske idealer, værdier og relationer, som vi kan have vanskeligt ved at få greb om på andre måder"

advocates that the study of political history must also include authors and fictional literature, even if the authors in question avoided expressions of political stances in the more conventional sense of the term. The school stresses that definitions and concepts change over time and that although something may not have been perceived of as political in its time, in some cases it might be considered political with the understanding of the concept of today (Frevert and Haupt 2005; Martinsen 2012a: 90). This dissertation will use a similar approach and study fictional literature as a source to insights into contemporary political issues by taking less into account the assessment of its political nature in its contemporary times and more how it might illuminate aspects of the political development as we understand it from a 21st century vantage point. The approach has previously been used with good results by Martinsen in her reassessment of the political nature of Ingemann's historical novels (Martinsen 2012a).

There is a wide theoretical field dedicated to the relationship between literature and politics, but as this is more of a historically than theoretically founded dissertation, political theory published previous and contemporary to the literature surveyed is prioritised over theory about literature and politics. I would, however, like to briefly turn to the thought of Jacques Rancière, as he provides an explanation for how literature functions politically which is in line with the conception behind the dissertation. Rancière contends that literature can be political by making particular things visible. In his book, *The Politics of Fiction* (2011), Rancière defines the politics of fiction as different from the politics of writers. The politics of writers he understands as associated with contemporary social and political issues and the way in which these are present in the works of the writers. The political aspect of literature, conversely, simply comes from its status as literature. Rancière holds that "literature does politics simply by being literature" (Rancière 2011: 3). One way in which literature can perform politics is by changing concepts of what is perceptible, as political activity to Rancière consists in negotiation and renegotiation of who may make themselves heard or seen in public debate; that is, making themselves perceptible as political subjects. To Rancière, politics consists in "the construction of a specific sphere of experience in which certain objects are posited as shared and certain subjects regarded as capable of designating these objects and of arguing about them" (Rancière 2011: 3). This line of thought is

conducive for illuminating how the literary representations of medieval kings may be understood to have political implications.

Use of history

Use of history is a concept from historical research which can be used to describe processes of literary appropriation of history and how literary use of history can be understood as political. Use of history designates the selection, highlighting and deselection of historical persons, events or periods for a specific purpose, for instance with regard to politics, information, entertainment or forming of identity (Kayser Nielsen 2010: 34). Use of history is what we see when looking into nineteenth-century nation building and its turning back to medieval history. It is, as historian Jacques Le Goff has argued, never simply concerned with contemporary issues or the past in itself, but is about the interplay between the two (Kayser Nielsen 2010: 27). An example of use of history taken from Danish art history is Otto Bache's painting *De sammensvorne rider fra Finderup Lade efter mordet på Erik Klipping 1286* [The Conspirators ride from Finderup Barn after the Murder of Eric Clipping 1286] (1882). The painting depicts a group of regicides escaping on horseback from the burning barn in Finderup, where King Eric Clipping was murdered in 1286. It is not known who was behind the regicide, but from sketches for the painting it appears that Bache, like many other nineteenth-century artists, cast the king's marshal Stig Andersen as the leader of the conspirators (Ørbæk Jensen n.d.). Bache thus expands on history, but from a use of history point of view, the crucial factor is not accuracy. Focus is on function and what effect comes from representing this or another historical person as a regicide in a new context (Kayser Nielsen 2010: 152).

Use of history has a number of subcategories describing various ways of appropriating history. The most relevant here is political use of history. When investigating this, it is particularly interesting to look into the actors and their aims. But, when studying use of history from a political perspective, it is important to observe some reservations. According to historian Niels Kayser Nielsen, political use of history cannot be understood simply as a means to achieve a goal; context and the scope of possible actions must be taken into account. He specifies that:

> Political use of history is […] neither a "master plan" nor undisputed traffic down one fixed king's way, but processes in which certain actors with certain interests or motives – subject to the contingencies of *realpolitik* and culture – seek to realise a certain view of history, which then is viewed as "the art of the possible" (Kayser Nielsen 2010: 145).[17]

When working with political use of history, it is thus important to study the motives behind the selection of historical entities and the consequences of the use (Kayser Nielsen 2010: 146). When literature is examined in this dissertation, it will be with a similar approach. As a starting point, the medievalistic literature will not be compared to the contemporary knowledge of the Middle Ages – it is not an examination of "correct" or "wrong" depictions of the Middle Ages or a philological search for origins. The primary focus will be directed at the function of the medievalism, irrespective of its degree of 'truth', accuracy, authenticity, or the like.

Chapters in the dissertation

The dissertation consists of four chapters which each treats a different aspect of royal power frequently considered in the literary corpus examined. The chapters reflect the two clusters of publications apparent from the diagram of the distribution of the literature about different medieval regents, so that the first chapter deals with literature published in the 1790s and the three following chapters primarily treat literature published in the nineteenth century. The dissertation is structured chronologically according to when the political issues treated in each chapter have been particularly prevalent in Danish history. That is, however, not to suggest that the subjects treated in the chapters delimit themselves to one of these periods. The majority of the political issues reflected in the literature surveyed occur in the corpus throughout the period. The chronological structure is chosen in order to explore the relationship of the literature to the intellectual history as well as possible, by linking political

[17] "Politisk historiebrug er […] ikke en »master plan« eller suveræn færdsel ad én fastlagt kongevej, men processer, hvori bestemte aktører med bestemte interesser og motiver – underlagt realpolitisk og kulturel kontingens – søger at realisere et bestemt historiesyn, som altså anskues som »det muliges kunst«"

questions considered in literature to political developments in the country. The structure is thus more a choice of communication and less a reflection of developments in literature.

The first chapter treats the influence of republican thought in medievalistic literature published in the 1790s. Republicanism was a widely debated subject in Denmark during this decade, particularly as a result of the French Revolution, and the chapter examines the ways in which republicanism was contemplated in relation to Danish royal power in literature. The chapter consists of an in-depth analysis of two literary pieces about the end of the 1332-1240 interregnum; Levin Christian Sander's play *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis* [Niels Ebbesen of Nørreriis] (1797/1798) and Malthe Conrad Bruun's ode "Niels Ebbesen, Tyrandræberen" [Niels Ebbesen, the Tyrant Killer] (1797). The chapter also introduces to the historical and theoretical background for Danish royal power, which also provides a foundation for the following chapters.

The second chapter treats *ius resistendi*, the right to resist a tyrannical ruler. *Ius resistendi* was not particularly discussed in the Danish public debate in the period, but the theme is quite prevalent in the literature surveyed here. Literature and drama about medieval regents often discuss if, when and how the people are allowed to depose of a tyrannical or incapable regent, and in the same line, what constitutes a good monarch for the Danish people. The chapter argues that contemplations on *ius resistendi* are rather prevalent in the literature examined by providing an overview of how it is used and charting different stances towards the issue.

The third chapter examines the distribution of political agency between the king and the people. It takes as its starting point the historical events of the 1830s and 1840s where the European revolutions – particularly the July Revolution in France – prompted an increasing politicisation of the Danish public. This is also visible in the literature throughout the corpus where the literature often experiments with popular political agency. Like chapter two, this chapter traces a tendency across the literary corpus. It examines how the people are depicted as political agents in literature and how the king in some instances – but not all – are reduced to a more politically passive figure.

The fourth chapter has a dual but connected aim. It explores the nationalisation of the king in literature in a time in which democratic

tendencies and nationalism were on the rise – both currents in which royal power does not hold an obvious place. The chapter argues that the literature examined inscribes the figure of the king into the national ideology and thereby provides the regent with a function which can be more immediately transferred to the contemporary society. The other strand of the chapter is an examination of why the fictional representations of King Christian II all but one are published in the 1830s and 1840s and why exactly Christian II has resonated with this period of increased politicization of the public. The chapter consists of three analyses of representations of national community in works about Christian II: Hans Christian Andersen's play *Kongen drømmer* [The King Dreams] (1844), Carsten Hauch's novel *Vilhelm Zabern. En Autobiografi fra Christian den Andens Tid* [Vilhelm Zabern. An Autobiography from the Time of Christian the Second] (1834) and Ole Bang's *Kongen vaagner* [The King Awakens] (1846).

The conclusion reflects on the political function of the literature surveyed in the dissertation and discusses the questions raised by the diagram above. It addresses the questions of how medievalism was used to facilitate considerations about contemporary political issues, what the Middle Ages represented to the late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century authors and why exactly Sweyn Grathe, Canute V, Valdemar the Great, Eric Clipping, Eric Menved, the Interregnum and Christian II possessed a particular appeal and relevance to these authors. In continuation of these considerations, the conclusion also reflects on how fictional literature may be used as a historical source and how it can contribute to the historical understanding of the period 1789-1848.

Chapter 1

Liberty, equality, monarchy

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, a brief, but intense, interest occurred for the 1332-1340 interregnum. It centred not least on the man who ended it by killing the tyrannical would-be-usurper Count Gerhard and thereby paved the way for reinstating the Danish monarchy – the Jutlandic squire Niels Ebbesen. The line of reinterpretations of Niels Ebbesen's story was launched with the staging of Levin Christian Sander's play *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis* at the king's birthday on January 31st 1797. The play was followed by three years of rapidly following publications of literature about Niels Ebbesen: Sander's play was published in two versions in 1798 and 1799, respectively, and translated into German in 1798; in 1797 the young radical Malthe Conrad Bruun published an expressive ode likening Niels Ebbesen's killing of Count Gerhard to Brutus' assassination of Caesar; and in 1797 and 1798 there were published two editions of *Hædersminde over Jyden Niels Ebbesen* [Memorial for the Jute Niels Ebbesen] edited by N.C. Øst, with collections of history and literature written about Niels Ebbesen. The first *Hædersminde over Jyden Niels Ebbesen* consisted of a historical exposition of the Interregnum and Niels Ebbesen, a song in honour of Niels Ebbesen by J. Smidth from 1794 and character sketches of the foremost actors of the Interregnum.[18] The second edition contained more or less the same

[18] The entry about King Valdemar emphasises Niels Ebbesen's importance for his reign. It states that Valdemar "Possessed all the qualities required by a great

foreword, but had a new and more extended historical exposition followed by the popular ballad about Niels Ebbesen from the Middle Ages. Smidth's song was reprinted, this time accompanied by another song of tribute by M.H. Bornemann, Bruun's ode and a summary of Sander's play.

The literature about Niels Ebbesen shares the common feature of using his story to represent the Danes as a free people. In this chapter, it will be argued that the emphasis on freedom is associated with the republican ideas flourishing at this time, which had prevailed since the publication of Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des loix* in 1748. Like other European countries, in Denmark the French revolution gave rise to public discussion about the French overthrow of the monarchy in favour of a republican form of government. But the Danish discussion did not so much turn into a question of whether or not to abolish the Danish monarchy, but resumed the political theorisation on the relation between republicanism and absolutism, which had intensified since Montesquieu's book.

This chapter will examine how republican ideas are reflected upon in Sander's *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis* and Bruuns ode "Niels Ebbesen, Tyrandræberen". This implies regarding literature as a political media, and that is also in line with the reception of Sander's play in its time. In a review written on occasion of the publication of Sander's drama in print, the literary critic Jacob Baden emphasises Sander's "considerateness and firmness, in philosophical as well as political principles" (Baden 1798: 177)[19] and asks: "what effect is it calculated to have on the audience in our time, by our customs, by the now prevalent maxims in politics and state philosophy? – In what

regent and combined these with the knowledge and experience, which he had acquired about affairs of state and the art of war at Emperor Louis's court. But notwithstanding that, without Niels Ebbesen he had probably not become who he became: one of Denmark's greatest kings; and Niels Ebbesen, therefore, was of service, not solely by saving the country from its former yoke, but also by consolidating its consequent glory and good fortune" (Øst 1797: 23–24) ("Besat alle de Egenskaber, som udfordres til en stor Regent og foreenede disse, med den Kundskab og Erfaring, som han ved Keiser Ludvigs Hof havde erhvervet sig i Statssager og Krigskonst. Men dette uagtet havde han uden Niels Ebbesen nok neppe bleven det han blev: en af Danmarks største Konger; og nyttede Niels Ebbesen altsaa ikke aleene ved at frelse Landet af dets da værende Aag, men og ved at grundfæste dets paafølgende Hæder og Lykke").

[19] "Sindighed og Fasthed, saavel i philosophiske som politiske Grundsætninger"

consist the merits of Niels Ebbesen?" (Baden 1798: 177).[20] Focusing on Sander's play, this chapter will consider this question among others and examine how medievalism is used to consider and discuss republican ideas and absolutism in Danish Interregnum literature of the 1790s.

The chapter begins with a brief outline of the political and literary history of Denmark in the period 1789-1799. It is followed by a more in-depth survey of the Danish reception of republican ideas and some main positions in the Danish theorisation of absolutism in the eighteenth century. The ensuing literary analysis treats republican freedom in Sander's *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis* by considering the representation of virtue, free men as opposed to slaves and social contractual thought. The chapter is closed by a shorter analysis of Bruun's ode about Niels Ebbesen and a discussion of medievalism's position in relation to two other dominant currents of the time, Classicism and Norse Renaissance.

A brief outline of Danish political and literary history 1789-1799

In the 1790s, the reigning king of Denmark was the mentally ill Christian VII (1749-1808, reign 1766-1808). The king's illness made him unable to rule the country, and during his entire reign, the ruling power had been in the hands of others. Between 1770 and 1772, the royal physician Johann Friedrich Struensee and Queen Caroline Mathilde led an Enlightened reign in the name of the king and implemented a number of liberal reforms. One of the more radical reforms were the complete abolishment of censorship, which had existed since the beginning of absolutism in 1660. Struensee's reign ended abruptly in a palace coup in 1772 followed by his execution. Government was then assumed by Ove Høegh-Guldberg, who was a statesman and tutor for crown prince Frederik, the later Frederik VI (1768-1839, reign 1808-1839). Høegh-Guldberg retracted many of Struensee's reforms and imposed rigorous restrictions on what was allowed in writing. Even though censorship formally was not

[20] "hvad Virkning er det calculeret til at giøre paa Publikum i vore Tider, ved vore Sæder, ved de nu i Politik og Statsphilosophie herskende Maximer? – Hvori bestaaer Niels Ebbesens Fortieneste?". Niels Ebbesen here refers to the title of the play, not the historical person.

reinstated, writers could now be convicted for their writings (Amdisen 2012; Blandhol 2014: 282; Bonderup 2012; Horstbøll 1989: 25, 28; N.M. Jensen 2012; Rian 2014: 179–180). This resulted in what the historian Jens Arup Seip has termed a "*quiet censorship*"[21] lasting up to 1799 (Seip 1958: 402).

In 1784, the young crown prince Frederik staged a coup d'état supported by count Andreas Peter Bernstorff. By making his father sign a decree to the effect that all laws must bear both the signature of the king and the crown prince for it to be valid, he effectively took hold of power in Denmark. With the crown prince as de facto ruler, Høegh-Guldberg's reign was over. Frederik and Bernstorff saw the freedom of the press as a source of enlightenment and a means to improve the monarchy by the guidance of enlightened people. Frederik therefore increased the freedom of press, but did not repeal the press laws completely, as had Struensee (Blandhol 2014: 283; Bregnsbo 2012; N.M. Jensen 2012; Rian 2014: 181). The Rescript of October 20th 1773 was still in effect, stating that the chief constable was entitled to fine anyone who published anything which "concerned the state and the government and public organisation" with 50-200 rixdollar (Holm 1888: 2).[22] Frederik also passed a number of agrarian reforms, which made him quite popular with the people, and during the first part of his reign, Frederik was considered vigorous, fulfilling and patriotic (Holm 1888: 17–19)

In the same period as the agrarian reforms were composed, the revolution unfolded in France. The news of the French Revolution were initially generally positively received in Denmark. It did not, however, cause aversion against the Danish Crown or outspoken demands for constitution. Sympathies for the revolution existed side by side with devotion to the Danish monarchy. One reason this was possible is found in the prevalent feeling that what was happening in France had already occurred in Denmark. The enthusiasm abated, however, with the execution of Louis XVI in 1793 (Holm 1888: 90–91; Horstbøll 1989: 30; Horstbøll and Østergård 1989: 2; Seip 1958: 455). In particular, the royal house and the aristocracy were shocked by the developments of the French Revolution. The fear of something similar happening in Denmark caused Frederik and some of his surroundings to turn more reactionary. The prince's fear of revolution became so

[21] "*stille sensur*"

[22] "angik Staten og Regeringen og offentlige Foranstaltninger"

intense that when Christiansborg Palace burned down in 1794 and during the Copenhagen Fire of 1795, Frederik immediately assumed that revolution had erupted in Denmark (Glenthøj 2013: 75–76).

With time, Frederik became increasingly more conservative. With the political developments in Denmark and abroad, he became more sceptical about the freedom of the press, and so did his public prosecutor general Christian Colbiørnsen (Blandhol 2014: 290). The freedom of the press became a pressing issue on the public agenda in the 1790s, among other things because the legislation on the subject was somewhat unclear (Rian 2014: 183). Two writers in particular conflicted with the authorities on accord of their publications. With their at times pungent satire directed towards the absolute monarchy, the author Peter Andreas Heiberg (1758-1841) and the poet, journalist and later geographer Malthe Conrad Bruun (1775-1826) repeatedly fell out with the authorities.

In 1790, Heiberg was charged and arrested for a song satirising the nobility and the monarchy and was fined 200 rixdollar (Blandhol 2014: 283; Fjord Jensen et al. 1983: 478; Pedersen et al. 2007: 622–623). Two weeks after the conviction of Heiberg, the Rescript of 1790 was published. It was written by Colbiørnsen and stated that good and enlightened men should be able to express their opinion publicly so that the king could be guided by it. There were, however, no alterations in the legislation on the freedom of the press, and the rescript did nothing to remedy the vagueness surrounding the limits of the freedom of the press. What remained was unclear legislation, where the authorities had a wide legal basis for convicting instances of public expression, leaving the citizens in doubt as to the restrictions for their expressions (Blandhol 2014: 284).

In 1795, Bruun published the first instalment of his serial *Jerusalems Skomagers Rejse til Maanen* [The Shoemaker of Jerusalem's Journey to the Moon]. His previous project *Vækkeren* [The Awakener] had shortly prior led to a conviction for inciting revolt and publication had been stopped (Bredal 2011: 79). The new publication was therefore promoted as a fictitious travel account. The eponymous shoemaker travels the countries on the moon and arrives to the country Adina (an anagram for Dania, Latin for Denmark) and its capital Anifah (an anagram for Hafnia, Latin for Copenhagen). Here he engages in discussions with the citizens, who voice critique of the country's absolutist form of government and its arbitrary laws on

freedom of the press. He also encounters the future king of Adina, who appears to have a striking resemblance to crown prince Frederik. The analogy is highly transparent, and after the publication of only three instalments, Bruun's series was taken to court. Bruun was eventually acquitted on the ground that a story taking place on the moon can only be a product of the imagination (Bredal 2011: 82–84; Holm 1888: 119). According to historian Edvard Holm's account of the events, the case of *Jerusalems Skomagers Rejse til Maanen* demonstrates "how ferociously you under the current laws could attack the monarchical government in general, and what latitude you had for saying the most exorbitant things about the Danish-Norwegian government, as long as you did so under a feigned mask, even though this was very transparent" (Holm 1888: 150).[23] The judgement over *Jerusalems Skomagers Rejse til Maanen* shows how it in 1795 was possible to use literary allegory to circumvent censorship. Bruun subsequently published more critical satires, which tried the limits of the freedom of the press. In these, he among other things exposed the aristocracy and voiced his thoughts on tyranny and the arbitrariness of the laws on the freedom of the press. These works had more severe consequences for Bruun than *Jerusalems Skomagers Rejse til Maanen* as they led to summons for lese-majesty and drove him into exile (Bredal 2011: 102, 139–140, 153; Fjord Jensen et al. 1983: 482).

In 1797, the debate on the freedom of the press really took off (Blandhol 2014: 280). At the heart of the debate was the freedom to criticise the politics of the absolute monarchy, the official religion of the state and the public government officers' exercise of authority (Blandhol 2014: 281). A new decree for the freedom of the press was put into force September 27th 1799, which tightened the freedom of the press and significantly intensified the punishments for infringement (Blandhol 2014: 296). While the order encouraged "upright and enlightened men" ("Trykkefrihedsforordningen af 1799" cited in Blandhol 2014: 297)[24] to publicly express their thoughts on the ways in which the legislation and organisation of the country might be improved, it dealt severely with critique directed towards the form of

[23] "hvor glubsk man efter de gjældende Love kunde angribe den monarkiske Regering i Almindelighed, og hvilket Spillerum man havde til at sige de blodigste Ting om den dansk-norske Styrelse, naar man blot gjorde det under en paataget Maske, selv om denne var nok saa gjennemskuelig"

[24] "redelige og oplyste Mænd"

government. The decree prescribed capital punishment for calls for constitutional changes, banishment for life for criticising the constitution or government, banishment for ten years for criticising the monarchical form of government in general and up to two years of imprisonment for improper criticism of governmental conditions or the decisions made by government (Blandhol 2014: 297). Censorship was introduced against authors, who had previously been convicted by the law of the freedom of the press (Pedersen et al. 2007: 625–626), and allegory and similar strategies were prohibited. The new decree stated that "In case the culpable or insulting in a piece of writing is couched in allegory or irony, of which, however, the malicious intent is unmistakable, then the writer must be subject to the same punishment as if he had expressed himself plainly and without pretence" ("Forordning som nærmere forklarer og bestemmer Trykkefrihedens Grændser" cited in Viken 2011).[25] The new decree affected Heiberg and Bruun considerably. They were both banished from the country retrospectively in December 1799 and December 1800, respectively, and neither of them returned to Denmark (Bredal 2011: 179–184). The result of the decree of the freedom of the press was widespread self-censorship (Glenthøj 2013: 77). According to historian Harald Jørgensen, the decree led to an instant paralysis of the previously lively public debate, and within a few years, it disappeared altogether (Blandhol 2014: 305). By 1810, censorship-like conditions prevailed anew (Glenthøj 2013: 78). The decree effectively terminated the debate on freedom of the press until revolutions again shook Europe in the 1830s (Blandhol 2014: 306).

The Danish absolute monarchy thus faced a number of challenges during the late eighteenth century, which revealed some weaknesses of the system. The appropriation of power from varying de facto rulers showcased the incapability of the actual regent. Enlightenment ideas collided with the practices of the absolute monarchy, and there were more or less successful attempts at reconciling Enlightenment ideas with the Danish form of government, to which the developments regarding freedom of the press serve as an example. As in the rest of

[25] "Dersom det strafværdige eller fornærmende i et Skrift er indklædet i Allegorie eller Ironie, hvoraf dog Meningen og den onde Hensigt er umiskiendelig, da skal Forfatteren dømmes skyldig til samme Straf, som om han havde udtrykket sig ligefrem og uden Forstillelse"

Europe, the Danish absolute monarchy found itself in a crisis of legitimisation (Horstbøll 1987: 47).

Legitimisation of absolutism

The crisis of legitimatisation had its roots in the unfavourable reputation eighteenth-century Denmark had of being a despotic reign. This reputation originated from Robert Molesworth's account of his journey in Denmark entitled *An Account of Denmark as it was in 1692* (1694). Published in English, French, Dutch and German – with reprints in English and French in the first half of the eighteenth century – his travel account gained considerable popularity across Europe for a long time. As the dominant description of Denmark in the period, Molesworth's interpretation of Denmark as an unfree antithesis to England took a firm grip in Europe and led to a common understanding of Denmark as a despotic regime. The foundation for Molesworth's casting of Denmark as the image of complete lack of liberty was its absolutist formation, which he regarded as entirely irreconcilable with civil liberty. For Molesworth, the institution of absolutism was a cession of liberty, and he found it very disconcerting that the Assembly of the Estates, which he termed the "parliament", had surrendered their supremacy of their own free will. Molesworth understood this as a relinquishing of rights and public liberty and as condoning a yoke of slavery (Horstbøll 2003: 158–161; Nevers 2011: 160–161). The negative account of Denmark prompted a reinterpretation from within the country of its absolutist monarchy in order to counter the claims of despotism. This was done by reconsidering and reconceptualising the terms of the absolutist constitution and the circumstances of its institution. The following sections will outline some of the main positions of interpretation of the terms of absolutism, which provided the foundation for discussing the monarchy in the 1790s and onwards.

The Royal Law as social contract

Danish absolutism was instituted by a coup d'état in 1660. Denmark had suffered a severe defeat to Sweden, and the Assembly of the Estates gathered to reorganise the finances of the state. The war and

subsequent crisis had led to questioning of the privileges and rights of the nobility, and demands of rights were rising from the citizens of Copenhagen. The sovereignty of the state posed an acute political problem. The king, Frederik III (1609-1670, reign 1648-1670), used the political situation to enter into an agreement with the Assembly of the Estates, in which the Assembly of the Estates delegated the absolute power to the king, thereby excluding the nobility from power (Horstbøll 1988: 6).

The constitutional document, *Lex Regia* (Royal Law), was written in 1665 by Peder Schumacher (later ennobled as Griffenfeld), who was inspired by Hugo Grotius and the tradition of natural law. The law draws legitimisation in natural law and stresses that the Assembly of the Estates transferred the power to the king of its own free will. Thus, in the law's rendering of the institution of absolutism, it is the people who entrusted the king with undivided sovereignty. The king, then, is only subject to God. Besides establishing the order of succession, the Royal Law only imposes three restrictions on the king's power. These are that the king is bound by the Augsburg Confession (which implies he must be protestant), he cannot cede parts of the realm and he cannot alter the Royal Law. Apart from that, formally, the absolutist kings were free to do as they pleased (Glenthøj 2013: 68; Horstbøll 1988: 6; Horstbøll and Østergård 1989: 3; Nevers 2011: 157–158).

By the beginning of absolutism, the notion of the king reigning by the grace of God was prevalent, and the theocratic argument prevails in the official documents of the period. Traditionally, the theocratic legitimisation of the absolutist rule is held to belong to the mid seventeenth century and to have been gradually succeeded by contract theory. However, newer historiography claims these two arguments to have existed parallelly (Glenthøj 2013: 70; Nevers 2011: 158).

Contract theory became a principal concept for understanding the state in eighteenth-century Denmark (Tine Damsholt 2000: 80). Within this conceptual framework, the 1660 institution of absolutism could be construed as a social pact in which the people had consigned the power to the king, who in return had committed to serve the interests of the people (Seip 1958: 407). The concept of contract poses the people and the king in a particular position regarding their mutual obligations. The regent is bound to ensure the common good through legislation and government, and the people commit to observe their part in the pact and put aside their own interests if required by the

common good (Tine Damsholt 2000: 88). In 1790, Niels Ditlev Riegels expressed the relationship between king and people as follows: "when the absolute power was transferred by the people to Frederik III, it did not happen without conditions. Yes, the first absolute monarch never forgot that he, in the contract on the absolute monarchy, was the one part and the people the other" (Riegels cited in Holm 1888: 20).[26]

In the Danish tradition, the notion of a social pact was first imported from Samuel Pufendorf's theory of the double social pact. In *De jure Naturæ et Gentium* (1672), Pufendorf describes how an initial social pact marked a secession from the natural state, while a second consisted in the transfer of supremacy to the king (Tine Damsholt 2000: 80). Pufendorf's idea of social contract was pursued further by Ludvig Holberg, whose work ranks as the most important piece of political philosophy within the natural law tradition in Denmark (Nevers 2011: 158). According to Holberg, the absolute rule gained legitimacy through the king's securing of the common good (Horstbøll and Østergård 1989: 4). Around the middle of the eighteenth century, a shift occurred in the understanding of the social contract. The forming of the pact was no longer regarded as an actual historical event, but as an abstract idea.[27] The reinterpretation of the contract from historical event to an idea of reason implied a transfer of emphasis from the contract to the people as the source of sovereignty (Tine Damsholt 2000: 84).

Understanding the terms of absolutism as a social contract between the king and people implies this transfer of sovereignty to the people. As the people has transferred the power to the king through a contract, the people can be understood as the actual sovereign (Glenthøj 2013: 73). The theory of the sovereignty of the people thus legitimises absolutism by stating that the king's exercise of power is legitimate only insofar as he has received the power from the people (Seip 1958: 407). The jurist Johan Frederik Vilhelm Schlegel pinpointed the notion: "If the … monarchical form of government [shall] be legal … then its origin must be conceived in the way that the

[26] "da Enevoldsmagten af Folket blev overdraget tredje Frederik, skete det ikke uden paa Vilkaar. Ja, den første Enevoldsherre glemte aldrig, at han i Kontrakten om Enevælden var den ene Part og Folket den anden"

[27] This development of thought was underway before Kant and Rousseau addressed the subject (Seip 1958: 411).

people has transferred the highest power … to one only by a union of submission (*pactum subjectionis*)" (Schlegel cited in Seip 1958: 410, omissions and square brackets in original).[28] By the late eighteenth century, it had become the reigning consensus that the monarchy was of popular origin. The relationship between king and people was therefore understood as equal and mutual (Holm 1888: 20).

Montesquieu and defence against despotism

While the Danish internal perception of the absolutist rule in the second half of the eighteenth century was of king and people being equal, with the people as the source of sovereignty, it was not the case with the rest of Europe's image of Denmark. Denmark's reputation as a despotic monarchy, which had been established with Molesworth, was enhanced by the publication of Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des loix* in 1748. From the mid-eighteenth century, the defence of Danish monarchy was therefore based on distinguishing it from despotism (Seip 1958: 416). As Jeppe Nevers has pointed out: "one can indeed argue that the reception of Montesquieu's work was a focal point in the transformation of Danish monarchism from the 1750s onwards" (Nevers 2011: 159). *De l'esprit des loix* influenced European political theory substantially by shifting some of the basic concepts. Widely read, particularly Montesquieu's definition of despotic rule posed a menace to Denmark's political reputation, as the Danish reign appeared as despotic from his writings (Tine Damsholt 2000: 83; Nevers 2011: 159; Seip 1958: 416).

Montesquieu operates with a tripartite typology for defining governments. The three types of rule are republican, monarchical and despotic government. Montesquieu defines republican government as a rule in which the people possess the sovereign power. Republican government has two subtypes, democratic and aristocratic government. In the democratic government, the people as a whole hold the ruling power, while in the aristocratic government only some of the people control the power. Both monarchical and despotic governments have one single person in charge, and the distinction between them amount to whether or not the ruler is subject to a body

[28] "Dersom den … monarkiske Statsform [skal] være lovmæssig … saa maa dens Oprindelse forestilles saaledes, at Folket har overdraget den høiste Magt … til een eneste ved et Underkastelses-Forbund (*pactum subjectionis*)"

of laws. If the ruler is restricted by laws, the government is monarchical, but if the ruler is free to exercise their power as they please, then the government is despotic (Montesquieu 1989: 10). Montesquieu associates a certain principle to each of the types of government. By the principle of the type of government Montesquieu means what "makes it act" (Montesquieu 1989: 21). The principle of republicanism is civic virtue and love of the republic, the principle of monarchism is honour, and the principle of despotism is fear (Montesquieu 1989: 22–29).

Montesquieu's somewhat vague distinction between monarchical and despotic rule had a detrimental potential with regard to the perception of the Danish state. As the Danish king formally reigned above the law, within Montesquieu's typology he could be framed as a despot. But as Denmark in practice was governed by a solid body of laws, the major reason for interpreting Denmark as despotic was the absence of a strong aristocracy, which Montesquieu saw as essential for a monarchy (Nevers 2011: 160). In the 1760s, however, Denmark's reputation had suffered so severely that it became imperative to refute the image of Denmark as despotic and assert the compatibility of civic virtue and patriotism with monarchy (Tine Damsholt 2000: 83–84). In such an attempt, King Frederik V (1723-1766, reign 1746-1766) engaged a number of Swiss, republican historians to augment the image of Denmark's political condition.

The Swiss historians André Roger, Paul-Henry Mallet and Elie-Salomon-Francois Reverdil were at the heart of the discussion about the Danish form of government from the mid-eighteenth century onwards (Horstbøll 2003: 155). They all illuminate the distinction between monarchical and despotic rule by juxtaposing the Danish government with the despotic regimes of the East. In their comparison, they emphasise the mildness and adherence to laws of the Danish rule, which supports its status as a benign monarchy and not a despotic regime (Nevers 2011: 162). For instance, in Roger's Montesquieu inspired exposition, he defines a monarch as subject to the laws of the country, while the despot is raised above the law and owns the people and country. The rulers of the Orient, Roger conceives of a despots, because they rule according to their own will with no regard to right and wrong (Horstbøll 2003: 156–157). He states:

> The countries which are in greatest danger of their absolute power being abused are those in which the regent himself decides and judges according to the information he receives, which is never sufficient when he himself has to seek it out, and almost always depends on a sudden idea when he does not have a people whose duty and office it is to constantly remind him of the laws of the country (Roger cited in Horstbøll 2003: 156).[29]

It appears from this quotation that a special relationship exists between the monarch and the people, in which the monarch depends on the people to lead him. The mutual relationship between king and people is repeated in Reverdil's Machiavellian notion of the king as the people's prince. As Machiavelli, Reverdil thought a king should do well if he founded his power on the people rather than nobles. With this foundation, the legitimacy of the rule comes to depend on the king's abilities to govern in accordance with the common good. Is he not able to do so, or should he deviate from lawful to arbitrary exercise of power, he becomes a despot.

The most essential component in the writings of the Swiss historians is the notion of an original Nordic peasants' freedom (Nevers 2011: 162), which was first formulated in Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des loix* (Martinsen 2012b: 111). This notion finds expression in the writings of Mallet in particular, in which he claims the original Nordic form of government to be republican. When describing the ancient Nordic government, Mallet referred to ninth century Iceland, which he conceived of as a law based republic. In the Icelandic republic, the freeholders met with the king on assemblies where the business of the realm was decided on together. The assemblies were legislative and elected the *lagmand*, "lawman", whose function is correspondent to that of the king in the Danish assemblies. Mallet's original Nordic government thus consisted of a compound of monarchy and democracy (Horstbøll 2003: 167–168).

In this way, the Swiss historians advanced the idea of the Danish absolute monarchy as resting on a popular foundation. They, also, accepted the contract theoretical legitimisation of absolutism by

[29] "De Lande, som allermeest staae Fare for at den absolute Magt i dem kan misbuges, ere de hvor Regenten selv personlig afgiör og dömmer efter de Oplysninger han faaer, hvilke aldrig ere tilstrækkelige naar han selv skal söge dem, og kommer næsten altid an paa et Indfald, naar han ikke haver Folk hvis Pligt og Embede det er at före ham bestandigen Landets Love i Erindring"

interpreting 1660 as an entering into an alliance between king and people. They furthermore legitimised the Danish absolute monarchy by turning to history and establishing continuity between the present monarchy and its ancient roots, which were presented as basically republican (Horstbøll 2003: 175).

Another key figure in the reaction to Montesquieu was the professor of politics and court official Jens Schielderup Sneedorff. He is considered the foremost defender of monarchical theory after Holberg and was central for the interpretation of Montesquieu's thoughts in Denmark. His book *Om den borgerlige Regiering* [On Civic Government] from 1757 echoes the title of John Locke's second treatise on government, but primarily relates to Montesquieu. While he was inspired by Montesquieu to a certain extent, Sneedorff disagreed with him with regard to republican government. According to Sneedorff, republic government was not as efficient a form of government as monarchy. With basis in natural law, Sneedorff argued that the virtues required in a republic could only exist in the natural state. The republic, therefore, was an unstable construction, as it was built on futile principles (Nevers 2011: 163–164).

Sneedorff combined Montesquieu's principles of honour and civic virtue with the key concepts from Pufendorf's theory of natural law about justice and the common good. Where Montesquieu considered honour an aristocratic virtue connecting king and nobility and associated civic virtue with the republic, Sneedorff understood civic virtue as an important feature of monarchy, which united the king and the people (Horstbøll and Østergård 1989: 4; Nevers 2011: 164). Sneedorff writes: "The civic virtue… consists on the Monarch's side in love to the people, and on the people's side in love to the monarch, but both must be founded in love to the common" (Sneedorff cited in Horstbøll and Østergård 1989: 4).[30] Sneedorff used the concept of civic virtue to characterise the relationship between king and people and thereby transformed a republican concept into a monarchical context. But, as historian Jeppe Nevers has pointed out, his defence of monarchy also provided a means for undermining it:

[30] "Den borgerlige dyd… bestaaer paa Monarkens Side i Kierlighed til Folket, og paa Folkets Side i Kierlighed til Monarken, men begge maae være grundede i Kierlighed til det Almindelige"

> Even though Sneedorff did not think beyond the existing form of government and indeed sought to build a theory for its defence, he built it on a set of principles and concepts that would slowly but irreversibly contribute to the fall of the absolutist monarchy. […] the idea of enlightened monarchy was gradually transformed into a far more radical theory that made public opinion a form of representative institution (Nevers 2011: 165).

Sneedorff dismissed Mallet's idea of ancient Iceland as a republic and the ancient form of government as a compound of democracy and monarchy. He did, however, accept and develop the notion of a consultative assembly being part of the absolute monarchy. Sneedorff regarded the entire people as the king's advisors and considered this liaison the connection between ancient monarchy with its consultative assembly and the contemporary absolute monarchy with its consultative opinion. Sneedorff's idea of the whole people as advisors to the king became a precursor to the theory of opinion, which we will turn to shortly. In the end, it was theorisations of monarchy in line with Mallet's which turned out to be predominant in the Danish historiography of the eighteenth century (Horstbøll 2003: 171–172).

Mallet's account of the ancient Nordic monarchy as a republican constellation reappeared in Danish historical writings in the 1770s and 1780s, when Christian VII's government and the years of Struensee's administration had undermined the legitimacy of Sneedorff's theories and other resembling his (Horstbøll 2003: 173). The myth of an ancient freedom took on a new political function in these two decades (Nevers 2011: 163). By order from the court, Peter Frederik Suhm wrote *Danmarks, Norges og Holstens Historie udi tvende Udtog* [The History of Denmark, Norway and Holstein in Two Excerpts] in the 1770s in which he described an ancient peasants' freedom, which had been lost, but could be restored (Nevers 2011: 162–163). Suhm conceived his theory of ancient peasants' freedom in *Historien af den danske Agerdyrkning og Landvæsen* [The History of Danish Agriculture and Farming] from 1771 and finished it in 1776. The key point was that sovereignty was founded in the popular assemblies, which could not issue decrees without the consent of the peasantry (*almue*), which in Suhm's writings implied the peasants to be independent (Horstbøll 2003: 174).

The essence of the notion of the ancient peasants' freedom, which came to be described in various way, was that the ancient Nordic monarchy was a proto-parliamentarian institution where the king and the peasants were equal. The people were free and had political influence. They had the right to speak and vote at the thing *(ting*) – the ancient pendant to a parliament – and elected the kings. The myth of the ancient peasant's freedom describes how the freedom of the people and the close bond between king and people with time became corrupted by the clergy and nobility until king and people united anew in 1660 (Martinsen 2012b: 110–113; Seip 1958: 452–453). The theory of the original peasants' freedom was later developed and elaborated by Tyge Rothe in *Nordens Statsforfatning før Lehnstiden* [The Nordic Constitution before the Age of Aristocracy] (Horstbøll 1987: 49; Nevers 2011: 163). Here, he contends that in "the North as the land of the people's freedom [*Folkefriehedens Land*] […] one finds in the Nordic people the real democracy, and this was so honest that the kings, no matter how proud and mighty, limited their power without loss of honour" (Rothe cited in Nevers 2011: 163, square brackets in original).[31] The ancient constitution was not simply inclusive of the people, the monarchy comprises the true democracy. Colbiørnsen described the ancient peasants' freedom with more precision regarding temporal delimitation:

> In antiquity, Denmark's peasants were a free people. The plots of the land were divided among its burghers; these had complete proprietary right, were free burghers and subject to no one except the laws and the highest power of the state.
>
> During the time of the first Valdemars, the yoke of aristocracy began to appear. Then the estate of commoners fell (says the enlightened Schytte), and dragged down the royal powers with it (Colbiørnsen cited in Tine Damsholt 2000: 95).[32]

[31] "Man finder hos Nordens Folk det virkelige Demokratie, og samme saa hæderligt, at Kongerne, hvor stolte og hvor overmægtige de end kunne være, dog uden Æres Tab lode deres Vælde indskrænke ved samme" (Rothe cited in Horstbøll 2003: 172)

[32] "I Old-Tiden vare Danmarks Bønder et frit Folk. Landets Jorder vare uddeelte i Lodder blandt dets Beboere; disse havde Fuldkommen Eiendoms Ret, vare frie Borgere, og ingen, uden Lovene og Statens øverste Magt, undergivne. | Under de første Valdemarers Tid begyndte Lehns-Aaget først at indsnige sig. Da faldt Borgerstanden (siger den oplyste Schytte), og i Faldet rev den Kongelige Myndighed med sig til Jorden"

Colbiørnsen places the transition from popular freedom to incipient aristocratic dominance at the time of Valdemar the Great and Valdemar the Victorious. Freedom and parliamentarism is thus associated with antiquity, while aristocratic power and decrease in popular freedom are initiated by the time of Valdemar the Great.

The idea of an original peasants' freedom was not just prevalent in the eighteenth century, but continued to influence the Danish political debate throughout the nineteenth century (Glenthøj 2013: 73).

Opinion-led absolute monarchy

The intersection between the old absolute monarchy and new ideas about republican freedom provided the foundation for a theorisation of the Danish monarchy, which has later been termed the theory of opinion-led absolute monarchy. The term was coined by Seip in his 1958 article "Teorien om det opinionsstyrte enevelde" [The Theory on the Opinion-led Absolute Monarchy]. The word 'opinion' is not used in the eighteenth-century theorisations of monarchy, but other equivalent designations abound (Seip 1958: 413, 456–457). Opinion-led absolute monarchy is a transitional form between absolute and constitutional monarchy, which combines the two types of government. This theoretical approximation of opinion and representation, Seip observes, can enlighten the development towards democracy (Seip 1958: 442). According to Seip, the fully developed theory on opinion-led absolute monarchy appears publicly after 1780 and in its concise form after 1790 (Seip 1958: 426). The theory of opinion-led absolute monarchy has been one of the prevalent theories in Danish historiography until today.

The designation opinion-led absolute monarchy comprises a construction in which the absolute monarch is led by public opinion and where the king's decisions therefore can be perceived of as an expression of the will of the people (Tine Damsholt 2000: 83). Colbiørnsen pinpointed this notion: ""The government", defined as "the power transferred [to the king] by the people", is "the point of unification of the common will"" (Colbiørnsen cited in Seip 1958: 412,

square brackets in original).[33] The common will is at the heart of this theoretical understanding of monarchy, and two main interpretations of the will of the people prevailed at the time of Colbiørnsen and the theorisation of absolutism. One is the common will as an abstract ideal. This is the idea that the common will is based on political rights, so by acquainting himself with what is right, the king will know the common will. The will of the people can thus be known through rational thinking, which implies that the king acts with legitimacy as long as he acts according to reason (Seip 1958: 412). Theis interpretation of the common will, in line with Enlightenment thought, is found in the writings of Schlegel, for instance, who states that a king "can give laws which express the (reasonable, just) will of the people better than those the people could have given itself, had they been gathered, when the power brokers by the law-making continuously ask themselves: what ought the people to want? and not what the people *really* wants?" (Schlegel cited in Seip 1958: 412).[34] The other interpretation of the common will is as empirical, concrete expressions of opinions. This could for instance be statements in the newspapers, which the king could use as an indicator of the opinion of the people (Seip 1958: 413).

Seip has identified two motives underlying the theory of opinion-led absolute monarchy. The first is a defence of the established monarchy. Its technique consists in incorporating positively charged concepts in its discourse such as popular sovereignty, common will, popular opinion, equality, civil liberty, republicanism, and so on. The strategy reveals itself when writers address the discrepancy between ideal and reality as a distance in time. The theory is framed as an objective, a state that the country has not reached yet because of imperfections in the contemporary time. In this account, the theory is only fully valid when this final stage is reached. The other motive is what Seip terms *incantation*.[35] This consists in an urging of the government officials to act in accordance with the ideal. For instance, incantation can be practiced by pointing out or praising state of

[33] "«Regjeringen», definert som «den [Kongen] af Folket overdragne Magt», er «den almindelige Villies Foreningspunkt»"

[34] "kan give Love som udtrykke Folkets (fornuftige, retfærdige) Villie bedre, end de som Folket selv, dersom det havde været forsamlet, vilde have givet sig, naar de Magthavende nemlig ved Lovgivningen bestandig spørge dem selv: hvad bør Folket ville? og ikke, hvad Folket v i r k e l i g vil?"

[35] "*besvergelse*"

affairs, which are not entirely concurrent with reality, but is an articulation of the state the speaker wishes society to obtain (Seip 1958: 457).

The theory on opinion-led absolute monarchy can be perceived as a version of the broader theory of a democratic or popular absolute monarchy. Gradually, proving the monarchy not to be despotic was not enough, it had to be democratic as well. Democratic in this sense means that the monarchy was in line with the common will or opinion. To this end, the terms 'democratic' and 'republican' were employed (Seip 1958: 416–417). Democratic absolute monarchy designates a reign ruling in accordance with the good of the people – in this connection the underprivileged estates – but not necessarily by articulated wishes from the people. In this theorisation, the people are positioned in clear opposition to the privileged aristocracy. The democratic absolute monarchy thus consists in an alliance between king and people bypassing the aristocracy; therefore the theory is also known as the anti-aristocratic monarchy (Seip 1958: 444–445). It should be mentioned here that the 'aristocracy' for the Copenhagen intellectuals at this time was more of a counter-image extracted from history than a social category (Horstbøll 1987: 51). Seip estimates the theory of the democratic or anti-aristocratic absolute monarchy to probably have been the most prevalent theorisation in the last three decades of the eighteenth century.

Schlegel was one of the theorists who operated with the idea of democratic absolute monarchy as the most desirable form of government. In lectures on constitutional law and textbook from around 1800, he presented his ideal form of government: "the monarchical, conducted by true democratic principles" (Schlegel cited in Seip 1958: 417).[36] To Schlegel, democratic means that the king issues laws, which expresses the will of the people. Schlegel found democracy under ideal circumstances to be the prime form of government (Glenthøj 2013: 74–75; Seip 1958: 417). But until the people would reach a higher level of enlightenment, he thought monarchy preferable on the ground that the monarchical form of government could ensure a more democratic spirit than a truly democratic government would be able to (Seip 1958: 417). He defends his interpretation of democracy in government in the following way:

[36] "den monarkiske, ført efter ægte demokratiske Grundsætninger"

"Lack of the burghers' participation in the legislative power, which should actually comprise the advantage of the democratic form of government, will not be missed when the laws always are composed such as the people should or *at least could* have given them to itself" (Schlegel cited in Seip 1958: 417).[37] As the democratic facets of the monarchy thus depend on the common will, Schlegel considers free formation of public opinion of vital importance. Hereby he inscribes himself in a broad tendency of the political theory of the time for stressing freedom of speech as an essential feature of the opinion-led absolute monarchy (Seip 1958: 418).

A comparable argument exists in favour of construing absolute monarchy as a republican institution. The official and writer August Hennings contended that true republicanism is only achievable under a monarchical form of government. In a monarchy, the monarch rules the people, but is himself ruled by the people, and this subordination of the ruler, Hennings finds, can only exist in a monarchy. As the most important feature of this institution, Hennings emphasises publicity, and it becomes evident that Henning's republican monarchy is a variant of the opinions-led absolute monarchy (Seip 1958: 418).

The reception of republican ideas thus did not result so much in discussions for or against monarchical or republican forms of government. Instead, positively charged terms such as democracy and republican were incorporated in the defensive theorisations of the absolute monarchy. As Seip observes: "The choice between opinion-led government and representative government appeared consequently as a choice between two means to reach the same end, not between two disparate principles of government" (Seip 1958: 438).[38] As we have seen, a prevalent understanding was that opinion-led government was nearer to true democracy than representative government, a notion based on the idea that public opinion must be closer than the opinion of representatives to the will of the people. This distinction came at the centre of the constitutional debates in the first half of the nineteenth century, when opinion appeared as a power of the state in

[37] "Mangel af Borgernes Deeltagelse i den lovgivende Magt der egentlig skulde udgjøre den demokratiske Statsforms Fortrin, vil ikke savnes, naar Lovene stedse affattes saaledes som Folket burde *eller idet mindste kunne* have givet sig dem"

[38] "Valget mellom opinionsstyre og representasjonsstyre fremstod altså som et valg mellom to midler til samme mål, ikke mellom to vesensforskjellige styringsprinsipper."

line with or superior to the king and the National Assembly (Seip 1958: 438–439).

Danish monarchy in the 1790s

The above has outlined some ways in which the notion of opinion-led absolute monarchy reconciled absolutism with ideas about popular sovereignty and civil freedom. In the 1790s, however, the discrepancy between theory and reality became increasingly difficult to disregard. The discourse on opinion-led absolute monarchy began to comprise calls for the state officials to act according to the ideal and thereby preclude the necessity for reform or revolution (Tine Damsholt 2000: 87). During the 1790s, more demands for free constitution emerged. From a younger and more radical section of society appeared a strong desire for a properly democratic constitution. It has, however, been observed by the historian Edvard Holm that this fraction did not have clear ideas about which type of representation they required. They neither found ideal models in the English Parliament nor in the ancient Nordic monarchy, and the interest for the French constitution of 1791 soon diminished (Glenthøj 2013: 76; Seip 1958: 440). Except for this radical movement, Seip estimates that the idea of opinion-led absolute monarchy in unison with similar and diverging theories have been so embedded in the collective consciousness that representation has not occurred as the only desirable form of government (Seip 1958: 440). Everything considered, it appears that the political theorisation of opinion in the latter half of the eighteenth century primarily centred round the anti-aristocratic stance and ideas on equality, while the question of absolute in opposition to republican government was considered to be of secondary concern (Seip 1958: 460).

The theory of opinion-led absolute monarchy endures into the following century, in which it in particular takes on an important part relating to the institution of the assemblies of the estates in the 1830s (Seip 1958: 426, 440). For instance, the philosopher Frederik Christian Sibbern's political philosophy have strong roots in the political theory of the 1780s and 1790s. In a defence for the plan to institute the assemblies of the estates from 1832, he writes: "True and actual *monarchy and* true and solid *republican constitution seems to me to be able to coexist so well* that one in many respects well could be

an excellent groundwork for the other" (Sibbern cited in Seip 1958: 441).[39] To Sibbern, the new assemblies of the estates were an extension of the old monarchy. His writings demonstrates how the theory on opinion-led absolute monarchy was employed to facilitate the transition from absolute monarchy to a constitution with the assemblies (*stænderforfatning*) by reconciling ideas about the foundation of political power and the emotional implications of terms as 'people' and 'king' with a representative institution (Seip 1958: 442). In this way, the theory on opinion-led absolute monarchy came to both legitimise absolutism and later to facilitate the transition from absolute to constitutional monarchy.

Literary republicanism in Sander's *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis*

In the following, it will be argued that the reflections on the legitimisation of the Danish monarchy – as outlined in the previous section – not only unfolded in political theory, but also in literature. A prime example of this is Denmark's first national historical drama (see e.g. Dumreicher, 1965: 13), Sander's[40] tragedy *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis*,[41] which, it is my contention, uses medievalism to reconcile

[39] "Sandt og egentligt *Monarchie og* sand og solid *republicansk Forfatning synes mig saa godt at kunne bestaae sammen*, at hiint i mange Forhold vel turde være en ypperlig Grundvold for denne"

[40] Sander (1756-1819) was a Holsteiner born in Itzehoe, who came to Copenhagen as private tutor in 1784. In 1789 he was engaged as first clerk at the secretariat at the Mortgage Credit Association Direction (*Kreditkassedirektionens sekretariat*), and two years later he was employed as secretary at the General Road Commission (*General-Vejkommissionen*). From 1800 onwards, he was a teacher with title of professor in pedagogic, methodology and German at the Pedagogical College of Education, and from 1811, he was lecturer at Copenhagen University (Erslew 1853: Tredje Bind S-Ø:9; Rønning 1900: 596–598).

[41] *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis* premiered on January 31st 1797 at the Royal Danish Theatre and was performed six times that year, two times in 1798 and two times in 1799. In total, the play was staged 37 times at the Royal Danish Theatre in the period 1797-1834 and eight times at other theatres in the period 1806-1905 (N. Jensen 2018). The drama was published in print in two versions shortly after the premiere: a first version in 1798 and a second version in 1799, which reflects the changes, Sander made to the fifth act after the first performances (Sander 1799: 121). In addition to these changes, a striking difference between the first two editions is found in the list of cast. In the first version, King Valdemar Atterdag stands at the top of the list and makes a brief appearance at the very end of the play. In the second edition, the role of King Valdemar is removed. Sander also published the play in his own German translation in 1798, and finally in a third, altered edition in 1816.

republican ideas with the Danish monarchical form of government. The play takes place towards the end of the Interregnum, which had begun when King Christopher II (1276-1332, reign 1320-1326 and 1329-1332) died in 1332 with the entire country, except Skanderborg Castle, pledged to the Swedish-Norwegian king and different counts. Of importance here is Count Gerhard III of Holstein-Rendsburg,[42] who was the pledgee of Jutland and Funen. King Christopher left behind him two sons; Otto and Valdemar. Otto, the eldest, tried to recover Denmark, but was captured by Count Gerhard in 1334 and was imprisoned until 1341. The Interregnum ended when Niels Ebbesen rebelled and killed Count Gerhard in the beginning of April 1340.[43] Niels Ebbesen himself was killed in battle against Gerhard's sons on November 2nd the same year. His killing of Gerhard had, however, initiated the process that enabled Christopher's younger son Valdemar – who is later known as King Valdemar Atterdag – to ascend to the throne after Otto had renounced his claims to it (Dzeko, Andersen and Engelbrecht 2011).

In the play, we follow Niels Ebbesen in his despair about the state of the country and the lack of resistance against Gerhard. Niels Ebbesen is the embodiment of national devotion and patriotism. He is nationally minded and performs his every action on behalf of king and country, without regard for the personal cost. Parallel with Ebbesen's story, we witness Count Gerhard's endeavours to obtain the Danish crown. Gerhard is framed as a tyrant and a despotic ruler, who believes only God to be above him (Sander 1798: 197). Gerhard is supported by the pragmatic Jutlandic nobleman Stig Andersen, who has changed sides because of the simple conviction that capitulation to the ascendency will spare the greatest numbers of Danish lives. Gerhard and Stig Andersen with him comprise an antithesis to Niels Ebbesen. While Niels Ebbesen is burning with patriotism and a strong sense of justice, Gerhard and Stig are calculating and rational. Gerhard is entangled in economic discourse, and Stig Andersen's pragmatism is so prevalent that it makes him disregard all

[42] In Danish, Count Gerhard is also known as Gert or Geert, which is the name Sander uses in his play.

[43] There is another aspect to Niels Ebbesen's killing, which was consented upon by eighteenth-century historians, but downplayed in Sander's drama and other literature, namely that Niels Ebbesen had had a run-in with Gerhard earlier and therefore also had a personal interest in removing him (see e.g. Øst 1798: 14–15).

immaterial values, including national values, and adopt a cosmopolitan standing, unappreciative of Niels Ebbesen's struggle.

With the first two acts setting the scene for the encounter between Niels Ebbesen and Gerhard, one of the most central passages of the play is found in the beginning of the third act, where a Dane Court (*danehof*), takes place. The Dane Court was the medieval assembly which elected the kings (Bøgh 2012b). Here Stig Andersen and Niels Ebbesen argue in favour of Count Gerhard and Prince Valdemar respectively. Stig Andersen presents logical arguments based on the contention that the election of Gerhard will end the war and prevent further killings of Danish people. Niels Ebbesen's arguments are solely based on the loss of national identity the country will suffer if it elects Gerhard, and on the tradition for electing members of the Danish royal dynasty. The scene of the Dane Court ends with a vote, and Valdemar wins the election. When he realises that Gerhard's cause is lost and that war cannot be prevented, Stig Andersen has a change of heart and wishes to rejoin the Danish side. Niels Ebbesen forgives him on the grounds that he is convinced that Stig Andersen's heart was not with him while supporting Gerhard (Sander 1798: 223). With Valdemar elected king, Niels Ebbesen sets off to duel with Count Gerhard, who he has challenged earlier when the count declared him an outlaw. Together with a group of conspirators, Niels Ebbesen makes his way into Gerhard's castle and finds him in his bedchamber. They duel, resulting in Gerhard's death and Niels Ebbesen escaping the castle. The last act of the play takes place at Niels Ebbesen's home, where he is brought wounded back from the battleground from fighting the Germans remaining in the country. Here he dies just as he is made acquainted with the final victory of the Danes.

In the earlier cited review of the play, Baden remarks about the scene of the Dane Court: "Whether such political discussions are appropriate on a scene in the spectators' presence, could perhaps be doubted" (Baden 1798: 175).[44] Baden bases his assessment on the ground that he believes the exchange of words to bore the audience, who prefers to see action. In reply to his own question about the political and state philosophical merits of the play, he observes the following, nicely illuminating a piece of contemporary reception of the play's debate at the Dane Court:

[44] "Om saadanne politiske Discussioner ere passende paa en Skueplads, i Tilskuernes Nærværelse, kunde maaskee tvivles"

> In defending a Danish king's right to his father's throne against a mighty neighbouring prince; who, however, alone seems endowed with the talents and means, which should set back on its feet the dilapidated Danish realm. Certainly, Denmark was a hereditary realm, but is was elective monarchy as well, and although the young Valdemar, Christopher's son, had roused good hope around him, then he could by no means in neither intellect, experience nor strength hold a candle to the great Count Gerhard. When you therefore compare the reasons for his engagement as advanced by the noble Stig Andersen at the Dane Court against those which Niels Ebbesen adduces for the young prince, you seem in the first to hear an enlightened patriot, but in the last a man, who is driven by a feeling, which in our times is regarded as prejudice; in case there should not be those who believe that Ebbesen speaks as a nobleman who could not expect from Count Gerhard to be granted the privileges, which were confirmed to the nobility in Christopher II's harsh coronation charter (Baden 1798: 177).[45]

The review highlights what I find to be one of the play's finest qualities, namely that it furnishes both sides with equally valid arguments for their candidate and thereby lets the spectator or reader form their own opinion. What is particularly interesting in this passage of the review is that Baden is not convinced by Niels Ebbesen's arguments, which he rejects as prejudice. He is very sceptical about the importance of national values and call into question that they should have any resonance in the contemporary society. He therefore concludes that he personally doubts that the figure of Niels Ebbesen – however great in his own time – will be of any interest to the Danish society of 1798 (Baden 1798: 178).

[45] "I at forsvare en dansk Kongesøns Rettighed til sin Fædrenethrone imod en mægtig Naboefyrste; der dog eene syntes udrustet med alle de Talenter og Hielpemidler, der skulde sætte det forfaldne danske Rige paa Fode igien. Vel var Danmark et Arverige, men det var tillige et Valgrige, og endskiønt den unge Valdemar, Kristophers Søn, havde opvakt et godt Haab om sig, saa kunde han dog paa ingen Maade enten i Forstand, Erfaring eller Kræfter, sættes ved Siden af den store Gr. Geert. Naar man derfor sammenligner den ædle Stig Andersens i Danehoffet forebragte Grunde for dennes Antagelse, imod dem, som Niels Ebbesen anfører for den unge Prinds, synes man i den første at høre en oplyst Patriot, men i den sidste en Mand, der drives af en Følelse, som i vore Tider ansees for Fordom; ifald der ikke skulde være den, som troer, at Ebbesen taler som Adelsmand, der af Grev Geert ikke kunde vente at faae de Adelen i Kristopher den andens haarde Haandfæstning tilstaaede Privilegier befæstede"

The play was, however, very well received (see e.g. Rahbek 1797: 200), and did, as mentioned, achieve the status as Denmark's first national drama. It has much in common with the patriotic theatre of the time, but it adds a significant streak of nationalism alongside its patriotism. Neither of these concepts have a clearly settled definition, but a simple distinction is that patriotism designates popular cohesion based on shared state territory and devotion to the king, while nationalism is cohesion based on shared origin and culture. In a patriotic conception, it is the state and the king who holds together the citizens. The nationalistic conception, in contradistinction, has the people, and not the state, at the centre. Around the year 1800, Denmark was dominated by composite state patriotism (*helstatspatriotisme*), which united loyalty to and support of the king and government with shared symbols as the flag and the fleet. An illustrative example of the workings of composite state patriotism was the Law of Privileges of Natives of 1776 (*Indfødsretten af 1776*), which stipulated that people born in the realms and lands of the king had an exclusive right to government posts. As the composite state was populated by both Danish, Norwegian and German inhabitants, composite state patriotism was necessarily a-national (Rerup 1991: 326–328; Vogelius 2012: 273–274). Sander's play comprises a unique blend of nationalism and patriotism, which appears from the way in which Niels Ebbesen's national endeavours are invested in the patriotic figure of the king. Niels Ebbesen's fight is for the Danish people and for Danish culture. For instance, one of his main complaints about Gerhard's reign is that he has imposed German legal proceedings and changed the official language at the thing to German (e.g. Sander 1798: 116). Niels Ebbesen's means to recover Danish culture is to overthrow Gerhard and reinstate the Danish monarchy; that is, to bring back the hub of patriotism. In this way, the play combines patriotic devotion to the king with national sentiments.[46]

Discursive negotiation of Montesquieu's typology

A prevalent feature of the play is virtue, in particular civic virtue. The strong emphasis on virtue can be understood as renegotiating

[46] For more on nationalism in *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis* see Andreas Blödorn: *Zwischen den Sprachen. Modelle transkultureller Litteratur bei Christian Levin Sander und Adam Oehlenschläger*. Göttingen: Vandelhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004.

Montesquieu's notion that a certain principle belongs to a particular form of government. As mentioned earlier, his typology associates civic virtue and patriotism with republicanism, honour with monarchism and fear with despotism. Civic virtue consists to a great extent in reconciling the citizen's self-interest with the common good (Tine Damsholt 2000: 89). As it appears from the brief summary of the action, the play's civic virtue and patriotism are mobilised on behalf on the monarchy. By practising civic virtue and patriotism in favour of monarchy, Montesquieu's republican principle is thereby transferred to the monarchical form of government.

To begin with one of the opposite principles, Count Gerhard's reign is clearly despotic and built on fear. He is framed as an assailant (Sander 1798: 120) when he utter lines as "The fright shall temper the recklessness of the people in order to save the blood of thousands" (Sander 1798: 145)[47] and "Fear and the sword will soon return Jutland to me" (Sander 1798: 148).[48] Similarly, Niels Ebbesen explicitly states to Gerhard: "You rule only by fear" (Sander 1798: 165).[49] The second principle, honour, has only a minor presence in the drama and is most often used to devaluate Gerhard's court. Niels Ebbesen pinpoints this notion when criticising Stig Andersen: "You are willing to sell him [Gerhard] the salvation of your soul for the honour to languish in a golden cage like his other tame animals" (Sander 1798: 157–158).[50] The honour and splendour associated with the court stand in clear contrast to the frugality of the people: "all this tinsel is dearly paid, I tell you; dearly paid for with the blood of our fellow countrymen" (Sander 1798: 158).[51] Honour is, however, not consistently framed this way. When Niels Ebbesen throws down the gauntlet to Gerhard, he does so because he feels disgraced by him (Sander 1798: 167).

The way in which the concept of virtue is employed is significantly more consistent. Niels Ebbesen and his family stand as the embodiment of the good citizen as they represent civic virtue and patriotism. Like the exemplary citizens they are, the Ebbesens always put the good of the country before their own comfort. Take for instance

47 "Skrækken skal dæmpe Folkets Overmod, for at spare Tusendes Blod"
48 "Skrækken og Sværdet vil om en föje Tid give mig Jylland tilbage"
49 "Kun ved Frygt hersker I"
50 "Du vil sælge ham din Siæls Saglighed for den Ære at vansmægte i et forgyldt Buur, som hans andre tamme Dyr"
51 "al den Glimmer her er dyrt betalt, siger jeg dig; dyrt betalt med vore Landsmænds Blod"

the daughter Estrith's reaction when receiving the news of the poor state of Denmark: "When my father said: Denmark's great prince is exiled, disdained and forgotten, the fatherland is torn to pieces by foreigners, the noble Danish people is condemned to thraldom or death, then I did not think of domestic joy, then I only thought of the salvation of Denmark" (Sander 1798: 113).[52] Estrith's domestic virtue is thus juxtaposed with civic virtue, uniting the private and public spheres. Likewise, when breaking off Estrith's engagement to Stig Andersen, Niels Ebbesen says to him: "You have loved my daughter as you love our fatherland, I see that too late" (Sander 1798: 159).[53]

The play's conception of civic virtue contains an important emotional aspect, which is particularly expressed through Niels Ebbesens passionate patriotism. His concern for the wellbeing of the country is all consuming, as his wife observes: "The universal distress blackens everything before your eyes. O! I am proud to be called the noble Ebbesen's wife. Day and night your entire soul meditates the salvation of the country" (Sander 1798: 115–116).[54] It is also Niels Ebbesen's unabating patriotism which in the end leads him to risk and sacrifice his life for the country:

> *Ebbesen*. […] Yes, with Gerhard's life, I will bring my country a great sacrifice.
>
> *Sören Frost*. And yourself fall as a sacrifice to the fatherland? Ebbesen! Ebbesen! I never shuddered at acts of manhood! – but daredevilry is not heroism.
>
> *Ebbesen*. What do you call daredevilry? Exactly because my enemy slumbers safely among his crowd, because he never expects such an unheard-of attack; exactly therefore it will succeed.
>
> […]
>
> *Sören Frost*. Ebbesen! you will not return!
>
> *Ebbesen*. Maybe.
>
> *Sören Frost*. And you will stake the outcome of the battle and the faith of the fatherland on this uncertain game?

[52] "Da min Fader sagde: Danmarks store Kongesön er landflygtig, foragtet og glemt, Fædrenelandet sönderrives af Udlændinge, det ædle danske Folk er fordömt til Trældom eller Död, da tænkte jeg ikke paa huuslig Fryd, da tænkte jeg kun paa Danmarks Frelse"

[53] "I har elsket min Datter, som I elsker vort Fædreneland; det seer jeg for silde"

[54] "Landets almindelige Nöd sværter alting for dine Öine. O! jeg er stolt af at kaldes den ædle Ebbesens Hustrue. Dag og Nat pönser din heele Siæl paa Landets Frelse"

Ebbesen. The sword which overthrows Gerhard also overthrows his army.

Sören Frost. And when you fall alone, waste your life to no avail; Who shall lead us against Gerhard?

Ebbesen. The Lord's justice will survive my death (Sander 1798: 185–186).[55]

Niels Ebbesen here shows ideal patriotism in that his love of the country is so great that he is willing to sacrifice his life for it.

Emotions are central to patriotism.[56] That is also apparent from the beginning of the Dane Court when the knight Povl Glob assumes that the estates will appoint Valdemar without election, on the ground that the people present "must have felt that the foreigner does not sincerely love our fatherland?" (Sander 1798: 169).[57] An important aspect of civic virtue is love of the country, but civic virtue is not solely realised on an emotional level. Even if the citizen's feelings are misguided (as is the case with Stig Andersen), he or she can realise cognitively how to act virtuously. Frustrated with Stig Andersen's change of sides, Niels Ebbesen exclaims: "Is not Andersen a knight? - - - - - if his heart does not impel him, his mind should teach him the duty of a Dane" (Sander 1798: 116).[58] One of the important civic duties is to place the common good before one's own gain, and this is one of the flaws, Niels Ebbesen finds among his fellow knights and the nobility. At the loss of Southern Jutland, Niels Ebbesen hoped to gather the mightiest and wisest men of the country on a Dane Court – "But alas! – everyone burns with the zeal to take revenge on their

55 "*Ebbesen*. […] Ja, med Geerts Liv vil jeg bringe mit Fædreland et stort Offer. | *Sören Frost*. Og selv falde som et Offer for Fædrelandet? Ebbesen! Ebbesen! aldrig gös jeg ved Manddoms-Færd! – men Forvovenhed er ikke Heltemod. | *Ebbesen*. | Hvad kalder du Forvovenhed? Netop fordi min Fiende slumrer trygt midt iblandt sine Skarer, fordi han aldrig venter saadant et uhört Overfald; netop derfor vil det lykkes. | […] | *Sören Frost*. Ebbesen! du kommer ikke tilbage! | *Ebbesen*. Kan være. | *Sören Frost*. Og du vil sætte Slagets Udfald og Fædrelandets Skiæbne paa dette uvisse Spil? | *Ebbesen*. Det Sværd, som fælder Geert, fælder og hans Hær. | *Sören Frost*. Og naar du nu falder aleene, spilder dit Liv uden Nytte; Hvo skal da före os mod Geert? | *Ebbesen*. Herrens Retfærdighed overlever min Död"

56 The emotional aspect of the play's patriotism is underscored in Danish. Danish has two words for patriotism; *patriotisme* and *fædrelandskærlighed*, and it is the latter conception which is thematised in the drama. *Fædrelandskærlighed* literarily means 'fatherland-love' and thus emphasises the aspect of love in a greater degree than does *patriotisme*.

57 "har dog vel fölt, at Udlændingen ikke oprigtig elsker vort Fædreland?"

58 "Er Andersen ikke Riddersmand? - - - - - driver Hiertet ham ikke, saa burde Forstanden lære ham en Dannemands Pligt"

own foes and no one considers consolidating the common fortune" (Sander 1798: 117).[59] The misfortune of the country is rooted in the general lack of civic virtue among the knights and nobility.

This concept of civic virtue presupposes a reciprocal relationship between ruler and the ruled. With duties come rights: In his defence of Valdemar at the Dane Court, Niels Ebbesen argues: "Do you wish to maintain the rights you still own and regain those you have lost? There is only one way to this great end! Only! when we meet our obligations can we call attention to our rights" (Sander 1798: 176).[60] Duty and privilege constitute two pillars of a contractual-like relation between king and people in the staged world of the play. In here, republican virtue becomes associated with the monarchical form of government. It is explicitly pointed out by Niels Ebbesen in his speech at the Dane Court when he ascertains that "Duty and patriotism [*fædrelandskærlighed*] bid us to elect him [Valdemar]" (Sander 1798: 178).[61]

Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis does not devote much effort to distinguishing monarchy from despotism. The play instead emphasises republican virtues as an important enabler of monarchy. The peoples' virtue comes to legitimise the monarchy, and this particular construction of republican monarchy implies a certain relationship between king and people. That the monarchy is dependent on the virtue of the people implies that the king is powerless without the support of his people, as the drama shows it to be the case before Niels Ebbesen takes action. The play's representation of monarchy thereby contains a significant element of popular sovereignty. Virtue thus serves a double function. On the one hand, it modifies Montesquieu's typology by detaching civic virtue and patriotism from the republican form of government and insisting that it should prevail under ideal monarchy. On the other hand, it also serves as a reminder (or in Seip's terms incantation) that the king is dependent on his people, is pledged to it and must ensure its rights.

[59] "Men desværre! – enhver brænder af Iver for at hævne sig paa sine egne Avindsmænd, og ingen tænker paa at grundfæste almindeligt Held"

[60] "Vil I vedligeholde de Rettigheder, som I endnu eye, og tilbagevinde dem, I har mistet? Der gives kun en eeneste Vei til dette store Maal! Kun! naar vi selv opfylde vore Pligter, kan vi paatale vore Rettigheder"

[61] "Pligt og Fædrelands-Kiærlighed byde at vælge ham [Valdemar]"

Republican freedom, law and election

Parallel with the understanding of republicanism as treated above, a different concept of republicanism prevails in Sander's play. This particular concept is based on the conditions of freedom and is known as the neo-Roman theory or the republican theory of freedom (Skinner 2008: 83–84).[62] A number of theorists have contributed to describing the republican theory of freedom, among others Quentin Skinner, whose outline of the tradition in the article "Freedom as the Absence of Arbitrary Power" (2008) will be drawn on here.

In the republican theory of freedom, freedom is – as Skinner's title indicates – understood as the absence of arbitrary power. Within the Anglophone political discourse, Skinner treats in the article, the basis of republican theory emerged with the outbreak of the English civil wars in 1642. The wars arose from a conflict between parliamentarians and royalists, which among other things was about the limits of the king's authority in relation to civil liberties. The parliamentarians criticised the monarchy's prerogative rights, which endowed it with unregulated, and therefore arbitrary, power, entailing possibilities for undermining specific rights and privileges without liability to punishment. The idea that freedom was subverted by arbitrary power rapidly gained footing. For instance, it partly comprised the argument used by the English parliament to legitimise the abolition of monarchy and the foundation of the "free state" in 1649 (Skinner 2008: 84–85).

According to republican theory, arbitrary power needs not to be exercised in order to affect political freedom. In this understanding of the concept, freedom is undermined by the sheer presence of arbitrary power. At the core of the theory is the notion that the presence of arbitrary power within a civil society prompts a transformation of its citizens from free men to slaves. The idea originates from the *Digest* of Roman law and its distinction between slaves, *servi*, and free men, *liberi homines*. A slave is here defined as a person subjected to a master's arbitrary power. The free man, in contrast, is free because he

[62] Brian Kjær Olesen has identified this particular conception of freedom in the milieu surrounding the periodical *Minerva* in "Frækhed er frihedens grænse. J.F.W. Schlegel og den republikanske udfordring" in Ola Mestad (ed.): *Frihetens Forskole. Professor Schlegel og eidsvollsmennenes læretid i København*. Oslo: Pax Forlag, 2003.

is not subject to another person's power, but is able to act according to his own will (Skinner 2008: 85–86). This distinction is, for instance, employed by John Locke in *Two Treatises of Government*, in which he redefines slavery as living under "an Absolute, Arbitrary, Despotical power", while he defines a slave as a person subjected to a master with "an Arbitrary Power over his Life" (Locke, cited in Skinner 2008: 86).

That the free man is defined as free on account of his possibility to act according to his own will, does not imply that the republican tradition rejects a society controlled by law. The tradition recognises the necessity of subjecting the citizens to laws in order to secure peace and safety for the society. The existence of laws of course implies that the liberty of the citizen is restricted to a certain extent, but to republican theory that is not tantamount to the citizens being unfree. The decisive factor is that it is not possible to exercise arbitrary power and that the citizens are only subject to laws to which they have given their consent. Through the citizens' consent, the laws can be understood as an expression of the will of the people, which means that the citizens can still be regarded as free men when they obey the law. As long as it is the laws alone which govern society, and the citizens make the laws, the citizens can be understood as free men in a free state (Skinner 2008: 86–87).

The discursive dichotomy of slaves versus free men can be found in the Danish political theory of the 1790s as well. For instance, in *Naturrettens eller den almindelige Retslæres Grundsætninger, del 2* [*The Principles of Natural Law or the Common Jurisprudence, part 2*] (1798), Schlegel writes:

> The monarch should always consider himself as existing for the people's sake and by no means act as if the people existed for his sake. Therefore, he may not treat them as thralls or as underage children, but as free men. Under this constitution, civil liberty must be as great as under democracy.
>
> Should the monarch exceed these limits, he becomes a despot (despota). A despotic reign (imperium despoticum f. herile), or the government which does not respect the rights of the human and subject, can never have a legal origin. This rule cannot be inferred from the people's union by submission because the people neither could nor would transfer a power by which it degraded itself to mere things, to passive tools in a higher hand. Neither can it be deduced

> from the seigneurial society or the relation between master and thrall (Schlegel 1798: 172–173).[63]

Sander, also, employs this vocabulary from the republican tradition.[64] In *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis*, the distinction between free men and slaves is used to describe the condition of the country by representing the Danes as a free people by opposing their station to thraldom. For instance, as cited earlier, the state of Denmark under Gerhard's reign is articulated this way, with Estrith repeating Niels Ebbesens statement that "The noble Danish people are condemned to thraldom or death" (Sander 1798: 113).[65] In the play, thraldom is regarded as deep, national degradation, as it appears from this dialogue between Niels Ebbesen and Stig Andersen:

> *Stig*. In truth. You fail to appreciate the count and me. He is after all the legitimate overlord of the country now.
>
> *Ebbesen*. And this fabrication of hypocrisy, you dare repeat to me? have the people allowed him to treat a pledge as property? have we Danes sold ourselves to be the thralls of strangers? Shame on you Stig! you degrade your fatherland to excuse your offence (Sander 1798: 158).[66]

Similarly, Niels Ebbesen uses this republican discourse when explaining the emergence of the resistance towards Gerhard:

63 "Monarken bør stedse ansee sig som tilværende for Folkets Skyld og ingenlunde handle, som om Folket var til for hans Skyld. Han maa derfor ei behandle dem som Trælle, eller som umyndige Børn, men som frie Mænd. Den borgerlige Frihed maa under denne Constitution være ligesaa stor, som under Demokratiet. | Overskrider Monarken disse Grændser, bliver han Despot (despota). Et Despotie (imperium despoticum f. herile), eller den Regiering, som ei agter Menneskets og Undersaattens Rettigheder, kan aldrig have en lovmæssig Oprindelse. Dette Herredømme kan ei udledes af Folkets Underkastelses-Foreening, fordi Folket hverken kunde eller vilde overdrage en Magt, hvorved det selv nedværdigede sig til blotte Ting, til passive Redskaber i en høiere Haand. Ei heller kan det deduceres af det herskabelige Selskab eller Forholdet imellem Herre og Træl"

64 Parts of the following analysis have been published earlier in the article "Frihed og kong Valdemar! Politisk middelalderisme i Levin Christian Sanders *Niels Ebbesen af Nörreriis* (1797) og Malthe Conrad Bruuns "Niels Ebbesen. Tyrandræberen" (1797)" in *Slagmark. Tidsskrift for Idéhistorie*, no. 79, 2019.

65 "Det ædle danske Folk er fordömt til Trældom eller Död"

66 "*Stig*. I Sandhed. I miskiender Hertugen og mig. Han er jo dog nu Landets lovlige Overherre. | *Ebbesen*. Og dette Hykleriets Paafund vover du at igientage for mig? har Folket tilladt ham at behandle et Pant, som Eiendom? har vi Danske solgt os selv til at være Fremmedes Trælle? Fy Stig! du fornedrer dit Fædreneland, for at undskylde din Bröde"

> When Count Gerhard publicly let himself be proclaimed duke of a country, which was only pledged to him for sinful money, then the first indignation sounded, like a distant thunder, through Jutland. We began to hope. When he built strong castles everywhere and consigned them to German lords; when he pressed immense taxes; when he instituted German judicial procedures and the German language and transformed the free men of the country to thralls of strangers: then the thunderstorm rose and we rejoiced. When he finally entered an agreement with Duke Valdemar to barter away our country for Southern Jutland in order to have all his usurped lands gathered, the peasant felt that he was a human, who was not to be sold and bartered away as the bullocks in the socage fields, and took up arms (Sander 1798: 116–117).[67]

Denmark is juxtaposed with the people. The country does not simply comprise lands to be traded with, but is articulated as inseparable from the people. It seems that the people constitute the country in a way. Even though it is the Danish king himself who has signed away Southern Jutland, his authority does not outweigh the importance of the people's national affiliation. The people do not consider themselves as property of the king and feel entitled to resist the sale. No king, whatever his qualities, owns the people and the lands they inhabit. The function of the king is thus not to be a proprietor of people (like Gerhard, who believes Denmark is to be bought), but more something along the lines of a trustee or leader of free men.

In opposition to this understanding of the king's function stands Gerhard, who is consistently described in terms of an economical force. As it appears from the exchange of lines between Niels Ebbesen and Stig Andersen cited above, count Gerhard is associated with pledge, property and the selling of Danes to thraldom. Similarly in the following quote, in which Gerhard becomes associated with sinful money. On account of the illegal acquisition of Jutland, the usurped

[67] "Da Grev Geert offentlig lod sig udraabe til Hertug over et Land, der kun var pantsat til ham for syndige Penge, da löd den förste Harme, som en fiern Torden, igiennem Jylland. Vi begyndte at haabe. Da han overalt byggede faste Borge, og overgav dem til tydske Herrer; da han udpressede uhyre Skatter; da han indförte den tydske Rettergang og det tydske Sprog, og forvandlede Landets frie Mænd til Fremmedes Trælle: da steeg Tordenveiret og vi glædede os. Da han tilsidst sluttede et Forliig med Hertug Valdemar om at bortbytte vort Land mod Sönder-Jylland, for at have alle sine tilranede Lande samlede, da fölte Bonden, at han var Menneske, der ikke skulde sælges og borttuskes, som Hovmarkens Stude, og greb til Vaaben"

reign over free men, the changes made to king Valdemar's wise old laws, the imposed taxed and imposed foreign culture, Niels Ebbesen concludes Gerhard to be "nothing else than a great robber" (Sander 1798: 141).[68] Gerhard's army consists of hirelings, and he collects taxes with no regard to the cash holdings of the Danish villages. Thus, Gerhard's army burns down an entire village for being unable to raise twenty marks worth of silver (Sander 1798: 128). For the tyrant, the country comprises property to be treated as he pleases.

The republicanism evoked through the play's particular conception of freedom is thus not aimed against monarchy, only against despotism. In fact, the republican forces work on the side of monarchy. As it was the case with the reinterpretation of the principles linked to different types of government in Montesquieu's typology, the depiction of republican freedom shows republicanism operating in tandem with monarchy. The representative of republican agency, Niels Ebbesen, works for the liberation of the country and the reinstitution of monarchy, two aims which are not simply able to coexist, but decidedly interdependent. Throughout the play, republican freedom and monarchy are interlinked; the freedom Niels Ebbesen achieves on behalf of the country by the killing of Gerhard is to be used to reinstate the Danish monarchy, and the monarchy shall stand as guarantee of republican liberties. The two ideologies are nicely combined in the watchword of Niels Ebbesen and his co-conspirators: "Freedom and King Valdemar!" (Sander 1798: 124).[69]

Two conditions are emphasised as the catalysts for this symbiosis: laws and royal election. In the play, Denmark is represented as a society of law, whose laws are temporarily suspended during the tyrannical reign of Count Gerhard. Niels Ebbesen perceives Gerhard as a bad ruler and an offender on this exact ground: "The count alone is the insurgent. He acts against the laws and rights of the country" (Sander 1798: 128).[70] In the Danish society, a fundamental tenet, according to Niels Ebbesen, is that the ruler is also subject to the law. Niels Ebbesen repeats this condition to Count Gerhard shortly before the count pronounces him an outlaw. Niels Ebbesen says to him: "We are free men, God for us all and the law above us all; thus it has always been in this country ever since the time of the Great Canute: and no

68 "intet andet end en mægtig Röver"
69 "Friehed og Kong Valdemar!"
70 "Greven allene er Oprøreren. Han handler imod Landets Lov og Ret"

king has dared to raise himself above the law" (Sander 1798: 165).[71] Here, the republican notion of the law reigning supreme in society is combined with a monarchical structure. With the critique of Gerhard for changing Valdemar's wise, old laws (Sander 1798: 141) and the association of good laws with king Canute the Great and what is likely Valdemar the Victorious, the play paints a picture of the early Middle Ages as a time of legislation. The accentuation of legislation as a condition for a good society segregates Gerhard's rule from the ideal rule. But to the play's contemporary audience, it must also have posed a contrast to their reality in which they were subject to a king with very few obligations to the law. In this way, the drama displays a critical potential without directly articulating it.

Medieval Denmark's status as a legislative society is furthermore brought to the fore when Gerhard mocks the Danish tradition for making the kings sign a coronation charter at their election (Sander 1798: 149). The coronation charters were a written oath, which most of the elective kings in the period 1320-1648 had to sign when elected. They set out the restrictions of the king's authority and the privileges of the estates (Bøgh 2012a). Thus, formally at least, the people established a contractual relationship with the king where he, among other things, promised to obey the law. By evoking the tradition of coronation charters, the play experiments subtly with republican ideas on government without criticising absolute monarchy.

Another feature, the drama accentuates from the medieval Danish rule, was the Dane Court. The Dane Court was the highest court of justice and was to meet once a year and monitor the king's government and exercise of power (Bøgh 2012a). As mentioned earlier, the Dane Court holds a prominent position in Sander's drama. It serves to represent the people as a political actor in that it shows an act of election on stage, and it reiterates the myth of the original peasants' freedom. At the Dane Court, all members have a right to express their opinion, without conditions. The beginning of the Dane Court holds the following conversation between Tyge (the bishop who presides over the Dane Court), Povl Glob and Søren Frost (two Jutlandic knights) and Niels Ebbesen about whether Stig Andersen should be allowed to speak Count Gerhard's case:

[71] "Vi ere frie Mænd. Gud for os alle, og Loven over os alle; saaledes har det stedse været her i Landet, siden den store Knuds Tid: og ingen Konge har tordet ophöje sig over Loven"

Tyge. Quiet, sir Glob! here, in the sight of God, a person's standing is of no consequence. Not what he is, but what he says, shall we judge .

Ebbesen. The Dane Court denies no member their voice in the matter.

P. Glob. Not even when the severest right of one man is injustice towards all?

S. Frost. Do you think us so blind that we should not be able to distinguish the reflection of the sun in the stream from the sun itself? (Sander 1798: 170).[72]

Stig is then allowed to talk and gives a speech in favour of Gerhard. He presents reasonable and pragmatic arguments for electing Gerhard as king, and the argument, which wins over some of the listeners to his side, reads:

Stig. […] Who of us have ever seen or heard Duke Gerhard to be defeated? His movement in battle is akin to the movement of the whale in the depth of the ocean, swarming armies flee from it in straits, bays and currents.

A peasant to his neighbour. Do you hear? he speaks splendidly.

A knight. Its is true; Gerhard is combative

Some voices. Yes! true enough, he is combative.

Stig. [with growing warmth] O, if only the combative Gerhard were our king! under his banner, we Danes could hope to experience the great Canute's golden age again. Let truth compare the two. Gerhard and Valdemar. What we could hope from the former; the latter has already achieved. O brothers! for a long time I have toured foreign countries; everywhere I have seen and compared learned, wise, combative, excellent people; and in the end I have asked myself: Who is the most perfect man of our age? Yes brothers! even here, in a gathering of decent, of excellent men, I dare to say it: Gerhard! [A part of the assembly grumbles loudly] Do you become angry, Danes! when I praise a stranger? O! let us not only be Danish; let us be human! only the dastard – no great man – should be foreign to us. –

Some voices. No! no! foreign to no great man!

72 "*Tyge*. Stille, Ridder Glob! her for Guds Aasyn gielder ingen Persons Anseelse. Ikke hvad han er, men hvad han siger, skal vi bedömme. | *Ebbesen*. Danehoffet nægter ingen Rigsdagsmand Stemme. | *P. Glob*. Heller ikke, naar den enkelte Mands strængeste Ret er Uretfærdighed imod alle? | *S. Frost*. Holder du os da for saa svagöjede, at vi ikke skulde skiælne Solens Billede i Aaen, fra Solen selv?"

> *Stig*. O! who can deny that Gerhard is great, as judge, army commander and overlord? By the sanctity of this place I swear that nothing besides sincere admiration has made me the duke's voluntary vassal – to Gerhard's spokesman. To follow him I have even sacrificed the noble Ebbesen's friendship. Can you blame me that I speak as the truth bids me? O brothers! let us compare with impartial frankness and let us choose with manly wisdom! Valdemar is young and inexperienced – combative – but without expertise as army commander. Under his reign, we must fear for war, bloodshed, heavy debts; and, in all likelihood, for the destruction of the entire country. Under Gerhard's reign, we could hope for peace, safety, remission of a heavy debt; and what is more than everything – the liberation of all of Denmark (Sander 1798: 171–173, square brackets with stage directions in original).[73]

Stig Andersen emphasises Gerhard's qualifications for ruling and the benefits of peace and safety. To him, these aspects are more important than the national values Valdemar represents. Stig Andersen's argumentation is embedded with patriotic discourse. He incites his listeners to disregard their Danishness and choose with sense and

[73] "*Stig*. […] Hvo af os har nogensinde hört eller seet, at Hertug Geert blev overvunden? Hans Gang i Slaget er, som Hvalens Gang i Havets Dyb, vrimlende Hære flygte for den i Sunde, Bugter og Strömme. | *En Bonde til sin Naboe.* Hörer du? han taler herlig. | *En Ridder*. Det er sandt; stridbar er Geert. | *Nogle Stemmer*. Ja! vist nok er han stridbar. | *Stig*. [med tiltagende Varme] O, gid den stridbare Geert var vor Konge! under hans Banner kunde vi Danske haabe at opleve den store Knuds gyldne Alder igien. Lad Sandheden sammenligne dem begge. Geert og Valdemar. Hvad vi kunde haabe af denne; det har hiin allerede opfyldt. O Brödre! jeg har længe draget igiennem fremmede Lande; jeg har overalt seet og sammenlignet lærde, viise, stridbare, udmærkede Mennesker; og tilsidst har jeg spurgt mig selv: Hvo er vor Olds fuldkomneste Mand? Ja Brödre! endog her, i en Forsamling af hæderlige, af udmærkede Mænd, vover jeg at sige det: Geert! [Een Deel af Forsamlingen knurrer lydeligen] Vredes I, Dannemænd! at jeg roser en Fremmed? O! lader os dog ikke blot være Danske; lader os være mennesker! kun Niddingen – ingen stor Mand – bör være fremmed for os. – | *Nogle Stemmer*. Nei! nei! ingen stor Mand fremmed! | *Stig*. O! hvo kan nægte, at Geert er stor, som Dommer, Hærförer og Overherre? Ved Stedets Hellighed sværger jeg, at intet uden oprigtig Beundring har giort mig til Hertugens frivillige Lehnsmand – til Geerts Talsmand. For at fölge ham, har jeg endog opoffret den ædle Ebbesens Venskab. Kan I fortænke mig, at jeg taler, som Sandheden byder? O Brödre! lader os sammenligne med upartisk Frimodighed, og lader os saa vælge med mandig Viisdom! Valdemar er ung og uerfaren; – stridbar; – men uden Hærförer-Kyndighed. Under ham maae vi frygte for Krig, Blods Udgydelse, trykkende Gield, og efter al Rimelighed, for heele Landets Ödelæggelse. Under Geert kunne vi haabe Fred, Sikkerhed, en trykkende Gields Eftergivelse; og det, som er meere end alt – heele Danmarks Frelse"

pragmatism. In his view, a Holstein might rule Denmark just as well as a Danish born prince.

This leads to a particularly interesting passage of the debate at the Dane Court, namely a discussion about whether the Danes ought to follow the tradition and elect their king from within the royal dynasty. This issue is interesting because it dramatizes the old question of whether medieval Denmark was an elective monarchy or a hereditary monarchy. Both parties agree that the Danes from ancient times have the right to elect their king, but Niels Ebbesen stresses that they also have a "self-imposed obligation" to choose from the royal lineage:

> *Ebbesen*. […] From our free forefathers we have inherited the proud allodial privilege: to appoint and elect our king ourselves. –
>
> *Some knights*. That we shall enforce.
>
> *Ebbesen*. But we also inherited the self-imposed obligation – hear brothers! – the obligation to elect one from our own old dynasty (Sander 1798: 176).[74]

Stig Andersen objects that as the Danes had the right to initiate this tradition, they also have the right to change it. Niels Ebbesen does not meet his objections, but changes his strategy and instead builds up an argument around Valdemar's nationality. This change of strategy must imply that Niels Ebbesen is not able to make a counter-argument to Stig Andersen's contention.

Niels Ebbesen's argument about a "self-imposed obligation" to choose out of the royal lineage is omitted from the second edition of the play. This could maybe be because this particular concept of an elective monarchy is somewhat problematic. On the one hand, it rings false with real freedom of choice that a right choice is given in advance. On the other hand, royal lineage is some of what legitimates the election of Valdemar in favour of Gerhard who clearly appears as the most qualified candidate. The scene thus contains an inner inconsistency as the representation of true free choice collides with the logic behind the election of Valdemar. The restriction to choose from

[74] *Ebbesen*. […] Af vore frie Forfædre have vi arvet den stolte Odelsherlighed: selv at kaare og at vælge vor Konge. – | *Nogle Riddere*. Den skal vi haandhæve. | *Ebbesen*. Men vi arvede ogsaa den selv paalagte Forpligtelse – hörer det Brödre! – den Forpligtelse, at vælge Een af vor egen gamle Kongeslægt.

the dynasty limits the freedom of choice that the scene is attempting to represent through the act of election. One could speculate whether the change in the manuscript is due to a certain fear or dislike of taking freedom of election to its logical consequence or a conviction about the order of succession being right. No matter the incentive, it is evident that the royal succession is subtly acknowledged in the logic of the play even though it otherwise greatly emphasises the medieval right for the people to elect their king. Thus, the notion of hereditary monarchy becomes juxtaposed and intertwined with the notion of republican freedom.

By evoking this myth and employing the character of Niels Ebbesen, the play uses medievalism in an attempt to reconcile republican ideas with a Danish monarchical form of government. The factors emphasised as enabling republican freedom under monarchy – laws and royal election – provides the people with political influence and limits the authority of the regent. These are factors which restrict the possibility for arbitrary exercise of power, and were not to be found in the Danish constitution in effect towards the end of the eighteenth century. It should of course be remembered that the depicted monarchy is not absolute as in the contemporary time of the drama's composition. But the scenic display of ideal monarchy as possessing republican features can still be understood as a suggestion – or incantation in Seip's terms – to how the society could be or ought to be structured.

A social contract between king and people

The coronation charters treated in the previous section comprise a contract between king and people, and the play's incorporation of coronation charters therefore entails a discussion of the relation between king and people. As the people appear as one part of a contract, they are conceptualised in their concrete form, not as an abstract concept. The ruler is bound to consult the actual people (which here means the part of the people with rights to contribute an opinion), and cannot make valid decisions regarding the country without the people or with only involving a select part of it. Niels Ebbesen refuses to recognise the popular assembly in Nyborg, in which King Christopher II signed away Jutland to Gerhard, as a Dane

Court on this account. As only the knights of Funen, the region in which Nyborg is located, partook in the assembly, and none of the Jutes had a say in the pledge of Jutland, Niels Ebbesen does not regard it as a valid decision, and to him, Gerhard is therefore not a legitimate ruler of Jutland (Sander 1798: 164).

The play's concept of the people (*folk*) is rather anti-aristocratic and inclusive of the lower standing classes. Even though Niels Ebbesen is a knight, the actor portraying him was dressed in a knightly garb that made him look like an idealised peasant (Petersen and Andersen 1929: II: 861). Framing Niels Ebbesen as part of the people rather than of the nobility[75] underscores the idea of a special bond between the king and the people surpassing the nobility. Niels Ebbesen sets himself off against Stig Andersen by referring to himself as a layman compared to Stig Andersen's abilities for the art of speaking (Sander 1798: 175). There is a dichotomy between the common Danish people and the persons populating Gerhard's court. The courtiers are characterised by lack of national attachment, falseness and superficiality. Niels Ebbesen speaks disparagingly of the courtiers as "courtly vermin" (Sander 1798: 120)[76] and "courtly thralls" (Sander 1798: 178),[77] where the last in particular substantiate the antagonism between the free, common people and the 'enslaved' courtiers. Niels Ebbesen criticises Stig Andersen for his foreign manners – Stig is educated from the university in Paris, and has resided with the emperor's court and in Rome (Sander 1798: 122) – and his "artificial court language" (Sander 1798: 157).[78] In contrast, the people is characterised by simplicity. Gerhard looks down on them for living their entire lives in a repetitive and uniform way, never leaving the place where they were born and never getting to know the world beyond their immediate surroundings (e.g. Sander 1798: 148). Within the conceptual framework of the drama, this simplicity is not as negative as Stig Andersen formulates it. In the first act, a group of refugees seek shelter at Nørreriis after their village is burnt to the ground by Gerhard's people because they were unable to pay their taxes. The refugees were not rich in the way it is conceived by

75 Niels Ebbesen was a nobleman and probably born into the wealthy Strange family (Dumreicher 1965: 7; Øst 1798: 14).
76 "Hofkryb"
77 "Hoftrælle"
78 "kunstlede hofsprog"

Gerhard's court; they did not possess enough ready money to pay their taxes, but considered themselves to be rich in non-pecuniary ways. Even though they were "poor peasants" who "does not own twenty marks sterling silver in ready money" they found themselves to be "free, wealthy Danes" (Sander 1798: 128).[79] While Gerhard solely sees the country for its economic worth – which is in line with his position as pledgee – the people find in it symbolic value. The people are represented as decent and honest (Sander 1798: 181), while the court is associated with "despicable vanity" (Sander 1798: 157).[80] The simplicity of the people is furthermore associated with nationality. In contradistinction, Niels Ebbesen castigates Stig Andersen's courtly way of speaking:

> *Stig*. Offence? Knight! you speak a language - - -
> *Ebbesen*. Which you have forgot here among foreign courtly vermin. It is Danish, it is the language of truth. Shame on you Stig! You could be a free Dane, and yet you buy golden chains from foreigners (Sander 1798: 158–159).[81]

Danish comes to stand in opposition to the artificial courtly language, Stig Andersen has acquired at the court. The Danish language is plain compared to courtly talk, but represents honesty, truth and straightforwardness.

As the people are valued for their closeness to the national, the good and right king for Denmark must represent nationality. As mentioned earlier, at the Dane Court Niels Ebbesen based his arguments in favour of Valdemar on him being a representative of Danish nationality. While Stig Andersen emphasises Gerhard's qualifications for ruling and the benefits of peace and safety, Niels Ebbesen in his counterargument largely disregards the political abilities of the candidates and instead bases his response on nationalistic grounds. His views are nicely summed up in this quotation where he says: "Choose Gerhard; and your grandchildren will listen with silent wonder to the singular fairy tale that once there

[79] "fattige Bönder", "eier ikke tyve Mark lödig Sölv i reede Penge", "frie velhavende Dannemænd"
[80] "usle Tant"
[81] "*Stig*. Bröde? Ridder! I taler et Sprog - - - | *Ebbesen*. Som du har glemt her blandt udenlandsk Hofkryb. Det er dansk, det er Sandhedens Sprog. Fy, Stig! Du kunde være en frie Dannemand, og du kiöber gyldne Lænker fra Udlændinger"

existed a Danish people, Danish language, Danish law and Danish glory" (Sander 1798: 177).[82] Shortly after, he highlights the king's purpose by stating: "For seven years, Denmark has missed a king, who could watch over our holy faith, our laws and our mores" (Sander 1798: 179).[83] For Niels Ebbesen, the king has to be a carrier of national values. He does not accentuate political qualities about Valdemar, such as his ambitions or competences for governing a country, as Stig Andersen did in his argument at the Dane Court. Likewise, the main argument against Gerhard is his national belonging. He is depicted as a proficient strategist and competent ruler, but that does not matter. The important part is that he is not Danish. Gerhard himself reflects upon this condition in an earlier scene and states:

> And why do they hate me? Because I at birth was not ingenious enough to choose a Danish Queen for my mother, because an incident placed my cradle on Holstein's ground. I am born a prince just as well as Prince Otto or Prince Valdemar. And what can these youths throw on the scales against my experience and warrior's honour? (Sander 1798: 148–149).[84]

Gerhard is qualified for ruling – and not just according to himself – but he has the wrong nationality. It is not the case, though, that one nationality is depicted as better than another. Gerhard simply does not have the right nationality for Denmark. Nationalism thus plays a crucial role in the Danes' choice of king. That the nationalism represented by Valdemar outweighs the political competences of Gerhard leaves the play with a king, who is more a representative of Danish nationality than a political agent. With the election of a king based on his representative affordances rather than his political qualities and the staging of an act of election, we can thus observe a transfer of political agency from the figure of the king to the people.

[82] "Vælger Geert; og Eders Börnebörn vil höre med tavs Forundring paa det synderlige Eventyr, at der een Gang har været et dansk Folk, dansk Sprog, danske Love, og dansk Herlighed til"

[83] "I syv Aar har Danmark savnet en Konge, der kunde vaage over vor hellige Troe, vore Love og gode Sæder"

[84] "Og hvorfor hade de mig? fordi jeg ved Födselen ikke var snild nok til at vælge en dansk Dronning til Moder, fordi en Hændelse satte min Vugge paa Holsteens Grund. Jeg er föd Fyrste, ligesaa godt, som Prinds Otto, eller Prinds Valdemar. Og hvad kan disse Yndlinge lægge i Vægtskaalen imod min Erfaring, og min Kriger-Hæder?"

The people at the Dane Court possess political influence and participate in politics. Also common people, who are not included at the Dane Court, are part of political life. With the staging of common people as representative for nationality and nationality as a governing political factor, the play is a prominent example of a society based on popular sovereignty.

With popular sovereignty comes the right to address the king. An important feature of the construction of monarchy as based on popular sovereignty is – as we saw earlier – that the king lets himself be guided by the common will. The king has to listen to the people, for instance through audiences or petitions. In contrast to this ideal, Gerhard is only surrounded by courtiers who – according to Niels Ebbesen – do not speak the people's case. Before going to speak with Gerhard, Niels Ebbesen states: "For a long time I have wanted a good opportunity to remind him of several things, which his courtly vermin probably do not feel obliged to remind him" (Sander 1798: 141).[85] This culture, reminiscent of opinion-led monarchy in that the ruler takes advice on how to run the country from the people, is not found at Gerhard's court. That appears from the fact that Stig Andersen has grown accustomed to detain his opinions: "Forgive me gracious lord! I am so used to admiring your wisdom that I scarcely dare utter my doubts!" (Sander 1798: 146).[86] Stig Andersen thus blindly complies with Gerhard, which he later realises to have been a mistake.

Gerhard is represented as a bad ruler on the ground that he does not govern to the benefit of the common good. Gerhard perceives the Danish people as an asset rather than as human beings. When Stig Andersen returns to Gerhard with the news of his defeat at the Dane Court and expresses his regret that the war therefore will continue, Gerhard retorts:

> Andersen! has the Dane Court infected you with these everyday thoughts? – The storm runs its course through nature and does not mind all the spruces and oaks, which fall to the right and to the left. – Wherein exists this fancied misery? That a couple of thousands farmhands are killed, who otherwise might have suffered boredom for another score of years in their oyster shell? believe me, this

[85] "Jeg har længe önsket en god Leilighed til at minde ham om adskilligt, som hans Hofkryb nok ikke finder sig forpligtet til at minde ham om"

[86] "Tilgiv, naadige Herre! jeg er saa vant til at beundre Eders Viisdom, at jeg neppe vover at yttre min Tvivl!"

> tribe[87] never die out; chop it off completely and new branches will shoot out of the roots. Eat, drink and reproduce, that is, after all, the only things, they understand thoroughly (Sander 1798: 196).[88]

To Gerhard, the people are worth no more than a plant. The clash between Gerhard's pragmatic, political nature and outright contempt for the people, and the concern for the common good is nicely illustrated in an earlier scene between him and Stig Andersen. While they are playing a game of chess, one of Gerhard's knights enters to bring him up do date on tax paying and which cities and manors have been destroyed for refusing to pay. Gerhard utters an angry exclamation, insulting the manors and cities in question, and Stig Andersen baulks at Gerhard's attitude, remarking:

> *Stig Andersen*. [who hitherto has been standing behind his chair and been pondering his game] It is pity, though, for these poor peasants, gracious lord!
>
> *Gerhard*. [steps towards the game, smiling] True enough knight! you have lost a fair share. – what can I do about that? I, also, regret the peasants' delusion and punish their disobedience. Dominion and supremacy are two invincible warriors, why did they challenge them to fight? The fear shall temper the recklessness of the people in order to save the blood of thousands (Sander 1798: 145, square brackets in original).[89]

[87] The word translated into 'tribe', "folkestamme", has two different associations in Danish. It is a compound word where the first word means people and the second has a double meaning of both tribe and trunk. So the word both bears the meaning of a tribe of people and more metaphorically the trunk of the people.

[88] "Andersen! har Danehoffet smittet Eder med disse Hverdags-Tanker? – Stormen gaaer sin Gang igiennem Naturen, og bryder sig ikke om alle de Graner og Eege, der falde til höjre og venstre. – Hvori bestaaer da denne indbildte Ulykke? At der falder et par tusinde Karle, der ellers maaskee kunde kiedet sig endnu en Snees Aar i deres Östers-Skal? troe mig, denne Folkestamme döer aldrig ud; hug den reent af, og nye Greene vil skyde frem af Rödderne. Æde, drikke, og forplante dig, det er jo det eeneste, de forstaae tilgavns"

[89] "*Stig Andersen*. [der hidtil har staaet bag ved sin Stoel, og overtænkt sit Spil] Det er dog Skade for disse stakkels Bönder, naadige Herre! | *Geert*. [træder smilende til Spillet] Sandt nok Ridder! I har mistet en Deel. – Hvad kan jeg giöre ved det? Ogsaa jeg beklager Böndernes Forblindelse, og straffer deres Ulydighed. Herskab og Overmagt ere tvende uovervindelige Kæmper, hvorfor æskede de dem til Strid? Skrækken skal dæmpe Folkets Overmod, for at spare Tusendes Blod" (square brackets in original)

The game of chess is brought to an end shortly afterwards: "*Gerhard*. [has in the meantime watched Stig's game] I admire your army; it is organised with boldness and shrewdness. But – [throwing over the chessmen] one single turn of a hand destroys all of it - - - - Thus Gerhard beats his adversaries" (Sander 1798: 146, square brackets with stage directions in original).[90] The chess scene is an obvious allegory for Gerhard's rule and indifference towards his subjects. In comparison, Niels Ebbesen's struggle for the Danish people can be perceived as a struggle for the actual people – a struggle for considering the people as humans rather than assets. Consider, for instance, the aforementioned scene from the first act in which a group of villagers seeks refuge at Nørreriis. The audience has already been informed about Gerhard's atrocities, so the introduction of the villagers does not add to the plot or drive it forward. But it shows the consequences of the war on individual people and the human cost, which Gerhard thoroughly ignores.

Gerhard thinks nothing of the people and does not consider them valuable for politics. He doubts their competences for politics and therefore disputes their right to elect the king. Stig Andersen grants him that: "From where should these everyday souls get a yardstick for a great man?" (Sander 1798: 148).[91] While it might be a valid objection, it is not the question posed by the play. The political aspect of the election is downplayed and the king is instead elected because of his national affiliations; an aspect of which the people must be considered experts as they are represented as carriers of national culture. The drama's popular sovereignty thus consists as much or more in a cultural influence on society than a political influence.

Historian Michael Böss has identified four basic narratives about the relations between king, state and people in Europe. Two of those are pertinent to this case. A prevalent base narrative in *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis* is what Böss terms "the patriotic narrative" (Böss 2014: 167).[92] The patriotic narrative has its origin in Antiquity, in particular Roman republicanism. It carries a conception in which the citizens are the substance of the nation. The citizens shall be loyal to their nation,

[90] "*Geert*. [har imidlertid betragtet Stiges [sic] Spil] Jeg beundrer Eders Hær; den er ordnet med Kiækhed og Klogskab. Men – [kaster Brikkerne overende] en eeneste Haandevending tilintetgiör det alt sammen - - - - Saa slaaer Gerhard sine Modstandere." [square brackets in original]

[91] "Hvorfra skulde disse Hverdags- Siæle faae en Maalestok til en stor Mand?"

[92] "den patriotiske fortælling"

which on its part shall only give fair laws ensuring the rights, security and freedom of the citizens (Böss 2014: 167). The patriotic narrative prescribes a society in which the citizens partake in public life and must be cultured into good, enlightened citizens. This narrative is prevalent at the Dane Court where we see the Danes conducting a political discussion, which is based on the presumption that the people present are able to make political decisions. The play does not, however, address the question of which people have access to the Dane Court. Gerhard's comment subtly brings this condition to the fore in that it points out that not all citizens are educated or enlightened enough to fully understand and participate in politics.

The patriotic narrative excludes the non-enlightened citizens from its community, and instead of directing attention to this problematic aspect of the patriotic narrative, the play chooses – as we saw with Niels Ebbesen's argumentation at the Dane Court – to shift focus to national values. This introduces the other basic narrative, "the ethnic narrative" (Böss 2014: 167).[93] This narrative describes a community based on common origin, language, culture and history (Böss 2014: 167). In this idea, the uneducated people gain importance as carriers of national culture – a notion with would flourish in later Romantic thought. This notion clearly casts the people in another role than does the patriotic narrative. The play thus contains two basic narratives, which each brings a separate understanding of the concept of the people. The patriotic narrative about the citizens comprising the nation is subtly challenged by Gerhard's comment, which directs attention to the fact that some people are excluded by this notion. By drawing on the ethnic narrative, the play provides the common people with a part in the overall patriotic narrative by framing them as carriers of national culture and making nationalism part of politics. In this fusion of patriotic and ethnic narratives, we can observe a politicisation of culture, which provides the common people with a function in politics different from the enlightened citizen of the patriotic narrative.

[93] "den etniske fortælling"

Theorisations of monarchy

Republicanism and ideas about popular sovereignty abound in Sander's play, and in the above have been outlined some of the ways in which these ideas interact with the notion of monarchy. There are, however, also other governmental theories represented in the play, which have not been treated here. For instance, what Seip has named "*the paternal absolute monarchy*" (Seip 1958: 449),[94] in which the king is articulated as the father of the country and the citizens as his children, also prevails in the drama. At the Dane Court, Niels Ebbesen refers to the election as an election of a father for the country (Sander 1798: 178). Likewise, when a Holstein envoy tries to persuade Gerhard to return to Holstein and resume his service as their ruler, he asks him to again become their father (Sander 1798: 203, 204). The idea of paternal monarchy was quite popular in Denmark at the time, but the discourse was not entirely unproblematic. As the framing of the citizen as under-age children clashed with the notion of the free man, even the positively charged concept of fatherhood was disputed (Seip 1958: 449–450). In Sander's play, the concept of paternal monarchy is also up for moderation. After the election of Valdemar, this exchange of lines is played out:

> *Ebbesen.* […] Thank God! the long, dark night is over, in which Denmark, without a king, mourned as a fatherless child. Under Valdemar, a bright *day* breaks through *once again*.
>
> *Hans Frost*. His name be VALDEMAR ATTERDAG![95] (Sander 1798: 181).[96]

The passage repeats the notion of the king as the father and the citizens as children. But the relation is reversed in the last line when the knight Hans Frost names the king. The child names the father and thereby appropriates an essential act of parental agency. Some kind of popular agency or influence thus also applies to the play's staging of the paternal theorisation of monarchy. The people and king are furthermore positioned in terms of a family relationship when Niels

94 "*det landsfaderlige enevelde*"

95 The epithet *Atterdag* directly translated means 'day once again'

96 "*Ebbesen.* […] Gud være lovet! den lange mörke Nat er forbi, da Danmark uden Konge sörgede som et faderlöst Barn. Under Valdemar frembryder *atter* en lys *Dag*. | *Hans Frost*. Hans Navn være VALDEMAR ATTERDAG!"

Ebbesen in his initial description of Denmark's state of despair refers to Denmark as a mother and the citizens as her sons (Sander 1798: 116). This poses the people, the king and the country in a triangular relationship, in which the king is not the country, but is related to it in a different way than the people.

Various conceptions of monarchy can be found in *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis*, but the monarchy based on republican principles is, however, the most prevalent. On the one hand, the play praises monarchy and demonstrates Danish monarchy and republicanism to be compatible. It states that the good ruler ensures values central to republican freedom. This is summed up by the Holstein envoy's plea to Gerhard: "You were after all born with the duty to enforce our laws, to employ your great gifts to our benefit. Come back! Live among us as a father; and grant us the heartfelt joy to love you" (Sander 1798: 203).[97] The good ruler ensures the laws of the country, is himself subject to them and loves and is loved by the people. As we have seen earlier, representing national culture and, for Denmark, royal election are, together with the qualities mentioned above, crucial for the good king. Thus, medievalism is used to reconcile two different principles of government. By representing a republican notion of freedom as part of Danish medieval history, the idea appears less foreign and more compatible with Danish culture, as it is represented as a form of government which the country has already had earlier.

On the other hand, the articulation of freedom as the right to political influence, royal election and the law above all reveals an implicit critique of the contemporary government. The strong emphasis on these conditions creates a contrast to the formal lack of these freedoms in eighteenth-century Denmark. By accentuating and praising republican liberties as inherently Danish, the play thereby also conveys a critical position by making the audience or reader reflect upon particular societal conditions. That the theatre facilitated encounters between citizens and government and reflected contemporary developments has been pointed out by theatre historian Anette Storli Andersen. She argues that the Danish theatre by the end of the eighteenth century functioned as a place of exchange between enlightened citizens and the enlightened absolute monarchy and that

[97] "Du födtes jo til den Pligt, at haandhæve vore Love, at bruge dine store Gaver til vort Hæld. Drag tilbage! Lev iblandt os, som Fader; og und os den inderlige Glæde, at elske dig"

the Royal Theatre considered it one of their chief objects to educate the citizens (A.S. Andersen 2015: 218–220). She continues:

> The theatre's overtly educational orientation during the late 1700s connected it closely to socio-political reality. So did the art form itself: the theatre consists of real, physical actors performing in real, historical space and time. Its very nature strongly links the theatre with its historical context, as well as with the socio-political reality of the actors and spectators. In effect, theatre functions as a seismograph for historical changes because it enacts fundamental changes that are taking place in a society (A.S. Andersen 2015: 219).

Whether the relation between the theatre and history should be considered so much on a one-to-one basis can be disputed, but there is a point to be found in the connection between theatre and society.

That there is some connection between the theatre and contemporary reality in late eighteenth-century Danish theatre has also been pointed out at the time by writer, editor and critic Knud Lyne Rahbek precisely with regard to Sander's *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis*. In a preface to a series of lectures on Sander's drama published in *Minerva* in February 1797, Rahbek comments on the nature of the drama by distinguishing it from the erotic nature of Ole Johan Samsøe's popular play *Dyveke*:

> Certainly, you could rightly claim that the type of tragedy, to which Niels Ebbesen's story is qualified, must be the true bourgeois [*Borgerlige*], that exactly which worked by bourgeois feelings; but this type of tragedy was named in the days when you only knew to translate bourgeois [*Borgerlig*] to bourgeois [*bourgeois*], and yet had not dreamt that it would come to mean civic [*civiqve*] (Rahbek 1797: 207).[98]

While *Dyveke* is characterized by the impossible love between the common girl Dyveke and King Christian II and appeals to feelings of passions, *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis* appeals to civic feelings. Rahbek subsequently poses the question whether art should accommodate the

[98] "Vel kunde man med Føje paastaae, at det Sørgespilslags, hvortil Niels Ebbesens historie qualificerede sig, maarte [sic] være det sande Borgerlige, det nemlig, der virkede ved Borgerfølelser; men dette Sørgespilslags fik sit Navn i de Dage, da man kun vidste at oversætte Borgerlig ved bourgeois, og endnu ikke havde drømt, det skulde komme til at betyde civiqve"

prevailing taste or direct the taste, and concludes that art ought to instruct the taste in order to gain importance and worth for the citizens and again become a supplement to the laws as in ancient Greece (Rahbek 1797: 211). Here again he brings out the theatre as a link between the people and the government.

Theatre – and literature in a slightly different way – thus provides a place of exchange between the ruler and the ruled. Medievalism is particularly suitable for facilitating political aspects of this exchange, because its fiction provides a safe distance to censorship. That does not imply that medievalism should simply be thought of as thinly veiled allegory, as it was the case with Bruun's *Jerusalems Skomagers Rejse til Maanen*, which circumvented censorship by situating the action on the moon. As Sander's play illustrates, medievalism can facilitate reflection on and discussion about political conditions pertinent to contemporary culture without necessarily taking a clear stance. While the drama reminds the spectator or reader of some particular conditions and obligations for monarchy, it also opens op for different opinions as represented by Niels Ebbesen and Stig Andersen, respectively. And as Baden's review showed, the receivers did not necessarily sympathise and agree with Niels Ebbesen's stances, even though he is the undisputed hero of the drama. The nature of the drama is clearly dialectical, as Hegel has famously demonstrated in the case of *Antigone* (Dahl 2010: 177), and its medievalism entails the possibility for unfolding a dialogue on a subject, which might otherwise have been problematic under the prevailing conditions for the freedom of the press.

Medievalism and classicism

The eighteenth-century ideal of the good citizen was, according to ethnologist Tine Damsholt, derived from classical Antiquity and its militia-men, who defended their fatherland in exchange for having their civil rights protected (Tine Damsholt 2000: 93). This idea had a counterpart in Montesquieu's climatically based depiction in *De l'esprit des loix* of Nordic antiquity as a counter-image to the Roman slave state (Tine Damsholt 2000: 93). This is of course in line with the theorisations outlined earlier and their reinterpretations of Nordic antiquity as a time of democracy and ancient peasant freedom, which

were in time subverted by the nobility and feudalism (Tine Damsholt 2000: 94). Nordic Antiquity thus came to represent a time of a certain freedom. Johan Fjord Jensen, Morten Møller, Toni Nielsen and Jørgen Stigel has in their *Dansk litteratur historie* [Danish Literature History] (1983) pointed out that the interest in the Nordic Antiquity appeared as a reaction against the Roman basis of the culture of absolutism (Fjord Jensen et al. 1983: 309). The Danish absolute monarchy found its role models for how to organise the state and society in classical Antiquity (Horstbøll and Østergård 1989: 12), more specifically in the lives of the Roman emperors (Tine Damsholt 2000: 93; Torben Damsholt 1972). In his article "De gode kejsere og den oplyste enevælde" ["The Good Emperors and the Enlightened Absolute Monarchy"] (1972), historian Torben Damsholt demonstrates how the Danish absolutist culture was influenced by Roman antique history and considered the good emperors of Rome as an ideal to be followed by the Danish monarchs. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the interest for the Roman past waned in favour of Greek and Nordic Antiquity. Greek Antiquity was felt to be more original and authentic, and in Denmark, Greek Antiquity and Nordic Antiquity (or Viking culture) was woven in together. Fjord Jensen, Møller, Nielsen and Stigel state that these cultures were often combined by embedding Norse elements into a classical form, which refined the expression of the Norse material, but removed its intrinsic value (Fjord Jensen et al. 1983: 319).

Fjord Jensen, Møller, Nielsen and Stigel maintain Peter Frederik Suhm (1728-1798) and Johannes Ewald (1743-1781) to be the first writers to employ elements from the Norse past in their literature. They framed Nordic Antiquity in opposition to neoclassicism and used it to criticise the changes, which the absolutist state and its estates were facing. Fjord Jensen, Møller, Nielsen and Stigel therefore perceive of the use of ancient Nordic material as a simultaneously critical and utopian-hopeful reflection to contemporary times. They maintain, however, that the rebellious potential in the Nordic material disappeared with the end of Høegh-Guldberg's government in 1784. From then on, the Nordic past was reduced to serve as ornaments for the absolute monarchy until the Napoleonic wars when it instead came to assume a national potential (Fjord Jensen et al. 1983: 316–318). They furthermore observe about the interest in the Nordic past that "This anti-courtly reaction was in pursuit of

conceptions about a historical counterculture, which could frame utopian conceptions about freedom, equality and 'natural' moral behaviour overall" (Fjord Jensen et al. 1983: 309).[99] That the return to Nordic Antiquity is described as "anti-courtly" bears witness to a contrastual relationship between the Nordic Antiquity and Danish Middle Ages.

While the ancient Nordic past represents utopian freedom, it seems that the writers of the 1790s understood the Middle Ages a time in which freedom was under attack. We saw the conception expressed in the quotation from Colbiørnsen cited earlier stating that the yoke of aristocracy began to appear during the time of the first two King Valdemars. Colbiørnsen's stance is in line with other historians, who believed the feudal system to have been introduced at this time (Tine Damsholt 2000: 95). Medievalism thus continues the political potential of the so-called Norse or Nordic Renaissance by representing earlier civil liberty, but in a slightly different way; by depicting the fight for freedom rather than a utopia of freedom. As the Norse Renaissance can be understood as a contrast to the Roman classicism of the absolutist culture, medievalism can be perceived as a current next to the Roman, Greek and Norse ones. But the limits between them are not clear cut. In the medievalism of the 1790s, we see combinations of medievalism with classicism, in particular in the form of diverse references to antique history and culture. For instance, on the first pages of both the 1798 and the 1799 editions of Sander's *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis* are inserted Latin quotes from Horace and Cicero, respectively. The line from Horace "*pro patria non timidus mori*" (Sander 1798: 109) strikes the theme and juxtaposes the Roman antique fatherland with the Danish fatherland.[100] Also, in the February 1797 issue of *Minerva* (printed shortly after the premiere of the play at the Royal Theatre), Sander published "Kor bestemte til femte Act af Niels Ebbesen" ["Chorus Intended for the Fifth Act of Niels Ebbesen"]. Here, the actions from the last act of the play is recreated in shape of an antiphony from antique tragedy. Thus, Sander parallels the "un-classical" prose version of the events from the

[99] "Denne anti-høviske reaktion var på jagt efter forestillinger om en historisk modkultur, der kunne danne rammen omkring utopiske forestillinger om frihed, lighed og i det hele taget 'naturlig' moralsk adfærd"

[100] The Cicero quote from the 1799 edition reads: "*Homines ad Deos nulla re propius accedunt qua*m [sic.] *salute hominibus danda*" (Sander 1799: first page, before pagination begins).

play with a version markedly more in line with classical tradition (Sander 1797; see also Blödorn 2004: 118–119).

The same year as *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis* was first performed at the Royal Theatre, Bruun published an ode on the same subject.[101] "Niels Ebbesen, Tyrandræberen" ["Niels Ebbesen, the Tyrant Killer"] combines medievalism and classicism in that the subject is taken from medieval history, but it employs antique reference by likening Niels Ebbesen and his act to Brutus' assassination of Caesar. The figure of Brutus was very popular among the French revolutionaries (Feilla 2016: 163–164). According to the literary historian Cecilia Feilla "Brutus served as a constant reminder of the classical ideal of civic virtue necessary to found and secure liberty and law" (Feilla 2016: 164). The link between Brutus and republicanism is clear, but in Bruun's ode – contrary to Sander's play – republicanism is not reconciled with monarchy, as the ode poses the two governmental principles as completely incommensurable.[102]

The ode spans 58 lines divided into six stanzas. In the first stanza, the lyrical subject beholds Niels Ebbesen's deed retrospectively and articulates him as Brutus: "What lonely light in endless darkness blazes? | What glimpse of life among sheer death? | Behind autocracy's night, a Roman deed I behold, | A Brutus in my Denmark born!" (M. C. Bruun 1797: 72).[103] The absolute monarchy is associated with darkness and night, which is an expressive stylistic choice in a time when the monarchy understood itself as enlightened. It could be objected that the autocracy mentioned here should not be understood as the absolute monarchy in Bruun's own time, but solely as Gerhard's tyrannical reign. I believe, though, that the autocracy in the ode should be understood as the autocratic reign in effect towards the end of the eighteenth century. The lyrical subject looks back through an endless darkness to the glimpse of light he finds Niels Ebbesen's act to emit. At the darkness is presented as "endless" and that the lyrical subject is only able to glimpse the light from the killing must imply that the darkness of autocracy stretches from the time of the action in

[101] The ode was followed by a note by Bruun stating that it was written during the summer of 1976 and therefore composed independently of Sander's drama (M.C. Bruun 1797: 72).

[102] Part of the following analysis of Bruun's "Niels Ebbesen, the Tyrant Killer" has been published previously in the earlier mentioned article in *Slagmark*.

[103] "Hvad eensomt Lys i endløst Mørke luer? | Hvad Glimt af Liv blant idel Død? | Bag Eenevældens Nat en Rommerdaad jeg skuer, | En Brutus i mit Danmark fød!"

1340 to the temporal position of the lyrical subject in 1796 and has not ceded to exist with the killing of Gerhard. Thus, it is not simply Gerhard's tyrannical reign, but autocracy as such which is associated with darkness. By framing Niels Ebbesen's killing of Gerhard as a light breaking the darkness and framing the autocracy as that darkness, the poem introduces a dichotomy. On the one hand is the light, which is linked to Niels Ebbesen, who is the representative of freedom as his action liberates Denmark. On the other hand is the darkness, which is linked to autocracy and, in opposition to Niels Ebbesen and freedom, also comes to be linked with unfreedom.

The second stanza narrates the killing, and the third is comprised by praise for Niels Ebbesen, which also conveys reservations against monarchy. The praise reads: "Hail you, o man! You have deserved a crown | And you scorn it. | Hail, three times hail you, fatherland! | Be proud of him! He killed a tyrant" (M.C. Bruun 1797: 72–73).[104] Niels Ebbesen is praised for not wanting a crown, which is then followed by intensified praise. That the praise triples suggests that Niels Ebbesen's rejection of the crown enhances his achievement. From that, it follows that even getting such a good and virtuous man as Niels Ebbesen as king is not a gain for the nation, quite the contrary. It is thereby implied that monarchy is not to be wanted for the country, and the underlying republican ideology becomes apparent.

The central part of the ode depicts Niels Ebbesen's death in battle and the Germans' withdrawal. The fifth and sixth stanzas are uttered from the perspective of the lyrical subject located in 1796. First, he praises Niels Ebbesen's triumph and describes the ensuing peace, but then his commentary changes into a critique of his contemporaries for having forgotten Niels Ebbesen. He chastises his contemporary time for its lack of freedom and vigour and mourns the loss of these virtues. On this account, he finishes the ode by framing his fellow citizens as slaves:

> O slaves, barely you dare to stammer out his name;
> Around his forgotten grave is silent.
> Is it extinguished, for ever extinguished, the flame,
> That roared in the Danes' free breast?

[104] "Held dig, o Mand! Du har fortient en Krone | Og du foragter den. | Held, trefold held dig, Fædreland! | Vær stolt af ham! Han dræbte en Tyran"

You proud line of days of virtue, vigour,
Age, rich in danger, rich in freedom and in men,
I look back on you through tears;
When will you smile towards north again?
(M.C. Bruun 1797: 74).[105]

The closing stanza presents the Middle Ages as a benchmark for liberty, which sets off the shortcomings of contemporary times. The ode characterises the end of the eighteenth century as a time of unfreedom and passivity. In the Middle Ages are found vigorous men willing to fight for freedom, while the 1790s only offer slaves, who have forgotten their ancestors' struggle. The republican vocabulary is clearly reflected here, where the term slave is opposed to free men. This choice of words emphasises the ode's understanding of autocracy as tantamount to lack of civil freedom and the notion that civil freedom is no realisable under absolute monarchy.

The ode is similar to a Pindaric ode in that it falls into three parts; a strophe, an antistrophe and an epode (Fafner 1994: 238–239). The first 16 verses, which comprise the strophe, consists of four pairs of alternate rhymes followed by a couplet. The strophe encompass the part of the ode dealing with Niels Ebbesen's killing of Gerhard. The antistrophe holds the battle following the killing and is initiated by a couplet and followed by four pairs of enclosed rhyme, thereby approximately mirroring the strophe. There is an exception to the pattern, though. In the centre of the enclosing rhymes is an extra verse, considerably shorter than the others and marked out by excessive use of punctuation compared to the small number of words. This line represents Niels Ebbesen's death with the simple "He fell!...." (M.C. Bruun 1797: 73).[106] The line rhymes with the first and fourth line of the ensuing quatrain, but otherwise the verse collides with the composition. Niels Ebbesen's death is thus marked by a break in structure.

The epode marks a shift in time and is articulated from the temporal position of the lyrical subject. The epode consists of four pairs

[105] "O Slaver, knap I tør hans Navn fremstamme; | Omkring hans glemte Grav er tyst. | Er den da slukt, for evig slukt, den Flamme, | Som brused' i de Danskes frie Bryst? | Du stolte Rad af Dydens, Kraftens Dage, | Old, rig paa Farer, rig paa Frihed og paa Mænd, | Til dig jeg giennem Taarer seer tilbage; | Naar smiler du til Nord igien?"

[106] "Han faldt!...."

of alternate rhymes, but with a couple of irregularities in the middle. The first two quatrains are enclosed by quotation marks (which is why I ascribe the remark to the lyrical subject) and conveys exultation for the German defeat and imminent peace. The first irregularity occurs by the end of these two quatrains, where the first two verses are repeated. This lends the passage a rounded character and provides it with a sense of closure. These verses are followed by the other irregularity, namely an extra three verses, which set themselves apart from the rest as three rhetorical open questions: "Where is the noble lord's menhir? | What festive song surrounds it in his memory? | Which giant battle at a festival? – (M.C. Bruun 1797: 74).[107] Apart from differing from the surrounding part of the ode in their design as questions and by adding extra lines, these verses are noticeable for introducing Old Norse traditions as the menhir, memorial songs and ancient warriors.[108] Niels Ebbesen and the freedom, he represents, is thus linked back to an earlier period than the Middle Ages. The first two of the irregular verses rhyme in couple and thereby echo the earlier two couplets, and the third verse rhymes with the second and fourth line of the following quatrain and thereby resonates with the detached "He fell!...." from the antistrophe.[109] These diverging verses following the conclusion-like repetition of the first part of the epode indicate a shift from praise of Niels Ebbesen to critique of the contemporary oblivion (cited above). The syntehesis of the epode breaks down, when it cannot unite the strophe (Niels Ebbesen's triumph) and the antistrophe (Niels Ebbesen's death) in a poetic homage, as the tributes due to Niels Ebbesen is clearly lacking (his menhir, memorial songs and giant battles). The epode does not find its form again, until it embarks upon a criticism of the oblivion which have befallen the memory of the freedom fighter.

The odic form of course underpins the nature of the poem as a homage to Niels Ebbesen and the freedom, he represents. The ode is furthermore a suitable form, as it was believed to provide the writer

[107] "Hvor er den Ædles Bautasteen? | Hvad festligt Mindesqvad omtoner den? | Hvad Høitids Kæmpedyst? –"

[108] That the warriors are ancient appears from the word chosen for warrior or knight, "kæmpe". "Kæmpe" is in Bruun's time commonly used when referring to Old Norse warriors, while the medieval correspondent is "ridder", which shares its connotations with the English "knight".

[109] The reason that I divide the verses b|abab and not abab|a is that the first verse correspond to the two previous wh-questions and is ended with a dash, which grammatically and punctuation-wise demarcates it from the following four verses.

with great freedom (Fafner 1994: 331), which mirrors the unlimited socio-political freedom the poem aspires to. While the verses are of varying length and makes use of the provided freedom in form, the rhyme scheme is rather structured, except for the two irregular passages described above. These breaks, pertinent to Niels Ebbesen's deed and the lack of memory culture, call attention to the contemporary lack of awareness of him. Thus, they emphasise the way in which the commemoration of Niels Ebbesen, the aim of the poem, is obstructed by the prevailing oblivion.

While the ode is a clear comment to the contemporary time, it conveys its message through a mixture of references to antique, Old Norse and medieval history. The antique histories – the Roman and the Norse – becomes associated with freedom; Roman Antiquity because the figure of Brutus is employed to represent an act of freedom and Norse Antiquity because the memory of the freedom fighter, even though he is medieval, is embedded in Old Norse culture. The Middle Ages then represents a time when the ancient freedom is under pressure, but even though freedom triumphs, liberty is eventually lost.

Sub-conclusion

This chapter has shown some examples of ways in which eighteenth-century Danish literature participated in the reception of republican ideas and contributed reflections on the relations between republicanism and monarchy. Bruun's ode is an example of pure rejection of monarchy in favour of republicanism, but it is an isolated case. Sander's play exhibits a reaction more in line with the majority of contemporary political theorisation in that it represents monarchy intermingled with republican features. The play's medievalism thus provides an imaginarium for reflecting on and experimenting with republican ideas and the possibilities for combining them with monarchy. But it is not any imaginarium, it is a conception of a certain period in the national past. By representing a republican notion of freedom as part of Danish medieval history, the notion appear less foreign and more compatible with Danish culture, as it is represented as a form of government which the country has already had earlier.

Not just in Sander's drama, but in Bruun's ode as well, medievalism provides a platform for considering political questions

which could not necessarily be expressed publicly. This is not to say that medievalism simply provides a cover for political expression (which it surely could, as the historical distance and fictitious nature places it in a safe position removed from censorship and legal proceedings). While Bruun's poem is rather clear about its political standpoint, in Sander's drama, medievalism provides a space for reflections, where the play itself does not always take a stand, but allows the audience or reader reflect on political issues such as the election of the future king.

The chapter has considered how some of the earlier medievalistic literature in the dissertation's corpus relates to other major currents of the time such as Classicism and Norse Renaissance. By refashioning medieval Danish material, the literature examined here posits itself in contrast to absolutism's use of Roman Antiquity. This contrast has brought to the foreground in Sander's play an emphasis on the people. It is a commonplace in Romanticism research to interpret the return to Nordic Antiquity and the Danish Middle Ages as a popular movement and to understand the concept of the people as firmly embedded in the far away imagined past. That Sander's play positions itself somewhat in contrast to the Roman Classicism of absolutism does not necessarily imply antagonism against absolutism, but it reflects a transfer of focus from the king to the people. Bruun's ode, on the other hand, takes a sharp critical stand against absolute monarchy and is markedly Roman classical, which might correspond to its focus on the evils of absolutism rather than the people. While Sander stages Niels Ebbesen as part of the people, despite his real, aristocratic status, Bruun reinterprets him as Brutus, as a high ranking politician. In Bruun's rendition, the story is of medieval origin, but the primary frame of reference is classical. While Sander's drama to a greater degree delves into medieval history, he also intermingles it with classicism by publishing the antiphony under a title which establishes an unmistakable intertextual connection to the play. The relation between medievalism and classicism is thus by no means consistent.

Medievalism also coexists with Norse Renaissance literature, as it also appeared from the diagram presented in the introduction. Even though both currents make use of old national history, and share significant common features, I believe there is a slight difference between them. If the Nordic Antiquity represents freedom, I will

suggest that the Danish Middle Ages might represent a time in which freedom comes under increasing attack. This is in line with Martinsen's exposition of the myth of the ancient peasants' freedom on which she notes that the myth of a lost original freedom was closely connected to the emergence of feudalism:

> During the 13th and 14th centuries, the prerogatives of these assemblies [the things] were gradually eroded by the increasingly powerful groups of bureaucrats and nobles. The monarch lost his special alliance with the peasants, who in turn would soon become prisoners in a restrictive feudal system. […] Thus, in Danish history, the idea of a lost peasant's freedom in inextricably linked to the emergence of feudalism and its consequences (Martinsen 2012b: 111).

A similar distinction between ancient and medieval times can be observed in Sander's play. Take for instance Niels Ebbesen's words on his deathbed: "Happy and proud can I meet Canute and Valdemar" (Sander 1798: 248).[110] The persons, Niels Ebbesen looks most forward to meet in the afterlife, are two ancient and early medieval kings. Likewise, when arriving at Nørreriis to meet Niels Ebbesen towards the very end of the play, King Valdemar exclaims: "I long to see a great man with the mark of antiquity" (Sander 1798: 251).[111] Niels Ebbesen's nature is not of his time. As in Bruun's ode, the freedom Niels Ebbesen represents is not typical of the Middle Ages he inhabits, but the earlier Antiquity.

[110] "Glad og stolt kan jeg möde for Knud og Valdemar"
[111] "Jeg længes efter at see en stor Mand med Oldtidens Præg"

Chapter 2

Where the sword of liberty gleams

The previous chapter described some ways in which two pieces of Danish medievalistic literature from the late eighteenth century considered questions about royal power and the social contract. This chapter will examine literature which reflects upon implications and consequences in the cases in which the social contract is violated and the popular right to resist may take effect.

A fine example of the right to resist can be found in Johan Moses Georg Hollard Nielsen's three-volume novel *Ridder Niels Ebbesen, Danmarks Befrier. En historisk romantisk Skildring fra Middelalderen* [Knight Niels Ebbesen, Denmark's Liberator. A Historical, Romantic Portrayal from the Middle Ages] (1847-1848). The novel spans the same time and historical events as Sander's *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis* studied in the previous chapter. The narrative about Niels Ebbesen consists in him renouncing allegiance to Count Gerhard and subsequently killing him in a duel, but the novel pads the story with a number of narratives about peripheral characters such as a shipwrecked Prince Edward of England, a group of Romanies and a vengeful prelate. When Niels Ebbesen sets out to kill Count Gerhard, the narrator informs the reader that it is perfectly acceptable: "Sometimes he rode out to take blood vengeance, and one must closely notice that Niels Ebbesen according to the laws and concepts of his time was within his rights when he on behalf of

Denmark took blood vengeance on Count Gerhard" (Hollard Nielsen 1847-1848: part 2: 17).[112] Few pieces of literature are as straightforward on the point of the legitimacy of resistance as Hollard Nielsen's novel, but reflections on the right to resist abound in the corpus of literature treated here. The issue appears in between a third and half of the works in the corpus. It particularly constitutes the focal point in narratives about Sweyn Grathe, Canute V and Valdemar the Great, where Sweyn kills Canute and is himself eventually killed by a peasant, and narratives about Eric Clipping, the last Danish king to suffer regicide. The significant prevalence of the theme of the right to resist an unfit ruler in the corpus literature renders it worthy of attention, and this chapter will therefore examine how the legitimacy of resistance towards the ruler is depicted and reflected on in the literature surveyed here.

Literary historian Herbert Lindenberger has treated the genre of conspiracy plays – to which the literature on right to resist can be said to belong – in his book *Historical Drama. The Relation of Literature and Reality* (1975). He defines conspiracy plays as dramas which depict clashes of forces (Lindenberger 1975: 32) and elaborates:

> A conspiracy does not simply depict a historical moment; rather, it creates the means by which one group clashes, or resolves its differences, with another group. Most of the great historical dramas are centrally concerned either with the transfer of power from one force to another (for example, *Richard II* and Grillparzer's *König Ottolars Glück und Ende*) or with the means by which a force already in power manages to stabilize itself against the onslaught of contending forces (*Henry IV*, *Dantons Tod*). The ideal situation for a play about conspiracy is a regime that shows one or more weakness which could prove fatal to its continuance (Lindenberger 1975: 31).

According to Lindenberger, a conspiracy play is concerned with transfer of power, or resistance to attempts to transfer of power, and the clashes to which it gives rise, and it is a particularly pertinent genre for depicting unstable regimes. Lindenberger's description of the genre limits itself to drama, but I see no reason why his thoughts

[112] "Stundom red han ud for at tage Blodhævn, og der maa just nøie lægges Mærke til, at Niels Ebbesen var efter sin Tids Love og Begreber i sin gode Ret, da han paa Danmarks Vegne tog Blodhevn over Grev Gerhard"

on the nature of the conspiracy play might not be applied to other genres such as the novel. Lindenberger does not himself extend the genre to other kinds of literature, as his book is concentrated on drama, but neither does he state that conspiracy is solely a subject for drama. And as a novel is as able to portray clashing forces and transfers of power as is drama, I believe it is quite valid to also apply Lindenberger's ideas of the conspiracy plays to novels, which will be done here.

One of Lindenberger's main contentions regarding the conspiracy play is that it prompts the audience to find a 'middle ground' between the clashing forces:

> the conspiracy play, by and large, forces the audience to find a middle ground between the opposing sides. The major conspiracy plays do not inspire us to pursue either action or revolution but rather set us at something of a remove from the world of action; through our ambivalence of response we often feel we are experiencing not merely out own complexity of attitude but also the complexities of history itself […] Whatever the political affiliations of their authors, conspiracy plays, in the effect they exercise on the audience, have a way of directing the spectator toward a political middle ground – not because of any positive values in the middle ground, but because the extremes on both sides turn out to be sorely wanting. In times of crisis, of course, no play can guarantee to be middle-of-the-road. […] The expectations a history play evokes often lie as much in what people feel about its essential subject matter as in what it text is actually saying (Lindenberger 1975: 37).

According to Lindenberger, then, an affordance of the conspiracy play is that it leads towards a middle ground on the issue at stake. This chapter will investigate which affordances are to be found in the engagement with questions on the right to resist of the corpus examined here. What does literature do to a political question as the legitimacy of resistance? And how may it contribute something different than can for instance political theory or public debate? These matters will be the underlying theme of this chapter.

The chapter will begin with a short introduction to the theory on the right to resist. It will be followed by a brief introduction to the history on resistance against the monarchy in Denmark in the first decades of the nineteenth century. The chapter will then turn to

literature and its representations of the right to resist. First, it will introduce the concept of the king's two bodies, which is widely contemplated in literature when dealing with the legitimacy of resisting an unfit king, and then it will map out a spectrum of stances to the question of the right to resist taken by the literature surveyed. At the end, the chapter will return to Lindenberger's contention of progression towards a middle ground as being at the heart of the conspiracy play, relate it to the literature analysed and discuss what literature contributes when it deals with the right to resist.

Right to resist

The question of if and when a people may legitimately resist a tyrannical ruler is an inherent issue of the absolute form of government, and theorisations of the right to resist, *ius resistendi*, reaches far back in the history of political philosophy. This section will outline some of the main thoughts on *ius resistendi*, as they comprise the theoretical backdrop for the Danish nineteenth-century writers' engagement with the right to resist an unfit king. Of course, political theory abounds with texts on the right to depose of a ruler, not least in relation to the French revolution. But, as the literary works treated in this chapter do not enter in discussions on particular theories to any significant extent, this section will not go into details with the theories, but simply sketch out the overall arguments. What follows is thus not intended as a comprehensive review of the theory of *ius resistendi*, but as a contextualising frame of understanding for the works which will be analysed later in the chapter.

The theory of *ius resistendi* has to do with "the paradoxical form of a (legal) right to resist legal authority" (Pottage 2013: 262). The question of *ius reisistendi* has its roots in medieval thought about the subjects' right to legitimately resist a tyrant (Pottage 2013: 262). Medieval thought on *ius resistendi*, proffered by the likes of John of Salisbury (1115/1120-1180), Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and Bartolus of Sassoferrato (1313-1357), revolved around the relative status of divine law and earthly authority. The issue at stake was that on the one hand Christian scriptures stipulated obedience to divine law to be put before obedience to secular authorities, but on the other, they maintained that Christians must obey the secular authorities to

which they were subject. The question inevitably arises how to proceed if the two realms come to contradict each other. When – if at all – are the people allowed to resist an earthly government offending divine law? And who may legitimately decide to resist a government and act upon that decision? Generally, the medieval thinkers avoid answering these questions in full, and the terms of *ius resistendi* are not completely stipulated. But, as the legal historian Alain Pottage has suggested, it may be that the real purpose of the medieval texts were rather to remind rulers of acting for the common good rather than their private interests, than to legitimate resistance (Pottage 2013: 266–267). The concept of *ius resistendi* was reassessed and developed by reformation thought by among others Martin Luther (1483-1546), John Calvin (1509-1564) and the writers of the *Vindicae contra tyrannos* (1579)[113] (Pottage 2013: 267–271). The reformation brought refinement to the political thinking on *ius resistendi*, but the period's historical events such as the Peasants' War in 1524-1525 also revealed the necessity for restricting the right to resist. While Protestant writers advanced the right of resistance in line with their religion, they were acutely aware of not providing the Catholics with a foundation for resisting Protestant rulers (Pottage 2013: 268). Many of the political thinkers of the Reformation believed the people to have the right to install and depose of their ruler. The question of who was allowed to resist received the answer that the people as a whole – not an individual or a group of individuals – could legitimately resist the ruler. In *Vindicae contra tyrannos*, for instance, this is interpreted to mean that in practice the magistrates of a government had the right to act on behalf of the people and execute *ius resistendi* (Pottage 2013: 270).

Later thought on the issue of sovereignty and the legitimacy of deposing a sovereign has been developed in concurrence with social contract theory. Social contract theory designates the idea that society is based upon an agreement between its members to adapt a set of common rules in order to ensure safety and stability. The theory was given its first extensive formulation by Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) in *Leviathan* (1651) and was later developed by other philosophers, most prominently by John Locke (1632-1794) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau

[113] *Vindicae contra tyrannos* was published under the pseudonym Stephanus Junius Brutus and is now attributed to the Huguenots Hubert Languet and Philippe Duplessis-Mornay (Pottage 2013: 268).

(1712-1778). In the following will be outlined some aspects of Hobbes' and Locke's interpretations of social contract theory, as these two provide quite different interpretations of the question of whether the people are entitled to depose of an unfit ruler from within a social contract theory conceptual framework (Friend n.d.).

Hobbes is one of the most influential Renaissance philosophers. His version of the social contract theory takes as its starting point a hypothetical state of nature, which can be imagined to precede the existing society. In Hobbes' state of nature, humans are self-interested and largely equal, but resources are sparse and there is no incentive for people to cooperate. Therefore, Hobbes infers that the state of nature must fundamentally be brutal and in an eternal state of war. Fortunately, according to Hobbes, humans are basically rational, which means they are able to escape the brutal state of nature by entering into a society through the establishment of a social contract. Hobbes describes this process as two-fold: First, the people agrees to relinquish the individual rights they possessed in the state of nature and live together under common laws. Second, they provide a sovereign with the authority to enforce the first contract and thereby establish an enforcement mechanism in the sovereign, who is able to force the people to cooperate. On the question about the people's right to depose of their sovereign, Hobbes' stand is clear: No matter how badly a sovereign discharges his duties, the people is never entitled to oppose the power of the sovereign, as that institution is the only device standing between ordered society and relapse to the state of nature, which must be avoided of any account (Friend n.d.).

Hobbes' ideas about the social contract was revisited in the late seventeenth century by John Locke in his *Two Treatises of Government* (1689), which was to gain major influence not least in the late eighteenth century and first half of the nineteenth century, where its ideas came to lay at the foundation of both the American and the French revolutions and constitutions. In *Two Treatises of Government*, Locke formulated his theory of the social contract in which the right to revolution was an inherent part. Locke also took the state of nature as his theoretical point of departure, but he regarded the stare of nature rather differently than Hobbes. For Locke, the state of nature is a state of perfect freedom in which people were equal and only subject to the law of nature; that is the God-given commands which forbid harming other people's life, health, liberty or possessions. The

only reason for leaving behind the blissful state of nature is its lack of civil authority – if the law of nature is transgressed, there is no mechanism for holding the transgressor accountable, and the transgressor is likely to continue. That is why, according to Locke, civil government was formed. The people gives up some of its power in order to create a system of laws, judges and executive power (Connolly n.d.; "Two Treatises of Government" 2020; Uzgalis 2020). With this foundation for the social contract, Locke infers that the people must have the rights to replace a government that disregards the interests of the citizens:

> whenever the *Legislators endeavour to take away, and destroy the Property of the People*, or to reduce them to Slavery under Arbitrary Power, they put themselves into a state of War with the People, who are thereupon absolved from any farther Obedience, and are left to the common Refuge, which God hath provided for all Men, against Force and Violence. Whensoever therefore the *Legislative* shall transgress this fundamental Rule of Society; and either by Ambition, Fear, Folly or Corruption, *endeavour to grasp* themselves, *or put into the hands of any other an Absolute Power* over the Lives, Liberties, and Estates of the People; By this breach of Trust they *forfeit the Power*, the People had put into their hands, for quite contrary ends, and it devolves to the People, who have a Right to resume their original Liberty, and, by the Establishment of a new Legislative (such as they shall think fit) provide for their own Safety and Security, which is the end for which they are in Society (Locke 1967: 430–432).

As Locke's perception of nature is not as dystopian as Hobbes', he believes that in some instances it will be preferable to depose a ruler and temporarily return to the state of nature in order to instate a better government (Friend n.d.). The citizens are, however, only allowed to resist unfair and unreasonable use of power; they cannot legitimately commence a revolution solely on the grounds that they feel aggrieved or unfairly treated. He states: "That *Force* is to be *opposed* to nothing, but to unjust and unlawful *Force*" (Locke 1967: 420).

The ideas of the right to resist articulated in *Two Treatises of Government* can be found in a number of subsequent revolutionary movements. In the American revolutionary movement, Locke's

arguments recur in the U.S. Declaration of Independence (1776). Likewise, the right of revolution is repeated in the French *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* (1789) ("Two Treatises of Government" 2020).

The right to resist is also present in the Danish context in the end of the eighteenth century: For instance, the Column of Liberty – an obelisk raised in 1792-1797 to commemorate the abolition of adscription in 1788 – served as a reminder about the right to resist, as its inscription proclaims the classical right to rebel against tyrants who violated the social contract (Horstbøll and Østergård 1989: 12-13). Likewise, in 1797, the jurist Peter Collet was fired on account of having endorsed the right of the people to install and depose of regents (Horstbøll 1989: 30).

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, though, the right to resist was not particularly prominent on the public agenda in Denmark, which is, of course, in part owning to the legislation on the freedom of the press. However, recently some historians have argued that critique of the form of government was more present in society at this time than has hitherto been assumed, in particular in connection with the Napoleonic wars and the consequent economical crisis. These arguments will be presented after a brief introduction to the more traditional laying out of the political history of the period.

Resistance against absolutism in Denmark

Resistance against the regent is not a particularly prevalent theme in Danish historical writing about the first half of the nineteenth century. The lack of sources about opposition to the monarchy can be interpreted both as a testimony to the absence of opposition or as a result of successful suppression of such opinions. It can be difficult to assess to what degree each of these possibilities are the case with regard to the historical sources stemming from the first decades of nineteenth-century Danish history because of the increased de facto censorship in the period. With the Decree of the Freedom of the Press of 1799, censorship-like practices had been reinstated in Denmark. After Frederik VI officially ascended to the throne after the death of his father in 1808, amendments were added so that by 1814, censorship had in practice returned (Auring et al. 1984: 160; Hansen,

Gregersen and Jensen 2011). The conditions for the freedom of the press of the period pose a challenge for historians trying to describe the political conditions of the first decades of the nineteenth century. Historian Claus Møller Jørgensen, for instance, points out that until the end of the 1820s, there was no particular opposition against absolutism or any widespread wish for the borders of the state to correlate to those of the nation (Jørgensen 2014: 84). Contrarily, archivist and researcher Kenn Tarbensen maintains that the opposition against the absolute form of government found in the rest of Europe after the end of the Napoleonic wars was also prevalent in Denmark at the time and can be discerned in private exchanges, but also vaguely in the daily press and clubs (Tarbensen 2006b: 233). More agreed upon and documented is the prevalent fear of Frederik VI and his officials that events like the revolutions in southern Europe would emerge in Denmark as well. There are recorded a high number of cases concerning infringement of the press laws, and even small cases of public expressions which could be interpreted as dissatisfaction with the king were severely prosecuted because of the rule's fear of uprising (Tarbensen 2006a: 198).

At the surface of it, critique of the monarchy does not seem to have been very prevalent in the 1810s and 1820s, at least because attempts at voicing criticisms were promptly shut down. There is, however, one prominent exception to this tendency, namely Dr Dampe's attempts to initiate a movement for the institution of free constitution. From 1819, the theologian and doctor of philosophy Jacob Jacobsen Dampe (1790-1867) began to voice demands for freedom and constitution (Tarbensen 2006a: 190). His object was not necessarily to alter the form of government, but he believed the nation should have the right to determine the form of government and change it. As political thinkers before him, he considered the people as the origin of power, and as the people was able to decide the form of government with the institution of absolutism in 1660, he maintained that they also had the right to decide the form of government in the 1800s. His demands was for a referendum, not forceful deposition of the king (Tarbensen 2006a: 204). Dampe's actions frightened the already tense government, and the reaction was severe. The newly appointed chief commissioner of police Andreas Christian Kierulff planted Lieutenant C.L.F. Top as an agent provocateur in the heart of Dampe's undertakings. Top encouraged Dampe's endeavours in favour of free constitution and

eventually set him up to be arrested by the police on November 16th 1820 (Tarbensen 2006a: 191–192). On February 2nd 1821, Dampe was convicted under the law on the freedom of the press of 1799, and sentenced to beheading. On March 7th, the sentence was changed to life imprisonment, and he was sent to Christiansø to serve out the sentence in isolation from the public (Tarbensen 2006a: 209).

This one radical character does not take up much room in the literary history of the early nineteenth century. Literary history rather tends to be occupied with the aesthetic discussions of the cultured elite in the period (Nygaard 2011: 419). Generally, the Danish Romantic age is not perceived of as particularly charged with politics, especially not when compared to revolutionary liberal movements in other European countries (Nygaard 2011: 419). As pointed out by historian Bertel Nygaard, a significant part of existing research has focused on either art or politics, which has resulted in atomistic treatment of the period and labelling of Golden Age[114] art as apolitical. He observes that historians mainly have approached the period

> from within the sphere of politics, mapping political institutions, leading politicians and their thoughts. Other scholarly traditions have focused on the histories of art, literature and ideas as virtually independent of politics. 'Golden Age' poets have been characterized in passing as 'apolitical', 'anti-political', disinterestedly 'conservative', or all three at once, but practically always very summarily. While some studies of literature have lent more weight to the political attitudes of authors, few have challenged traditional categories or interpretations (Nygaard 2011: 420).

Nygaard applies a more holistic approach and maintains that Danish Romantic art contains political aspects, albeit it might be of a different nature than the type of politics, historians often otherwise engage in. He contends that:

[114] The Golden Age is a designation for the period c. 1800 to c. 1850 in Danish cultural history ("Guldalderen. 1800-1850" n.d.). The term was coined around the year 1900 when the cultural productions of the first part of the nineteenth century was looked back upon nostalgically and perceived of as a golden age of art and culture. The term Golden Age is still used as a designation for the period within art history, but literary historians tend to prefer the term Romanticism for the period (Grand, Pennington and Thomsen 2013: 70).

> The subjectivism inherent in romantic idealizations of individuality, genius, poetry, nature and mythological history was not without political implications. In some senses, the intense debates on poetry and aesthetics of the early 1800s also prepared the Danish public for the political divisions to come by forging, as the poet Henrik Hertz put it, an 'element of criticism, a spirit of opposition continuously prepared for resistance' (Nygaard 2011: 419).

This does not imply, however, that Romantic literature should be regarded as political as a matter of course, as detachment from politics became a positive value in the period (Nygaard 2011: 419–420). Nygaard therefore comes to characterise the relationship between poetry and politics in the early nineteenth century in the following way:

> The literary public which held this contradictory complex of modernity, escapism, protest and royalist ideals in great esteem might indeed, as Jürgen Habermas has claimed, be regarded as a 'pre-form' of the critically reasoning political public. Yet the formal separation of the literary public from explicit political debate meant that it was more than just 'prepolitical'; it contributed to a widely felt sense of inherent opposition between politics and the sort of romantic poetry dominant in Denmark during the first decades of the 19th century (Nygaard 2011: 423).

While Nygaard encourages us to look for politics in Romantic era art and understand its particular nature, he is one of few. As he himself observes, research abounds with examples of researchers stating to the apolitical nature of Danish society in the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Arguments against political stagnation

As Nygaard calls for researchers to consider the political nature of Romantic literature, two historians have contended that the political climate of the 1810s weas more charged than hitherto assumed. In an article, Rasmus Glenthøj claims that around 1814, Frederik VI's government was challenged by liberal demands to a much higher degree than had been assumed prior to the publication of his article

(Glenthøj 2013: 69), and that there was much stronger opposition and aversion towards Frederik VI and the absolute monarchy during and after the Napoleonic Wars than previously thought (Glenthøj 2013: 90–91). Glenthøj grants that the Danish public in the 1810s was dominated by conservative and moderate forces and that the period was characterised by fear of revolution and lack of dynamism, but he encourages historical research to look beyond these conservative currents (Glenthøj 2013: 89). In the article, Glenthøj emphasises sources, which take a critical stance towards royal power. He refers to "calls, drafts and preliminary work for a Danish constitution, which were published or constructed between 1815-1818" (Glenthøj 2013: 86),[115] which argued for more freedom, indirectly criticised the government and articulated the idea of opinion-led absolutism, which Glenthøj regards as going to the limits of what was possible to publish at the time (Glenthøj 2013: 88). Based on a handful of sources and secondary literature, Glenthøj concludes that the aversion towards the king intensified with the peace in 1814 (Glenthøj 2013: 83).

One of Glenthøj's examples is a diary entry from 1807 by the public officer Laurits Engelstoft. From it, Glenthøj reads aversion towards Frederik VI because he had left Copenhagen in time of need and located the Danish army in Holstein, whereby Copenhagen was left defenceless against Britain. The entry reads: "The tone in Copenhagen is not very advantageous. They scold the government, the crown prince, the departments. The great merchants are so English-minded that they wish for nothing else than coming under English control" (Engelstoft cited in Glenthøj 2013: 80).[116] Another of his examples is British espionage reports about the dissatisfaction with the Danish king. Glenthøj is aware that the type of source can be unreliable, but he claims them to be concordant with Danish sources (Glenthøj 2013: 82).

Another argument in favour of considering the period as more politically charged is put forward by Jens Rasmussen in his article "Jødefejden og de beslægtede uroligheder, 1819-20. "Indledning til den store scene"?" (2010) [The Jew-baiting and the related tumults, 1819-

[115] "opfordringer, skitser og forarbejder til en dansk forfatning, der blev publiceret eller udformet mellem 1815-1818"

[116] "Tonen i Kiøbenhavn er meget li[d]t fordeelagtig. Man skielder paa Regieringen, paa Kronprindsen, paa Collegierne. De store Kiøbemænd ere saa engelsksindede, at de intet hellere ønske end at blive under engelsk Herredømme" (square brackets in original)

1820. “Preamble to the great scene”?]. In the article, Rasmussen uncovers then newly found sources which reveal the government’s fear of uprising aimed towards absolutism as form of government (J. Rasmussen 2010: 134–135). Rasmussen’s contention is that the Danish government believed there to be a connection between Dr. Dampe’s revolutionary association and the persecution of Jews in 1819. The material discovered by Rasmussen reveals a fear in Minister for Justice and Prime Minister (*Gehejmestatsminister*) Frederik Julius Kaas that the unease surrounding the persecution of Jews was about to develop into political unrest aimed towards the king’s government on account of the poor economy (J. Rasmussen 2010: 145). What is relevant in Rasmussen’s article for the purpose here is the article’s overall claim that political opposition was an issue in the 1810s. Rasmussen’s article thus aims to nuance the perception of the political climate of the period.

To what degree Glenthøj and Rasmussen are right to claim that the political climate of the 1810s was more charged than previously assumed is not for this dissertation to assess. The articles are included here because they promote the idea of the existence of a political opposition in the second decade of the nineteenth century and thereby illustrate the inconclusive state of the historical research on the disposition of the political public in the period. However, arguments in favour of reconsidering the prominence of political unrest are still rather sparse.

The right to resist in literature

Whether or not the dissatisfaction with the Danish absolute rule in the beginning of the nineteenth century was more prominent than historians have hitherto assumed, the notion of opposing the king is widely debated in the corpus of literature examined here. A substantial part of the literature treated in this dissertation engage in discussion of the right to resist an unfit ruler. Literature about Niels Ebbesen and the Interregnum of course contemplate the rightfulness of Niels Ebbesen’s murder of Count Gerhard, as we saw examples of in the previous chapter. Also two other of the frequently represented kings are closely connected to reflections on the legitimacy of killing a monarch.

One is Sweyn Grathe, who killed his co-pretender to the throne and was himself later killed by a peasant. Sweyn Grathe's death marked the end of the civil war lasting from 1131 to 1157. During this period, different pretenders attempted to claim the Danish Crown, often with the aid of the German Emperor. Towards the end of the civil war – which is the time the literature analysed here represents – Denmark was ruled by the three kings: Canute V, Valdemar (later known as Valdemar the Great) and Sweyn Ericson (later known as Sweyn Grathe). In the spring of 1157, peace negotiations between the kings had settled that Valdemar would be king of Jutland; Canute would be king of Funen, Sealand and the surrounding islands; and Sweyn would be king of Scania. To celebrate the peace agreement, a feast was arranged in the city of Roskilde. According to the medieval historian Saxo Grammaticus – whose history of Denmark was a primary source for the writers of the nineteenth century – Sweyn planned to murder the two other kings at the feast so that he could himself become sole king of Denmark. At the feast, Sweyn's men attacked Canute and Valdemar. Canute died, but Valdemar managed to escape back to Jutland. In Jutland, Valdemar gathered an army, which met Sweyn's army from Sealand and Scania on Grathe Heath on October 23rd 1157. Sweyn's army was defeated, and Sweyn fled the battlefield, only to be killed by a peasant while hiding in the bogs. With the death of Sweyn, the civil war ended with Valdemar becoming the only king in Denmark (Bøgh 2009a; Lund 2019a, 2019b; Pajung 2011, 2018; Ulsig 2012).

The other of the often represented kings associated with reflections on the legitimacy of regicide is Eric Clipping, the last victim to regicide in Danish history. Under Eric Clipping's reign, the royal court of justice excessively convicted accused persons for lese-majesty, for which the punishment was loss of life and property. Because politics and law had become quite intertwined under Eric Clipping's rule, the nobles united in an effort to impede the king's arbitrary use of the punishment for lese-majesty. The result was the creation of Denmark's first coronation charter in 1282. In this document, Eric Clipping had to concede to a number of limitations for his exercise of power. The royal court of justice was no longer allowed to pass judgement in cases which had not first been presented to another court, it was only allowed to impose previously agreed-upon fines, and the annual Dane Court was made the supreme court where cases on

lese-majesty could be ruled upon by a tribunal consisting of nobles. Although the king and nobles cooperated on extensive legislative work in the following year, the king still ignored claims to succession to property from his relatives, even though the Dane Court had ruled in favour of the relatives, and the political climate continued to be unstable. It culminated on November 22nd 1286, when Eric Clipping was murdered in the village Finderup with 56 stabs. Although nine nobles were convicted for the murder at the following year, the regicide has never been solved (Bøgh 2016). The nineteenth-century writers' source to the story of the regicide was the popular ballads composed some time after the murder. The ballads often cast the king's marshal Stig Andersen as the leader of the conspirators who killed Eric Clipping. His reason for doing so – which is often replicated in nineteenth-century literature as well – is the king's violation of the marshals wife Ingeborg. In order to restore his honour, marshal Stig therefore renounce his allegiance to the king and join forces with the discontented nobles and clergy in order to kill the king (Møller 2015: 417–418).

Many of the works treated in this dissertation showcase explicit contemplation on regicide or the right to resist, and more deal with the topic. Few instances of literature justify regicide as forwardly as does for instance Bruun's ode analysed in the previous chapter, which we saw represented tyrannicide as fully legitimate and celebrated Niels Ebbesen as a revolutionary Brutus incarnation. Most of the works thematising the right to resist remain either undecided or show a slight inclination either in favour or against. The points of interest, however, do not necessarily lie in the stances the different works take on the question of regicide, but in the contemplations and arguments they unfold. The following section will map out some of the main arguments found in the literature with regard to the right to resist. As a significant part of these arguments are based on the same theoretical foundation – the concept of the king's two bodies – this notion will be explained before the different positions on the right to resist will be mapped out.

The king's two bodies

A basic, recurring notion at the foundation of much of the arguments about the right to resist is a distinction between the regent as a person and as an institution. This distinction, medievalist historian Ernst Kantorowicz has described in his book *The king's two bodies. A study in mediaeval political theology* (1957). The metaphor of the king's two bodies originates from medieval political philosophy and it carries the idea that the king possesses two bodies; the body natural and the body politic. The body natural is the king's biological body and the body politic is the immortal royal authority, which takes residence in the heir to the throne upon succession. The body natural is not distinct or divided from the body politic, but they comprise an indivisible whole. However, the body politic is superior to the body natural, as in the body politic dwell certain "truly mysterious forces which reduce, or even remove, the imperfections of the fragile human nature" (Kantorowicz 1997: 9). Thus, when the body natural and the body politic merge, the body politic removes the flaws of the body natural, and the body natural is transformed into an omnipotent whole (Kantorowicz 1997: 7–23).

The notion of distinguishing between the king's physical and political bodies is also found in Danish political thought in the first part of the nineteenth century. Here, also, it was the understanding that upon the death of one king, the immortal royal power would transfer into the body of the heir to the throne (Glenthøj 2013: 71). Much of the literature treated in this chapter makes use of a distinction between what can be termed the king's two bodies. But, the literary works sometimes diverge from the above description of the phenomenon as they often question the indivisibility of the body natural and body politics and ponder the possibilities of killing one body natural in order for the body politic to transfer to a more suited body natural.

The literature analysed here presents different interpretations of the king's two bodies with different political implications, in particular in instances where the king's status as sacrosanct is being reconsidered. Sometimes the distinction between the king as a person and as an institution is very explicitly stated, as for instance in Salomon Soldin's *Marsk Stig eller Sammenrottelsen mod Erik*

Glipping, Konge af Danmark. Et romantisk Skilderie fra det trettende Aarhundrede [Marshall Stig or the Conspiracy against Eric Clipping, King of Denmark. A Romantic Picture from the Thirteenth Century] (1802). In a conversation between Eric Clipping and the mother of Marshall Stig's wife Ingeborg, Ingeborg's mother prepares the ground for warning Eric against commencing an affair with Ingeborg when she says: "Is it the king or is it the father, the virtuous Queen Agnes['s] spouse, to whom I am talking? – is it the king, only the king, then Heaven save my lips! But is it the father, the faithful spouse, then I will speak as nature and duty bid me" (Soldin 1802: 13).[117] Clearly, Ingeborg's mother acknowledges the parallel existence of both a body natural (the father and spouse) and a body politic (the king) in the king she confronts.

The distinction of the two bodies is used with more nuance in Caspar Johannes Boye's *Erik den Syvende*[118] [Eric the Seventh] (1827).[119] In this rendition of the Eric Clipping story, Marshal Stig is an undisputed villain. Stig has convinced himself that the king and Ingeborg are having an affair, which they are not. When the proofs against the marshal's thought-up affair becomes too compelling for him to ignore, Stig loses his reasons for rebelling against the king. He does not give up his enterprise on that account, though, but convinces himself that he is now acting on behalf of the country rather than from selfish motives when he continues to plot against the king. The king, in this rendition, is basically a decent man, but fails because he neglects his coronation charter.

When marshal Stig accuses his wife Ingeborg of being unfaithful with the king while he was absent waging a war in Sweden, Ingeborg is incredulous of the fact that Stig on his return would be in company with the king and receive gifts and awards of honour if he really believed him to be having an affair with his wife. Stig's reply goes: "To the crown, I bent my knee, | but not to the king; the fatherland gave | me the prize, not he; as a marshal, | but not as a friend, I walked

[117] "Er det Kongen eller er det Faderen, den dydige Dronning Agnes [sic.] Ægtemage, jeg taler med? – er det Kongen, kun blot Kongen, saa bevare Himlen mine Læber! Men er det Faderen, den trofaste Ægtemage, saa vil jeg tale som Natur og Pligt byde mig"

[118] Eric Clipping is in fact not the seventh Eric in the sequence of kings, but the fifth. Why Boye has entitled his play *Eric the Seventh* is unclear.

[119] The play was performed at the Royal Danish Theatre five times in 1827, twice in 1828, three times in 1829 and a single time in 1831, 1832 and 1847 respectively (N. Jensen 2020b).

closest to him; Denmark | it was that I served with my counsel" (Boye 1851: 36).[120] Stig clearly distinguishes between the king as a person and in his professional capacity. In the quote, there can also be observed a distinction of the king from the country. In Stig's perception, the king is not interchangeable with the country: The king can act on behalf of the country by awarding Stig a prize, but he does not embody the country. Likewise, Stig sees his own being as twofold, with on the one hand his profession as marshal and on the other a socially defined person, a friend. And like Stig perceives his own person to be separate from his profession, he sees the king as separate from his profession; the crown and the king are two different entities.

Another interesting example of the separation of the king's two bodies can be found in Ole Bang's drama *Kongen vaagner* [The King Awakens] (1846, published under the pseudonym S. Norby) about King Christian II, where the division has religious implications. Christian II was the last regent to reign over the Kalmar Union, a union between Denmark, Norway (including Iceland, Greenland, The Faroe Islands, The Orkney Islands and the Shetland Islands) and Sweden (including Finland) which had been established by Queen Margrete I in 1397. In particular Christian II's violent action under the Stockholm Bloodbath in 1520, where he had 82 of his opponents executed, contributed to the secession of Sweden from the union in 1521. In 1523, the Danish nobility's dissatisfaction with Christian II's reforms led parts of the Jutlandic aristocracy to revoke their oath of allegiance to the king. The rebellious nobility formed an alliance with Christian II's uncle Frederik, who agreed to provide troops in exchange for the Danish Crown. Christian II was not able to suppress the aristocratic rebellion and was forced to flee the country. Frederik climbed the throne as King Frederik I in 1523. In 1531, Christian II attempted to recapture Denmark, but when he was lured back to Denmark under false pretences, became imprisoned, and he spent the rest of his life in captivity (Bøgh and Haahr 2012; Lønvig 2012; Mogensen 2012).

Bang's drama takes place after the Stockholm Bloodbath and depicts Christian II realising his wrongdoings over the course of the

[120] "Kronen bøied jeg mit Knæ for, | Men ei for Kongen; Fædrelandet gav | Mig Seierslønnen, ikke han; som Marsk, | Men ei som Ven, jeg gik ham nærmest; Danmark | Var det, jeg tjente med mit Raad"

play. After having realised what he has done, the king desperately converses with himself and frets about his actions, when he is interrupted by an envoy sent from Martin Luther. The king welcomes the envoy and questions him about how much he overheard, to which he answers: "I thank your Grace | For that permission; in you I will | Forget the king, only see the human. – | You ask what I heard? – What I | So often learned before: that the royal power cannot | Command the voices crying out | An oh woe to the sinner" (Norby 1846: 56).[121] The envoy's comment about disregarding the king and only seeing the human implies that the king as person and his office can be thought of individually and that one can be contemplated separate from the other. The quote also shows an internal division within the king, that he – like other kings – embodies both royal power and a sinner, a human being. The king's two bodies, in this instance too, are not a merged whole, but two separate entities within the same person. The king's body natural has not been elevated by the cohabitation with the body politic, but is still an ordinary sinner. The king, too, conceives of his two bodies as divided from one another. Towards the end of the play, after the king has fully realised his errors and decided to make amends, he utters to the same envoy: "Come now and follow me inside! soon I will again show | You the proof that not only the human, | But also the king, has awakened" (Norby 1846: 154).[122] From this appears that the human, or the body natural, has agency apart from the king, or the body politic. The two bodies are juxtaposed, but not merged, within the same body.

The metaphor of the king's two bodies is often employed in the historical literature of Bernhard Severin Ingemann, where it is most often linked with the inviolability of the crown. It is particularly prevalent in *Erik Menveds Barndom* [The Childhood of Eric Menved] (1828). *Erik Menveds Barndom* revolves around the murder of Eric Clipping and delves into the prelude to the regicide and the subsequent ascension to the throne of his son Eric Menved.[123] The

[121] "Jeg takker Eders Naade | For den Tilladelse; i Eder vil jeg | Forglemme Kongen, kun see Mennesket . – | I spørger, hvad jeg hørte? – Hvad jeg før | Saa tidt erfared': at ei Kongemagten | Kan byde over Stemmerne, der raabe | Et Ak og Vee til Synderen"

[122] "Kom nu og følg mig ind! snart skal jeg Eder | Gjenvise Prøven paa, at Mennesket | Ei ene, ogsaa Kongen vaagnet er"

[123] Eric Menved had been elected as the successor to Eric Clipping in 1276 and ruled under tutelage until 1293 (Albrectsen 2014).

novel follows a multitude of different characters, many of them based on historical persons, associated with the stories of the two kings. One of the main characters is Eric Clipping's seneschal Peder Hessel. Peder Hessel is a character who is troubled by the king's personality and actions, but remains fiercely loyal to the crown. He is described to "combine our common wish for the welfare of the country with personal devotion to the royal family" (Ingemann 1857: part 1: 44).[124] At the Dane Court following the death of Eric Clipping where there is to be passed a judgement for the murder, the conspirators accused defend the regicide by referring to the serious and numerous wrongdoings of the late king. In his response, Peder Hessel appeals to the notion of the king's two bodies: "It is not the person Eric Christopherson we are dealing with, but the king and Crown of Denmark, whose inviolable majesty and sanctity with bloody and presumptuous hand have been assaulted; it is a violence against the anointed head of a people and a realm which shall be judged" (Ingemann 1857: part 3: 109).[125] Peder Hessel's interpretation of the king's two bodies is rather classical: Because the king's physical body is infused with the body politic – and divine right – it is sacrosanct as well. To Peder Hessel, it is a tragedy one must simply bear, if the person of a king turns out to be unworthy of kingship, and thus he has resigned quietly in the service of Eric Clipping: "Silent and with the bitter feeling that he could not, as he deeply wished, wholeheartedly respect the human hand to which the holy sceptre of the Crown bade him pay homage" (Ingemann 1857: part 1: 111).[126] Hessel's acceptance, although based on religious principles, are more than a confirmation of the divine right of kings. Unquestioned loyalty to the king is also, importantly, a practical arrangement ensuring peace and safety for the country, if everyone contributes to it:

> Shall not discord and strife soon separate all, even the best of Danish hearts, and shall not the people be dissolved and perish in

[124] "forbinder vort fælles Ønske om Fædrelandets Vel med personlig Hengivenhed for Kongehuset."

[125] "Det er ikke Mennesket Erik Christophersøn her er Talen om, men Danmarks Konge og Danmarks Krone, hvis uantastelige Majestæt og Hellighed med blodig og formastelig Haand er angreben; det er en Forgribelse paa et Folks og et Riges salvede Hoved, her skal dømmes"

[126] "Taus og med den bittre Følelse af at han ikke, som han saa inderlig ønskede, kunde af Hjertet høiagte den Menneskehaand, Kongeværdighedens hellige Spir dog bød ham at hylde"

> such a devastating conflict, we must perforce agree in one respect, and that is in loyal veneration to the Crown's sanctity and majesty on whose head it lawfully and rightfully rests. It is surely lamentable if we as humans – as knights or the servants of God's word – could not always love and praise the personality which is however inseparable from the majesty (Ingemann 1857: part 1: 44).[127]

Thus, in Ingemann's fiction, the notion of the king's two bodies operates to the effect that the two bodies are inseparable with that implying that the body natural cannot be harmed either, as it is infused with the body politic.

In Ingemann's fiction, the contemplations about the king's two bodies are closely related to the question of succession. The king both carries on the crown, but importantly also the line of the royal house, as Hessel expresses it when he orders a group of people to carry the dead body of the late king away from Finderup: "Honour the dead for the crown he wore and for the great dynasty from which he came!" (Ingemann 1857: part 2: 174).[128] Even though an individual king is unfit for the office, this mind-set prescribes the preservation of him as he is part of a dynasty from which have emerged great regents and from which great regents may appear again. The whaler Henner Friser offers this argument of preserving the king only on account of the potential in his son:

> And yet – I still say the Lord save the king and his son! for the sake of the country and the realm. The father is no good; a wily old fox shall say otherwise; but God save the rotten trunk for the sake of the fresh root shoot! The little Eric has Valdemar the Victorious's eagle eyes, and will our Lord keep his hand over him, it might again be worth it for an honest man to live in Denmark (Ingemann 1857: part 1: 8).[129]

[127] "Skal Splid og Tvedragt ikke snart adskille alle, selv de bedste danske Hjerter, og skal Folket ikke opløses og gaae tilgrunde i en saa ødelæggende Strid, maae vi nødvendig være enige i eet Stykke, og det er i trofast Ærbødighed for Kronens Hellighed og Majestæt, paa hvis Hoved det saa er, den lovligt og retmæssig hviler. Sørgeligt er det tilvisse, hvis vi, som Mennesker – som Riddere eller Guds Ords Tjenere – ikke altid kunne elske og hylde den Personlighed, der dog er uadskillelig fra Majestæten"

[128] "Ærer den Døde for Kronen, han bar, og for den store Kongeslægts Skyld, hvoraf han er udgangen!"

[129] "Og dog – Vor Herre bevare Kongen og hans Søn! siger jeg endnu for Landets og Rigets Skyld. Faderen duer ikke; en Skjelm skal sige Andet; men Gud bevare den

The same connection between the king's two bodies and the line of succession can be found in Thomas Christopher Bruun's *Erik Glipping* [Eric Clipping] (1816), which is also about the murder of Eric Clipping. In the second to last line of the play, the queen dowager offers her comfort to the queen after they have found Eric Clipping murdered, and her comfort is comprised by the fact that her husband lives on in her son: "Still the trunk is green | King Eric lives in your son" (T.C. Bruun 1816: 122).[130] An interesting detail is that the queen dowager says "King Eric" rather than "the king", suggesting that this individual king, and not simply the body politic inhabited by the entire line of regents up to this point, lives on in Eric Menved. Here we do not see the classical division of body politic and body natural, but some of the body natural – at least the name and probably more than that – is transferred to the successor when the previous king dies.

While the notion of the king's two bodies is very frequently encountered in the corpus of literature treated here, there are also examples of literature which does not employ this distinction. Adam Oehlenschläger's drama *Erik Glipping* [Eric Clipping] (1844), for instance, features an example of the king's body as an equivalent to the country, so that the king's biological body, his political body and the country are condensed into one unity. In the beginning of the play, the king's treasurer abducts Ingeborg. When Ingeborg is brought together with the king, she brings him to his senses and he decides to release her back to marshal Stig. However, Ingeborg foresees that the marshal will not forgive the offence and warns the king: "I foresee | the entire horror. You have abducted me, | Marshal Stig will never forgive the offence. | A stab to the heart you gave your realm, | Which hits yourself with destruction" (Oehlenschläger 1853: 418).[131] The stab to the heart of the kingdom becomes juxtaposed with the wounds the king will later himself receive from the conspirators. Thereby is established a connection between the king's mortal body and the realm which is not one of coexistence, like the king's two bodies, but rather of unity. Elsewhere, too, the condition of the king and that of the

raadne Stamme for det friske Rodskuds Skyld! den lille Erik har Valdemar Seiers Ørneøine, og vil Vor Herre holde sin Haand over ham, kan det maaske endnu blive værd for en ærlig Mand at leve i Danmark"

130 "Endnu er Stammen grøn: | Kong Erik lever i Din Søn"

131 "Jeg forudseer | Den hele Rædsel. I har bortført mig, | Marsk Stig tilgiver ei Fornærmelsen. | Et Stik i Hiertet gav I Eders Rige, | Der træffer Eder selv med Undergang"

country are juxtaposed: When the king returns to Denmark from abroad, he exclaims: "Now, yes, I came again, here I am. | The pleasure trip was not exactly pleasant; | But after this illness I feel | More strong than before I had it. | How suffers old Denmark? Has it not | Been feverish in the meanwhile?" (Oehlenschläger 1853: 409).[132] As the king have felt ill, he assumes that the country must have been unwell too. Like the instance of the stab wounds to the heart, the king and country are posed in a parallel relation to each other or as a unified whole.

The contemplations about the king's bodies are connected to the question of the right to resist. It is about distinguishing the human from the institution and considering whether that is possible at all. If the king's two bodies are indissolubly linked – as it is in Ingemann's novels – resistance cannot be legitimated on account of the king's bad personality. But can the body natural be removed without affecting the body politic, whereby the body politic is transferred to a more suited regent, it might provide an argument for the justification of regicide. Below we shall see how these arguments are unfolded in literature dealing with the right to resist.

Ingemann: Resistance as illegitimate

The theme of resistance is treated by several novels and plays, which approach the question from different angels and offer different implications. The following sections will delve into the different treatments of the theme of resistance in different works from the literary corpus, but will begin by focusing on one single author, B.S. Ingemann and his historical cycle. This is because Ingemann is the author in the corpus who deals most with the legitimacy of resisting the king. Deposition of the king is a recurrent theme in the entire historical cycle, and rather than attempting to offer solutions to the question, the cycle remains unsolved and quite conflicted about the issue. Thus, the novels offer excellent insights on some of the many nuances, feelings and convictions surrounding the question of resistance.

[132] "Nu ja, jeg kom igien, her har I mig. | Lystreisen faldt ikke just lystigt ud; | Men efter denne Sygdom føler jeg | Mig mere stærk, end før jeg havde den. | Hvor lider gamle Danmark? Har det ei | Havt Feber midlertid?"

The question of the right to resist pervades the entire historical cycle, but is especially unfolded in *Erik Menveds Barndom*. In Ingemann's rendition of Eric Clipping's regicide, three characters outline different positions towards the question of the right to resist: the whaler Henner Friser, the king's seneschal Peder Hessel, and the marshal Stig. As it appears from his surname, Henner Friser originates from Frisia. Henner Friser's origin is of importance, because Frisian peasants traditionally have been associated with resistance against feudalism and retention of independence. Henner Friser is a historical person who, according to historian Arild Huitfeld (1546-1609), killed the Danish King Abel (c. 1218-1252, reign 1250-1252) in 1252 in an attempt to avoid becoming his subordinate and afterwards fled to Denmark (Martinsen 2010: 193). Throughout the book, Henner Friser is used to contemplate the rightfulness of killing an incompetent king, and Henner Friser himself is showed to be divided on the question. Early in the novel, Henner Friser and Peder Hessel discuss whether an entitled regicide will be damned in the hereafter. Peder Hessel maintains that people shall not condemn others and that they should least condemn the one who can only be judged by God. Henner Friser agrees as long as the king in question is legitimate; when the king has been elected by the people and not obtained the throne by fratricide and perjury, as did King Abel. Henner Friser questions Peder Hessel if he really believes King Abel's killer to be an impious traitor to be eternally condemned. Peder Hessel replies, astonished, that he still will not pass judgement, least of all on he who God chose to avenge King Abel's murder of King Eric Ploughpenny (1216-1250, reign 1241-1250) and remove him from the throne. Henner Friser then reveals himself to be the one who committed the murder. Peder Hessel is shocked by the information and castigates Henner Friser for burdening him with such an awful secret. He is severely divided between his beliefs of the king as sacrosanct and his awareness of the crimes Abel committed to ascend to the throne. Henner Friser, on the contrary, is in no doubt of the righteousness of his deed, even though it still haunts him:

> apart from you, no one in the world knows what old Henner thinks about when it storms at midnight, like the wild hunter rushes over my roof with his howling hounds. Do not think that I regret the best deed of my life! No, God and St. Christian be promised! I do not

> dread the hour when I shall stand with King Abel before the judgement seat of the Lord. And yet, sir Knight! yet it is a strange thought to have pulled away a soul from mercy and have thrown a sinner down to the damned before his right hour had arrived. But it is the weakness of old age – I know it well; it is also only at night that such thoughts occur to me; when at day I look at that bow, I feel with pride that this hand, after all, saved Denmark from destruction. As I say, it is only at night that my heart softens and I feel pity for the dead devil (Ingemann 1857: part 1: 53).[133]

Henner Friser is convinced of the rightfulness of his regicide and accepts the severe burden on his consciousness it entails. He firmly believes the regicide to have been necessary for the preservation of the country, although at the same time he recognises its ethical problems.

Peder Hessel is, as it appears from the above, absolutely loyal to the Crown, but he is not blind to the king's faults for that reason. Throughout the book, he is often shown reflecting on this dilemma, always maintaining the sacrosanctity of the monarch: "if the people can justly depose of their kings, because they are not as they should be, then no throne and no kingdom could continue to exist until pure angels were sent from heaven to govern the people in the world" (Ingemann 1857: part 2: 28).[134] Peder Hessel accepts that the king will always be flawed – as humans are – and he does not regard it as a problem:

> Well, Denmark does not always need to have a great man on the throne in order for it to be happy. The brilliant days, when there was immortal honour to be won here, I do not expect back in our time; in a hundred years, perhaps no one will remember the names

[133] "uden I veed Ingen i Verden hvad gamle Henner tænker paa, naar det stormer ved Midnat, som den vilde Jæger farer hen over mit Tag med sine hylende Hunde. Tro ikke, jeg fortryder den bedste Gjerning i mit Liv! Nej, Gud og St. Christian være lovet! jeg gruer ikke for den Time, da jeg skal staae med Kong Abel for Herrens Domstol. Og dog, Hr. Ridder! dog er det en underlig Tanke at have bortrykket en Sjæl fra Forbarmelsen og styrtet en Synder til de Fordømte før hans rette Time var kommen. Men det er Alderdoms-Svaghed – jeg veed det nok; det er ogsaa kun om Natten, slige Tanker falde mig ind; naar jeg om Dagen seer paa den Bue, føler jeg med Stolthed, at denne Haand dog eengang har reddet Danmark fra Undergang. Som jeg siger, det er kun om Natten, jeg bliver blød om Hjertet og har Ynk af den døde Djævel"

[134] "kan Folkene med Rette afsætte deres Konger, fordi de ikke ere som de bør være, saa kan jo ingen Throne og intet Rige bestaae, førend der sendes os rene Engle fra Himlen til at regjere Folkene i Verden"

> which we most often hear at the Dane Courts; but the pillars which supports an unsteady throne does not stand there in vain even if they will also be hidden and forgotten under its ruins (Ingemann 1857: part 1: 61-62).[135]

The lack of qualities in one particular king is of no consequence to Peder Hessel. The important part is to honour the royal lineage disregarding the flaws of the current regent. In this conception, the body politic makes sacrosanct the body natural as well.

Marshal Stig, with his object of killing the king, comprises the novel's revolutionary power. It should be noted that he has no intentions of assuming power over the country for himself, but intends to instate Duke Valdemar as king (Ingemann 1857: part 2: 85), thus preserving the monarchy. His rebellion is aimed at Eric Clipping, not the monarchical form of government. After the regicide, Marshal Stig has been outlawed and is in conflict with Eric Menved and his people. Stig has retreated to the small peninsula Helgenæs and the nearby island of Hjelm and works on fortifying the old caste on Hjelm and building a wall to cut off Helgenæs from the mainland. Henner Friser is one of the workers building the wall, and when Stig discovers his identity, he wants to knight him for his deed of killing Abel. But Henner Friser maintains that although there are both regicides, they are that in significantly different ways:

> I did not regret my deed; you do not regret yours either; but I did not pursue the dead in his innocent family; I did not take it upon me to substitute crowns with a sullied hand and be a false god among humans; I wanted to save, but not ruin my fatherland – I did not build walls between hearts and souls – I even realised, although it was late, that there are no blessing for us and our equals. See, therefore I could not catch you and your accomplices; therefore I was to be lead into your power by a sly devil, which I, however, had tied up myself – here I was to remedy my presumption by slaving for a bigger regicide, and I got my just deserts. You see, proud marshal!

[135] "Danmark behøver vel ikke altid en stor Mand paa Thronen for at være lykkelig. De glimrende Dage, da her var udødelig Ære at vinde, venter jeg ikke tilbage i vor Tid; om hundrede Aar vil maaske Ingen mindes de Navne, vi nu høre oftest paa Danehofferne; men de Piller, som støtte en vaklende Throne, staae der dog ikke forgjeves, om de ogsaa skal skjules og glemmes under dens Ruiner"

> I realise that now and therefore I stand higher than you (Ingemann 1857: part 3: 22).[136]

From this passage there appears to be a hierarchy of censure of regicide. Stig is a worse criminal than Henner Friser because he is not weighed down by guilt and has not ceased his vendetta after the murder. Although Henner Friser's regicide is not approved of in the novel, it is represented as less reprehensible than Stig's because he acknowledges his guilt and illegitimacy of his action.

On the one hand, Ingemann's story acknowledges that committing regicide in the case of King Abel has been necessary for the preservation of the country, while on the other hand it struggles with its ethical implications and refrains from legitimising it. The closest thing to a solution to the dilemma seems to lie in the protagonist Peder Hessel's refusal of taking a stance on the issue and leaving the matter to divine providence. The novel definitely does not encourage that people raise up against a king on their own accord – only godly will may drive regicide, and it is still not legitimate for that reason. As introduction to the discussion treated above, Ingemann has Henner Friser stating: "The crown is holy, who ever bears it, and a king is an anointed man after all: no one shall raise a hand against him unpunished, even if it was the loathsome Satan himself that our God and Lord for a moment had made our chastiser" (Ingemann 1857: part 1: 50).[137] The novel's stand on resistance is that regicide is illegitimate, no matter what. Despite the very good reasons for Henner Friser's killing of King Abel and the necessity of it, this might be the reason why, towards the end of the book when Eric Menved has become king, his tears burn Henner Friser's hand (Ingemann 1857: part 3: 229). Even though Henner Friser's regicide has contributed to

[136] "Jeg fortrød ikke min Gjerning; du fortryder ei heller din; men jeg forfulgte ikke den Døde i hans uskyldige Slægt; jeg paadrog mig ikke med besmittet Haand at udskifte Kroner og være en Afgud blandt Mennesker; jeg vilde frelse men ikke ødelægge mit Fædreland – jeg byggede ingen Mure mellem Hjerter og Sjæle – jeg indsaae dog engang, hvor sent det blev, at der ingen Velsignelse er med os og vore Lige. See, derfor kunde jeg ikke gribe dig og dine Medskyldige; derfor skulde jeg ledes i din Vold af en listig Djævel, jeg dog selv havde bastet – her skulde jeg afbøde min Formastelse med at trælle for en større Kongemorder, og det var Løn som forskyldt. Seer du, stolte marsk! det indseer jeg nu, og derfor staaer jeg høiere, end du"

[137] "Kronen er hellig, hvem der saa bærer den, og en Konge er en salvet Mand: ham skal Ingen ustraffet løfte Haand imod, om det saa var den lede Satan selv, vor Gud og Herre en Stund havde sat til vor Tugtemester"

placing the good King Eric Menved on the throne, he has committed a crime against the royal kin that cannot be absolved.

The difficulty with rebellion is emblematic for the entire cycle of novels. *Prinds Otto af Danmark og hans Samtid* [Prince Otto of Denmark and his Time] (1835) depicts the period of time between the death of King Christopher II in 1332 and Valdemar Atterdag's ascent to the throne in 1340 by the end of the Interregnum. It represents the same major events in history as Sander's *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis* and other literature about the period, but it takes more serious the claims to the throne of Prince Otto, Christopher II's eldest son. The novel portrays Prince Otto as an ideal king on account of his kind and sensitive nature and high morals, and it presents him as the rightful heir to the throne as the eldest son of the previous monarch. By juxtaposing the incompetent Christopher II along side the ideal Prince Otto, the novel opens up for discussion about the possibilities of exchanging an unfit king for a better one. In the beginning of the novel, King Christopher and Prince Otto reside with a wealthy merchant in the city of Sakskøbing, which is described as probably being the only city in which Christopher has any devoted subjects left. The merchant has a garden in which he trims his yew trees into allegorical shapes to convey messages he finds important to other citizens. On occasion of the royal visit, the merchant cuts his yews into hearts and crowns and has his apprentice lay out King Christopher's monogram in the vegetable beds. While engaged in this work, the boy asks the merchant: "May I also lay out Childe Otto's name? […] I do like him much better: he is, after all, our duke in some way, and he is to be our king and free us from the Germans as soon as the Lord in his grace shall part us from the other" (Ingemann 1859: part 1: 50).[138] To this the merchant replies: "Are you stupid, boy! will you join in the talk about such things? Be quiet and mind your own business! or I shall teach you to hold your tongue. It is an easy matter to turn a C into an O, you see, but a greater finger is required than any of ours. Don't forget that, boy!" (Ingemann 1859: part 1: 50).[139] Although it

[138] "Maa jeg ikke ogsaa lægge Junker Ottos Navn? […] ham kan jeg dog meget bedre lide: han er jo vor Hertug paa en maade, og han skal jo være vor Konge og befrie os fra Tydskerne, saasnart Vorherre i Naade vil skille os ved den Anden"

[139] "Er du tosset, Dreng! vil du snakke med om saadanne Ting? Ti du stille og pas din Dont! eller jeg skal lære dig at holde Tand for Tunge. Det er en nem Sag at gjøre et C til et O, seer du, men der skal en større Finger til, end nogen af vores. Mærk dig det, Dreng!"

may seem as a good idea to exchange an unpopular king for a capable person, the merchant warns that it is not for the people to interfere with. Briefly after this passage, the reader is introduced to King Christopher. In a conversation with Prince Otto he conveys how he has learned from bitter experience that no good comes from exchanging regents at will: ""See! I was *determined* to become king" – he continued – "and I became it twice for one. It cost much, my son! way too much – more than the whole meagre life and the hollow crown were worth[…]"" (Ingemann 1859: part 1: 56).[140] Although the novel begins with denouncement of interfering with who is in charge of the country, it delves into the nuances of the legitimacy of resistance with respect to Niels Ebbesen's killing of Count Gerhard.

As in *Erik Menveds Barndom*, this novel exhibits reservations towards the murder of Gerhard even though it recognises it as necessary for the good of the country. This can be observed in the reaction of the bishop Svend of Aarhus when he learns about Niels Ebbesens intention to fight Count Gerhard and denies him the sacrament before he sets out for the battle. The bishop shares Niels Ebbesen's distress over the condition of the country and he is convinced that his enterprise is not driven by vindictiveness or a personal offence. He reminds Niels Ebbesen that everything, which is not the will of God, stems from the world or the devil, and from evil no good can result: "By injustice is advanced neither God's kingdom nor any human's or any people's true bliss in this world and the next" (Ingemann 1859: part 2: 46).[141] Niels Ebbesen's reply is: "I have thought of it in more nights than I in all probability have days left in which to act. I *cannot* do otherwise, whether you condemn it or not, even if I should be ostracised from Denmark as a miscreant when the country is saved and all other rejoice" (Ingemann 1859: part 2: 46).[142] Having in mind the Ingemann's novels' belief in divine providence, the emphasis on "can't" in this sentence could be understood as an expression to the effect that it is not possible for Niels Ebbesen to give

[140] ",,See! Konge v i l d e jeg være" – vedblev han – ,,og jeg blev det to Gange for een. Det kostede Meget, min Søn! alt for Meget – Meer, end det hele lumpne Liv og den hule Krone var værd[…]""

[141] "Ved Uret fremmes hverken Guds Rige eller noget Menneskes og noget Folks sande Lyksalighed her og hisset"

[142] "Jeg har tænkt derpaa i flere Nætter, end jeg rimeligviis har Dage tilbage at handle i. Jeg k a n ikke Andet, hvad enten I fordømmer det eller ei, og om jeg saa skal udstødes af Danmark, som en Misdæder, naar Landet er frelst, og alle Andre glæde sig"

up his venture because he is in some way called to discharge it. The bishop asks whether there is no voice of God in his soul, which condemns his intention, but Niels Ebbesen rejects it and claims that he can defend it for both nobly born knights and the highest seat of judgement (Ingemann 1859: part 2: 46-47): "There is an eternal law in my heart which exonerates me. There is a voice of a judge in my soul which gives me authority to my pursuit and power over this human until death" (Ingemann 1859: part 2: 50).[143] Niels Ebbesen turns out to be right, and after the killing, another bishop thanks him for his deed even though he would have tried to prevent it, as did Bishop Svend:

> "Thank and honour for the venture in Randers, bold Knight Niels of Brattingsborg!" – the bishop said and gave Niels Ebbesen his hand. – "You have made a staggering blow in the name of Denmark and the Lord, though I dare not say it was strictly by my *Ethics* as we heard it at the higher schools; but the deed must now defend itself! Regardless of the thank you may get for it from the great and mighty on Earth, I do think we will exculpate it for St. Canute and the dear Lord God, who best knew our distress and your will."
>
> "That is also my hope, Lord Bishop!" – Ebbesen replied – "even your pious colleague, Bishop Svend, severely condemned my intention and threatened me direly, should I initiate it."
>
> "He did that as a pious and strict man of God!" – replied the bishop – "I would [have] done that too in his place. Now that the deed is done, it is another case. Now I say: thank God for what he allowed for our salvation! And now I will help you freely and openly in broad daylight with what you have begun in darkness and night at your own peril" (Ingemann 1859: part 2: 86-87).[144]

[143] "Der er en evig Lov i mit Hjerte, som frikender mig. Der er en Dommerrøst i min Sjæl, der giver mig Fuldmagt til min Id og Magt over dette Menneske til Døden"

[144] "‚‚Tak og Ære for Vovestykket i Randers, djærve Ridder Niels af Brattingsborg!" – sagde Bispen og rakte Niels Ebbesen Haand. – ‚‚I har gjort et dygtigt Dommedagsslag i Danmarks og Vorherres Navn, hvorvel jeg ikke tør sige, det var ganske efter min Ethica, som vi hørte den paa de høie Skoler; men den Gjerning maa nu forsvare sig selv! Hvad Tak I end faaer derfor af de Store og Mægtige paa Jorden, jeg tænker dog nok, vi skal undskylde det for St. Knud og den kjære Herre Gud, der bedst kjendte vor Nød og jer Villie." | ‚‚Det er ogsaa min Fortrøstning, Herre Bisp!" – svarede Ebbesen – ‚‚enddog eders fromme Collega, Biskop Svend, strengelig fordømte mit Forsæt og truede mig svart, hvis jeg satte det i Værk." | ‚‚Det har han gjort, som en from og nidkjær Guds Mand!" – svarede Bispen – ‚‚det vilde jeg gjort [sic] med i hans Sted. Nu, Gjerningen er skeet, er det en anden Sag. Nu siger jeg: Gud skee Tak for hvad han tillod til vore Frelse! og nu vil jeg hjælpe

As in *Erik Menveds Barndom*, killing a ruler is represented as illegitimate when it is initiated by the people, but less so when it is performed by God through a human being.

Ingemann also counters the issue of a regicide, which brings with it peace and stability and cannot be fully condemned, in the first volume of the historical cycle, *Valdemar den Store og hans Mænd* [Valdemar the Great and his Men] (1824). The poem does, however, commence with a depiction of the miserable condition the murder of a pretender has led the country into. When Valdemar returns to Denmark with his retinue, they reflect on the murder of Valdemar's father Canute Lavard (1096-1131). Canute Lavard was a son of King Eric Egode (c. 1060-1103, reign 1095-1103) and was killed by another pretender to the throne, who expected Canute Lavard to be elected king before him (Pajung 2012). When the murder of his father is brought up, Valdemar remarks:

> See! a hostile star blazes,
> Blood red, over people and country.
> Murder cannot atone for murder.
> The curse cannot be averted;
> The blood of a king towards heaven screams.
> Therefore the throne is broken up,
> Therefore hatred among brothers arms
> Denmark's hand against its own heart.
> Those who desired the blood of a king,
> Themselves lightened with a spirit of discord
> Blindly in the son of a murderer's hand,
> The mother country's flame of arson
> (Ingemann 1913: 12).[145]

In this instance, the morale of the murder of a would-be king is that it only brings woe and that it does not only harm the pretender, who is killed, but the entire country – in this case in form of civil war. The

Jer frit og aabenbart ved høi lys Dag med hvad I har begyndt i Mulm og Nat paa eders egen Fare""

145 "Se! en fjendtlig Stjerne luer, | Blodrød, over Folk og Land. | Mord ej Mord udsone kan. | Ej Forbandelsen bortviger; | Kongeblod mod Himlen Skriger. | Derfor splittes Tronen ad, | Derfor væbner Broderhad | Danmarks Haand mod eget Hjerte. | De, som Kongers Blod begærte, | Tændte selv med Tvedragtsaand | Blindt i Mordersønnens Haand, | Fødelandets Mordbrandsflamme"

morale is another by the end of the narrative, however, when the bad King Sweyn Grathe is killed. Towards the end is recreated the famous scene at Grathe Heath where the Sweyn Grathe is finally defeated when a peasant kills him. During the battle, a group of peasants have captured Sweyn and contemplate what to do with him. They maintain the basic premise of the novels that the king is inviolable due to his position: "A king is, after all, an anointed man, | No peasant shall touch him" (Ingemann 1913: 102).[146] However, one of the peasants has sworn to kill Sweyn if they ever met again and had also been prophesied that he "should find so red a treasure | In the heather at Grathe Heath" (Ingemann 1913: 102).[147] He therefore decides to ignore the other peasants and take action:

> Yonder little, grey peasant walks next to the king,
> He scowls with wild eyes,
> He squeezes the axe tightly in his hand:
> "St. Canute so dearly I promised" –
> He swings the axe with mighty speed –
> In the heather, the king's head rolls.
> From the saddle, the dead body falls;
> The peasants behold it with terror.
> Yonder little, grey peasant pulls up his doublet,
> Quite peculiarly he had to dread:
> "Now I have found that treasure so red –
> Me it shall benefit little;
> But it shall, however, end the country's distress;
> I will probably reap as I sowed,
> Shall I now be crushed as small as flour,
> What rather in the gallows hang –
> I yet put together Denmark's crown,
> She was asunder for so long"
> (Ingemann 1913: 102).[148]

[146] "En Konning er dog en salvet Mand, | Ham ingen Bonde skal røre"

[147] "skulde finde saa rød en Skat | I Lyngen paa Grathe Hede"

[148] "Hin liden graa Bonde gaar Kongen næst, | Han skuler med vilde Øje, | Han klemmer Øksen i Haanden fast: | ,,St. Knud saa dyrt jeg det loved" – | Han svinger Øksen med mægtig Hast – | I Lyng ruller Kongens Hoved. | Fra Sadlen styrter den døde Krop; | Med Skræk de Bønder det skue. | Hin liden graa Bonde sin Vams rev op, | Helt sært han maatte dog grue: | ,,Nu har jeg fundet hin Skat saa rød – | Mig skal den kun lidet baade; | Men ende dog skal den Landsens Nød; | Jeg høster vel, som jeg saaede. | Skal jeg nu knuses saa smaat som Mel, | Hvad heller i Galgen hænge – | Jeg gjorde dog Danmarks Krone hel, | I sønder var hun saa længe""

The description of the peasant's reason for and reaction to the killing echoes Martin Luther's reflections on the legitimacy of rebelling against a tyrannical ruler. Luther operates with a fundamental division between the Christian world and the profane world, which he believes to function according to two different sets of rules. Luther advises the Christian about how to behave when confronted by the differences of the two worlds. Luther maintains that the good Christian must always act according to divine laws, no matter what injustices he is subjected to by the secular system. For instance, the good Christian is not supposed to take up arms, so even if he becomes subject to a tyrannical ruler, he is not allowed to rebel, but must await justice in the hereafter. A good Christian is likewise not allowed to wage war of his own accord; he may only fight for others, either if his secular ruler commands him to – as he has to obey the secular rule in all but religious matters – or if it is in defence of others (Luther 1964). This is the mind-set of the peasant who kills Sweyn Grathe. He does not himself gain from the act ("Me it shall benefit little"), but he saves the country by it; the killing is done for others. Also, the decision to commit regicide seems not to be made by the peasant himself. As he recalls his promise to saint Canute, we see again a touch of divine interference to justify the regicide. Thus, this portrayal of regicide conveys a sentiment similar to the two other instances of Ingemann's historical cycle analysed here, that regicide is not legitimate, but it is an action that can be performed by divine providence.

The underlying question when Ingemann's historical cycle deals with regicide has to do with the concept of the king's two bodies and whether the sacrosanctity of the body politic makes the body natural sacrosanct as well. The answer in this case is mostly affirmative. This results in the novels and poem being rather conflicted when dealing with a regent or ruler whose nature is damaging to the country. On the one hand, the novels and poem maintain the wrongness of killing a regent, as the regent is sacrosanct, but on the other, they recognise the necessity for sometimes deposing of a detrimental ruler for the good of the country. The sentiment of the three pieces on regicide are therefore somewhat ambivalent. They maintain regicide to be illegitimate, but at the same time accepts it if executed by divine providence acting through a human being. Although there is this one approach for considering regicide as not completely illegitimate, the

overall stance of the works seems to be that it is not for the people to depose of a king trough regicide and that acceptance of the status quo – as represented by Peder Hessel – is the best plan of action to preserve the happiness of all. As one former conspirator states toward the end of *Erik Menveds Barndom*: "Now I see that there comes no happiness and blessing from revolt or conspiracy against the lawful power, even if it happens from the purest love for the fatherland and our freedom" (Ingemann 1857: part 3: 143).[149]

Resistance as duty

While Ingemann's novels maintain the illegitimacy of resistance, other pieces of literature take the opposite stand. Some even take the acceptance of resistance further and insist on resistance as a civil duty. This is, for instance, the case in Sander's *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis*. Niels Ebbesen cannot find rest until he has fulfilled his duty to the fatherland by defending it against the foreign oppression, and he regards all hesitation as unpatriotic: "An entire people armed against foreign oppressors – and I calm? Jutta! our days and hours are precious. Who now futilely squanders a moment is an enemy to the fatherland" (Sander 1798: 114–115)[150] He chastises Stig for being too tardy in convening the estates when Count Gerhard seized the country, as it was his duty. Niels Ebbesen considers his dilatoriness "unforgivable […] perhaps treason" (Sander 1798: 115).[151] The play's heavy emphasis on the Enlightenment ideals of civil virtue and duty – as discussed in chapter one – is thus juxtaposed with the duty to resist. Resistance towards a tyrannical ruler thus appears as a civil duty in line with prioritising the well-being of others over one's own or loyalty to the legitimate ruler. As Niels Ebbesen and his supporters regard their resistance as a duty, they do not consider themselves to be insurgents. Within their logic, the count is the insurgent. When Niels Ebbesen's squire Claus Breyde is taken prisoner by Count Gerhard, he denies being one of the insurgents and retorts: "Here in

[149] "Nu seer jeg, der er ingen Lykke og Velsignelse ved Opstand eller Sammensværgelse mod den lovmæssige Magt, om det ogsaa skeer af den reneste Kjærlighed til Fædrelandet og vor Frihed"

[150] "Et heelt Folk væbnet imod fremmede Undertrykkere – og jeg roelig? Jutta! vore Dage og Timere ere kostbare. Hvo nu unyttigen bortödsker et Öjeblik, er en Forbryder mod Fædrenelandet"

[151] "utilgivelig […] maaskee Forræderie"

this country I know no insurgent other than Count Gerhard" (Sander 1798: 209).[152] Likewise, in an earlier scene, Niels Ebbesen has objected to Gerhard designating him a rebel: "Can you hear the truth, sir Count? You consider us insurgents. Not even in your eyes will I be regarded as a haughty and selfish man" (Sander 1798: 163).[153] The conspirators refuse to be perceived as insurgents, and likewise Niels Ebbesen perceives of himself as innocent of the murder of Count Gerhard when he exclaims: "Righteous God! You see that I am innocent as to all this human blood" (Sander 1798: 221).[154] For Niels Ebbesen, his business is purely a fight for freedom against an assailant: "Where the sword of liberty gleams, the sceptre of the assailant is broken" (Sander 1798: 166-167).[155] Thus, Niels Ebbesen is not tormented or marked in the same way by his regicide as is for instance Ingemann's Henner Friser. However, the play evens out the scale by killing off Niels Ebbesen by the end, even though that is at odds with the actual historical events where he survived the battle following Gerhard's death and only died in another battle seven months later (Dzeko, Andersen and Engelbrecht 2011). Thus, the death of Niels Ebbesen by the end is significant. Of course, it provides a dramatic highpoint and lets the audience marvel at Niels Ebbesen's patriotism and willingness to die for his country. But, Niels Ebbesen's death may well have more to it than that, as the sacrifice for the country is thematised continuously in the play. Niels Ebbesen's dying at the end can also be considered as a balancing of the scales after his murder of Gerhard. When Niels Ebbesen decides to pursue Count Gerhard, he recognises the personal cost: "*Ebbesen*. […] with Gerhard's life, I will bring a great sacrifice to my fatherland | *Sören Frost*. And yourself fall as a sacrifice for the fatherland?" (Sander 1798: 185).[156] He adheres to his resolution with the conviction that "The justice of the Lord outlives my death" (Sander 1798: 186).[157] In this way, the character of Niels Ebbesen is used to carry out the violent act of deposing of Count Gerhard so that the right king, Valdemar, can

[152] "Her i Landet kiender jeg ingen Oprörer uden Grev Geert"
[153] "Kan I höre Sandhed, Hr. Greve? I holder os for Oprörere. End ikke i Eders Öine vil jeg agtes for en hovmodig og egennyttig Mand"
[154] "Retfærdige Gud! Du seer, jeg er uskyldig i alt dette Menneskeblod"
[155] "Hvor Friehedens Sværd blinker, er Voldsmandens Scepter knækket"
[156] "*Ebbesen*. […] med Geerts Liv vil jeg bringe mit Fædreland et stort Offer | *Sören Frost*. Og selv falde som et Offer for Fædrelandet?"
[157] "Herrens Retfærdighed overlever min Död"

ascend to the throne clean of murder. Even though the killing of Gerhard is represented as necessary and right, it comes with a price for the character executing it.[158]

In Otto Ferdinand Bræmer's two-volume novel *Slaget paa Grathehede. En original historisk Roman* [The Battle at Grathe Heath. An Original Historical Novel] (1828) as well, resistance is framed as a duty. In style, the novel seems very inspired by the likes of Ingemann and Walter Scott. It is set in a historical setting and much of the novel is comprised by a love story playing out between characters associated with the court. The novel also portrays some royal history and this narrative strand culminates with the regicide at Grathe Heath. As in Sander's *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis* and Ingemann's *Valdemar den Store og hans Mænd*, the act of regicide devolves on a member of the people, so that the good king is kept out of it. During the battle, a group of peasants have seized King Sweyn Grathe. When an elderly peasant recognises Sweyn, the king reveals his identity to the peasants and asks to be taken to Valdemar. The elderly peasant abides, but a couple of young men at arms object:

> "What good will come of leading him to the king!" one of them yelled. "We might as well let him run whichever way he wanted; for does he get there, he will soon know how to use his sharp tongue to disclaim al guilt, and the end of it will be that the great Valdemar, who has too good a heart, gives him his freedom, yes, maybe even shares the kingdom with him! – No, when we give him what serves him right," he continued and swung his sharp axe, "then we will be free of the tyrant, who by his wild rebellions have brought so many of us to the beggar's staff and brought so many of our brothers to their death, whose widows and children yell revenge over his head; and when we appear before our king, he will surely receive us much better by hearing of our deed, than if we brought him ourselves; for then he will have no blame in his death, which he will certainly rather not render himself liable to as they are close relatives, and the guilt we lay on ourselves for the deed, we can easily shake off, – even more so as we gain honour and not indignity from it; for thereby we will do

[158] Although Niels Ebbesen insists on the rightfulness of the murder, that was not entirely how it was received by the contemporary audience. In his review of the play in print form, Baden dedicates a section to contemplating the details of the murder. Baden laments that the killing is realised by a surprise attack, because in his opinion it degrades Niels Ebbesen's character and gives the killing the nature of a wilful murder (Baden 1798: 176).

> the country a great service, as we free it from a bloody extortioner, and surely Valdemar will reward us nicely for the undertaking, yes, maybe even make great men of us!" (Bræmer 1828: part 2: 112-113).[159]

The peasants kill Sweyn Grathe, and when he receives the news of the deed, Valdemar reacts exactly as predicted. In this case, killing an unfit king is by no means a sin; it is more of an honour. As in Sander's play, the regicide is legitimate when committed by the people, but it cannot be performed by a good king. It is also worth noticing that much in contract to Ingemann's literature, the blame for the killing can be removed and that there is no punishment or in-erasable guilt associated with the regicide.

In a contrary position to Sander and Bræmer is Boye's drama *Erik den Syvende* (1827), when it dissects the possibility of actually acting selflessly and in the interests of the country. In the play, a Lutheran-like argument similar to the one reflected in Ingemann can be found, but in a rather distorted version. At first, Marshal Stig legitimates his persecution of King Eric with his conviction that the king and his wife are having an affair. When the proofs against his fantasy becomes too evident for him to ignore, he dismisses the idea and says: "– Even better! | I will not ruminate on this any longer; | Then petty passion has no longer a share | In this doing; then it is not myself | I revenge over a weak, unworthy king, | Then I act for the welfare of the country! | You cannot match me, King Eric" (Boye 1851: 55).[160] Stig hereafter continues his personal and unwarranted vendetta thinly

[159] ""Hvad gavner det at vi føre ham til Kongen!" raabte den Ene. "Ligesaagodt kunne vi lade ham løbe hvad Vei han selv lyster; thi kommer han did, da vil han med sin spidse Tunge snart vide at frasige sig al Skyd, og Enden derpaa bliver, at den Store Valdemar, som har alt for godt et Hjerte, giver ham Frihed, ja maaskee deler Riget med ham! – Nei, naar vi give ham hvad han haver godt af," vedblev han, og svingede sin skarpe Øxe, "saa ere vi frie for Tyranen, der ved sine vilde Oprør haver bragt saa mange af os til Bettelstaven, og bragt saa mange af vore Brødre i Døden, hvis Enker og Børn raabe Hævn over hans Hoved; og naar vi da træde frem for vor Konge, vil han sikkert modtage os meget bedre ved at høre vor Daad, end naar vi bragte ham selv; thi saa har han ingen Skyld i hans Død, den han vel ikke gjerne vil udsætte sig for da de ere nære Frænder, og den Skyld vi paalægge os for Daaden, kan vi let ryste af os, – endmere, da vi have Ære og ikke Tort af den; thi dermed gjøre vi Landet en stor Tjeneste, da vi befrier det fra en blodig Udsuer, og sikkert vil Valdemar belønne os godt for den Færd, ja maaskee gjøre os til store Mænd!""

[160] "– Desto bedre! | Jeg vil ei gruble mere over dette; | Saa har ei smaalig Lidenskab sin Andeel | I dette Værk; saa er det ei mig selv, | Jeg hevner paa en svag, uværdig Konge, | Saa er det Landets Vel jeg virker for! | Du kan ei maale dig med mig, Kong Erik!"

disguised as a task undertaken on behalf of the country. The drama shows how personal interests can easily be covered up as in the country's interest, and that the line between them can easily be blurred.

Duty is also represented as the justification of Niels Ebbesen's killing of Count Gerhard in Johan Gunløg Gunløgsen Briem's play *Ridder Niels Ebbesen. Optrin fra Thronfølgetvisten i Danmark 1340* [Knight Niels Ebbesen. Scenes from the Succession Dispute in Denmark 1340] (1840). The play, which seems not to have been performed, takes place over the course of the 24 hours around the murder of Count Gerhard. It avoids the question of legitimacy by representing the regicide as a necessity. By the end of the play, Niels Ebbesen reflects on his deed and necessity clearly stands out as the driving force behind it:

> Not my life only (was my word not so?)
> I ventured when, deeply stirred, I
> Went to battle to defend old Denmark.
> Necessary is: to fight for one's right
> And the fatherland un-cowardly defend.
> Necessary is: regarding our own life
> Only little, when it concerns such a great cause.
> It was Necessary: to cut down Gerhard,
> Because he overcame the freedom of the kingdom
> (Briem 1840: 187–188).[161]

The triple repetition of the word 'necessary' and the capitalisation of the initial letter of the third 'necessary' nicely illustrate the play's somewhat unreflective approach to the question of resistance. None of Niels Ebbesen's contemplations pertain to the rightfulness of his killing, but simply state the necessity of it without reasons. Thus, the responsibility for the legitimacy of the killing is removed from Niels Ebbesen as he simply performs a duty.

[161] "Ei mit Liv enkelt (var ei saa mit Ord?) | Jeg vovede, da hjertegreben jeg | I kampen gik at værge gamle Danmark. | Nødvendigt er: at kjempe for sin Ret | Og Fædrelandet ufeig at forsvare. | Nødvendigt er: vort eget liv at agte | Kun ringe, naar saa stor en Sag det gjelder. | Det var Nødvendigt: at nedstøde Geert, | Fordi han Rigets Frihed overvælded'

Agents of resistance

The previous sections have analysed different stands on the legitimacy of resistance found in some of the literary works in the corpus. In many works, however, it is not so much the question of legitimacy, which is contemplated, but questions as to *who* may carry out the resistance and *how* it may legitimately be done. The literature surveyed here offers multiple possible answers to this, which are associated among others things with divine interference, forces of nature and human itself.

Divine providence is not a much used argument, but it can be found occasionally in the corpus, for instance in Ingemann's novels – as we saw earlier – and in Briem's *Ridder Niels Ebbesen*. The play, as mentioned, rejects the question of right and wrong with regard to resistance and instead focuses on necessity, which is intertwined with providence. In the scene following the death of Count Gerhard, two of Niels Ebbesen's knights, Poul Glob and Eske Frost, are reflecting on the murder. Poul Glob, who was present at it, is troubled by the killing and starts to question the rightfulness of it: "can it be right, what we accomplished? […] Right or wrong in the cruel deed | Was not mentioned […] He was the head of the realm, Eske Frost! | Of princely blood and in addition defenceless" (Briem 1840: 158–159).[162] As he states, the legitimacy of the killing was not contemplated beforehand; the question of right and wrong was not considered. Eske Frost reassures him by replying:

> He was a prince; but the dividing wall of power,
> when it is misused, subverts man's courage
> In self-defence. His being defenceless,
> Was retaliation for when he Denmark unprotected
> And without mercy deep wounds inflicted.
> The lord of lords has thrown into his scale
> His regency, it was at its measure
> (Briem 1840: 159).[163]

[162] "kan det være Ret, hvad vi fuldbyrded'? […] Ret eller Uret i den grumme Daad | Blev ikke Nævnet […] Rigets Forstander han var, Eske Frost! | Af Fyrsteblod og dertil værgeløs"

[163] "Han Fyrste var; men Magtens Skillevæg, | Naar den misbruges, Mandemod nedbryder | I Selvforsvar. At han var værgeløs, | Gjengjelded', at han Danmark ubeskyttet | Og uden Skaansel dybe Vunder slog. | Herrens Herre lagt har paa sin Vægtskaal | Hans Rigsforstanderskab, det var ved Maalet"

Eske Frost steers away from the question of legitimacy and instead brings in the motive of fate. That the killing has been decided by providence removes the liability from the people. In this play, then, the moral questions surrounding the removal of a tyrannical ruler are rejected in favour of a view of the world as directed by destiny.

In instances where resistance is not only legitimated by providence or similar, but it is left to the people to decide whether an act of resistance is right, there is often proscribed or contemplated correct ways of discharging the resistance. A good example can be found in Bruun's *Erik Glipping*, which considers what form legitimate resistance may take. In this play, Eric Clipping has violated marshal Stig's wife, and Stig therefore joins the dissatisfied nobles to get revenge. The tragedy was offered for performance at the Royal Danish Theatre, but was rejected by the censors who had "not found it to be of a character that could be performed at our stage" (T.C. Bruun 1816: preface (n.p.)).[164] The play's contemplations on the issue of resistance has as its basic premise that the king is accountable to the people, and it considers how the king may be held accountable for his transgressions. When the conspirators gather to debate what to do about the king's unfair treatment of them, Marshal Stig summarises:

> Men of honour!
> what injustice have been inflicted on each of us,
> we all are plenty aware of.
> in vain we have sought in a lawful way,
> and as it be proper for an honest knight,
> to enjoy justice for such nuisance;
> King Eric was deaf to all complaints,
> is still so. – How the nobility of Denmark
> he weighed on with taxes and impositions;
> how he has harassed the clergy
> and thereby brought the excommunication of the church upon the county:
> therefore he is responsible to the common man.
> Here, everyone of us still have different grounds
> for individual complaints; will he put things right
> and give you, my friends, satisfaction,
> I should be glad that you, at least,

[164] "ikke fundet det af den Beskaffenhed, at det kunne opføres paa vor Skueplads"

receive compensation. To me, none can be given;
the stain he has put on *my* honour
can only be washed off by blood
(T.C. Bruun 1816: 41).[165]

The logic here is that the king is accountable to the people, and that transgressions must be rectified by compensating the affected person. The king's violation of Ingeborg, however, is an act which cannot be put right, and it opens up for considerations about what to do about the king when he has committed an unforgivable crime. Marshal Stig holds that the king must pay for this transgression with his life. The king is not simply to be killed, though. The marshal follows the traditional practice of denunciation and maintains that all resistance must be in the open: "It is not in hiding, in the horror of night | but openly, in the countenance of day | we here enter into our alliance" (T.C. Bruun 1816: 44).[166] Thus, there are certain procedures which must be observed for the resistance to be admissible. Although the play thus represents regicide as legitimate when a certain code is followed when the murder is about to be committed, divine providence is introduced as an agent in the regicide. When the conspirators arrive at the place where they intend to kill Eric Clipping, Marshal Stig exclaims:

Here the place is and there our prey;
it ran into the snare itself.
No, rather, the Heavens led it there
which, although forbearing, punish in the end.
As late as today, Eric wanted to lure
a peasant's daughter here in this woods;
so bad is his doings, so frivolous
his disposition; and by that it is right

[165] "Dannemænd! | hvad Uret er enhver af os tilføiet, | det noksom Alle er bevidst. | Forgieves har vi søgt paa lovlig Maade, | og som det sømmer ærlig Riddersmand, | at nyde Ret og Skiel for sliig Ulempe; | Kong Erik var mod alle Klager døv, | er det endnu. – Hvorledes Danmarks Adel | han tynget har med Skat og Paalæg; | hvorledes han har Geistligheden plaget, | og Landet derved bragt i Kirkens Band: | derfor han Menigmand til Ansvar stander. | – Her har endnu hver af os skiellig Grund | til særskilt Anke; vil han for sig rette, | og giøre, mine Venner, Eder fyldest, | saa skal det glæde mig som mindst at I | Erstatning faae. Mig ingen ydes kan; | den Plet han paasat har m i n Ære | aftvættes ene kun ved Blod"

[166] "Det ikke er i Skiul, i Nattens Gru, | men aabenbart, for Dagens Aasyn | vi slutte her vort Forbund"

that he now falls forsaken into our hands
(T.C. Bruun 1816: 112).[167]

Thus, although the drama recognises regicide as legitimate, when it is about to be carried out, it also legitimises it as an act of divine interference.

As in most of the literature treated here, the resistance is not directed towards royal power as such, but towards one particular ruler, who is seen as unfit for the throne. The regicide is not committed in order for the conspirators to be take over the throne, but to pass on the throne to the prince next in line. The rightfulness of royal succession is undisputed, which can also be observed at the very end of the play which is dedicated to praising the importance of an amicable relationship between the Danish people and the royal dynasty. As the closing remark, the widowed queen says: "O, may *his* murder be the last | to bring disgrace on the Danish people! | May it love its royal house loyally | and may Denmark enjoy peace and quiet!!!" (T.C. Bruun 1816: 122).[168] It is worth noticing the choice of the word "royal house". The wish expressed is not for the people to love the king, but the royal kin. Employing the vocabulary of Kantorowicz, it could be said that this play demonstrates acceptance of killing one body natural in order for the body politics to be able to take up residence in another, more suitable body natural.

A recurring feature in the literary pieces which recognise the right to resist is that the resistance towards the unfit ruler must be carried out in accordance with a chivalric code. The proper conduct of resistance is often represented as declaration of open enmity and renouncement of allegiance before the attack of the ruler can find place. This can for instance be found in Salomon Soldin's play *Marsk Stig* (1802) in which the Eric Clipping regicide is reinterpreted as a result of the king's valet Ranild Johnson having played off Eric Clipping, his queen and Marshal Stig against each other in a pursuit to claim the throne for himself. When Stig learns that the conspirators

[167] "Her Stedet er, og hisset er vort Offer; | det selv i Snaren løbet har. | Nei rettere, det Himlen did har ledet, | der, skiøndt langmodig, straffer dog tilsidst. | Endnu i Dag har Erik villet lokke | en Bondedatter her i denne Skov; | saa daarlig er hans Idræt, saa letfærdigt | hans Sind; og derved er det just | han falder nu forladt i vore Hænder"

[168] "O, maa h a n s Mord det allersidste være, | som Dannerfolket skal vanære! | Sin Konge-Slægt det elske huldt og tro! | Og Danmark nyde Fred og Ro!!!"

plan to disguise themselves as monks in order to assault and murder the king, he objects that the regicide cannot be committed in such a manner: "Kill the king? No, that must be prevented. Stig Andersen shall be revenged, but not by underhand murderers. […] Eric does not deserve to be killed by assassins. Openly and by my hand he shall fall!" (Soldin 1802: 91–92).[169] For Stig, the manner in which the regicide is executed is crucial: the king must be given a chance to defend himself and depriving him of that chance is downright repugnant.

In Bruun's *Erik Glipping* treated above, the Marshal Stig character likewise expresses consciousness about his role with respect to committing regicide and the right way of conduct throughout the play. During the narrative, Stig is repeatedly referred to as a figure of the ancient north rather than the contemporary Middle Ages and he also himself explicitly recognises this role and the code of conduct it implies. When the conspirators proclaim Stig "the leader of the feat" (T.C. Bruun 1816: 42),[170] he replies:

> Well, I will assume that honorific name,
> but in the old Norse way.
> We are knights, not highwaymen,
> who sneak around in the dead of night
> in order to underhandedly kill their victim from behind.
> No, openly, in honest battle
> the ancestors met the ready enemy;
> that is also my intention.
> *Multiple voices.*
> In single combat?
> *The marshal.*
> No, I will present him with my case at the thing;
> I will renounce my loyalty, allegiance and obedience to him
> In public; and from this day on,
> What time and place we might meet
> Each may help himself as he best knows and can
> (T.C. Bruun 1816: 42).[171]

[169] "Dræbe Kongen? Nei, det bør forekommes. Stig Andersen skal hævnes, men ikke ved lumske Mordere. […] Erik fortjener ikke at dræbes ved Snigmordere. Aabenlyst og ved min Haand skal han fældes!"

[170] "Daadens Høvedsmand"

[171] "Vel, jeg det Hæders-Navn antager, | men efter gammel nordisk Viis. | Vi Riddersmænd, og ingen Stimænd ere, | der liste sig i Nattens Mulm og Mørk, | til bagfra lumskt at deres Offer myrde. | Nei, aabenlyst, i ærlig Kamp | Forfædrene den rede Fiende mødte; | det ogsaa er min Agt. | F l e r e S t e m m e r. | I

The marshal does as proclaimed and renounces allegiance to the king at the thing in the old manner of knights: "A tyrant | I do not recognise as king. | I first summoned him for Skanderborg; | in this hour, in public, | I renounce in the old way of knights, | my loyalty, allegiance to you Eric; and as an enemy | renounce my allegiance to you for revenge for violence and derision" (T.C. Bruun 1816: 61–62).[172] By renouncing his allegiance to Eric, Stig no longer recognises him as his king whereby he may treat him as any other enemy. Through the act of renunciation, Stig alters what would be regicide to common enmity. As in Soldin's rendition of the regicide, in Bruun's version, Stig intervenes when the conspirators are about to seize and kill the king and demands that the proper code of regicide is observed:

> *The marshal.*
> No, friends, wait! *I* have renounced allegiance to the king;
> only I have a right to overthrow him.
> He might have been lured here by cunning,
> but he shall not be attacked in the manner of a highwayman.
> I in my sword and my good cause
> shall *alone* find the power to wash off
> the stain of Hadingus he has put on my name.
> *Aage K.*
> Why, he has offended us all.
> *Peder Jacobsen*
> We all have just complaints.
> *Arved B.*
> Did we not all wow his death?
> *The marshal.*
> Yes, but only I gave him warning
> (T.C. Bruun 1816: 113).[173]

Tvekamp? | M a r s k e n. | Nei, jeg ham Sag paa Tinget giver; | Ham Huldskab, Mandskab, Hørighed opsiger, | I Alles Paahør; og fra denne Dag, | Hvad Tiid og Sted vi siden mødes, | Hver hielper sig som han bedst veed og kan"

[172] "En Tyran | erkiender ikke jeg for Konge. | Jeg stevnede ham først til Skanderborg; | i denne Stund, i Alles Paahør | opsiger jeg paa gammel Ridder-Viis, | Dig, Erik, Huldskab, Troskab; og som Fiênde | undsiger Dig til Hevn for Vold og Spot"

[173] "M a r s k e n. | Nei, Venner, holdt! J e g Kongen undsagt har; | mig ene det tilkommer ham at fælde. | Vel er han lokket hid med List, | men ei han skal paa Stimands Viis anfaldes. | Jeg i mit Sværd, og i min gode Sag | Skal e n e finde Kraft til at aftvætte | den Haddings Plet han paa mit Navn har sat. | A a g e K. | Han jo os alle har fornærmet. | P e d e r J a c o b s e n. | Vi alle har retmæssigt Kiæremaal. | A r v e d B. | Tilsvore vi ham samtlige ei sin Død? | M a r s k e n. | Jo, men jeg ene gav ham Varsel"

Here, too, is emphasised giving warning and engaging in open battle as the proper way of committing regicide.

Chivalric code is also a pivotal point in Ingemann's contemplations on regicide in *Prinds Otto af Danmark* (1835). In the novel, we follow the esquire Svend Trøst, who Martinsen aptly has described as

> the popular protagonist that expresses the political situation in Denmark around 1834; freedom of expression is needed, diplomacy should solve crises, the people ought to unite behind a (just and rightfully elected) monarch and every individual should act with responsibility to the fatherland (Martinsen 2010: 99).

In the beginning of the novel, Svend Trøst has been sent to the king in an attempt to overthrow him. During the process, Svend Trøst discovers how the dethronement is planned to be performed. He therefore refuses to complete his business because the method conflicts with his moral convictions:[174] "It is a poor dealing, I have been used for. I thought it was about an honest and overt rebellion against the wretched king, and to that end I have willingly lent a hand in order to save the country; but against an underhand assault or assassination I will protect even my most vicious enemy" (Ingemann 1859: part 1: 44).[175] As in Soldin's and Bruun's plays, the way in which the regicide is conducted is of paramount importance, and the principal premise is that it cannot be executed by assassination. Regicide must be committed openly. Ingemann's Niels Ebbesen is likewise governed by a moral code which prescribes renouncement before he can attack Count Gerhard:

> What was most important to Knight Niels in this meeting with his great enemy was to seize the opportunity to publicly renounce allegiance to the count in order to thereby, in the eyes of himself and his time, free himself from every complain and stain on his honour as he, as an honest Christian knight, indeed wanted to pick

[174] Martinsen touches upon the same pointe in her PhD dissertation *History as a Mass Experience. Re-examining the Historical Fictions of Bernhard Severin Ingemann in a Political Context 1824-1836* (2010) (Martinsen 2010: 98).

[175] "Det er en lumpen Handel, man har brugt mig til. Jeg troede, det gjaldt en ærlig og aabenbar Opstand mod den elendige Konge, og dertil havde jeg villig rakt Haand, for at frelse Landet; men mod et lumsk Overfald eller Snigmord vil jeg beskytte selv min arrigste Fjende"

> a quarrel with his and the fatherland's mortal enemy, but without becoming stigmatised in his time and posterity for it with the name of an underhand highwayman or assassin, even if it had to happen by a surprise attack (Ingemann 1859: part 2: 63).[176]

For the protagonists of *Prinds Otto af Danmark*, it is thus crucial that resistance towards a ruler is conducted according to a moral code. It is necessary here to distinguish between the killing of a king and the killing of Count Gerhard, who is not a Danish king. As described earlier, the historical fictions by Ingemann analysed here generally maintain regicide to be wrong, unless performed by the will of God. It could seem that this mostly pertains to regicide and not to murders of rulers in general as *Prinds Otto af Danmark* appears less troubled by the murder of Count Gerhard than does for instance *Erik Menveds Barndom* by the murder of Eric Clipping. With respect to Svend Trøst's involvement in the planned regicide of King Christopher should be mentioned that by the beginning of the novel Svend Trøst is depicted as rather naïve and boisterous, and these traits of his character becomes refined over the course of the novel. So his immediate acceptance of commiting regicide cannot be understood as representative for an overall stance on regicide in the novel, but must be regarded as one stance among several.

In the literature analysed in this section, chivalric code, in particular renunciation, seems to work as a strategy by which to circumvent the problem of the legitimacy of *ius resistendi*. By renouncing allegiance to the king, the king is no longer the king of the person who has renounced him, and the subsequent killing no longer ranks as regicide. Renunciation as a way to confront problems of *ius resistendi* appears only to be a solution to medieval *ius resistendi*, however. The termination of allegiance implies a former entering into an allegiance and accordingly a liberty of choice as to whom to swear allegiance. Thus, notions of swearing allegiance and renouncing allegiance are distinctly expressions of a medieval-like social structure with electoral monarchy, and renunciation as a strategy to legitimate

[176] "Hvad der var Ridder Niels mest om at gjøre ved dette Møde med hans mægtige Fjende, var at gribe Leiligheden til offentlig at undsige Greven, for derved i sine egne og i sin Tidsalders Øine at befrie sig for enhver Anke og Æresplet, idet han, som en ærlig christen Ridder, vel vilde sin og Fædrelandets Dødsfjende tillivs, men uden derfor at ville brændemærkes for Samtid og Efterslægt med Navnet af en lumsk Stimand eller Snigmorder, om det end maatte skee ved Overrumpling"

ius resistendi is not transferrable to the nineteenth-century Denmark in which the literature was composed. This difference is also expressed in the quotation from Ingemann cited above (Ingemann 1859: part 2: 63) and the quotation from Hollard Nielsen cited in the introduction to this chapter, where renunciation is articulated as a legitimate strategy in the Middle Ages, by which is at the same time stated implicitly to its illegitimacy in contemporary times. So, while some of the contemplations on the legitimacy of resistance or aspects of them may be considered as pertinent to nineteenth-century thought, the contemplations embedded in chivalric code does not seem to lend themselves directly to the contemporary times. The question presents itself, then, which function the widespread representation of chivalric code serves in literature. A suggestion could be that it works as a facilitator for retelling stories from the Middle Ages to nineteenth-century sensibilities (where regicide cannot be committed without "complain and stain on his honour"). Chivalric honour serves to render regicide a little less brutal, so that a contemporary audience may better sympathise with the characters contemplating and committing it. The frequent depiction of chivalric code may then be perceived as a narrative strategy which lets the reader or audience better follow the choices of the characters. That chivalric code may be employed as a narrative strategy does not, however, deprive it of political potential. Rather the opposite, as it thereby facilitates sympathy for the insurgents and may provide understanding of the underlying motives of resistance.

Sub-conclusion

As this chapter has shown, discussion of the right to resist an unfit ruler prevails in the literary corpus examined in this dissertation. It is worth noticing, however, that the resistance in the works analysed here most often is not about dethroning the king in favour of another form of government, but about exchanging an unfit ruler for a better one. The prevalence of *ius resistendi* in literature may or may not be in keeping with the nature of the political discussion in the contemporary society, depending on to which historical account of the period one adheres. But the interesting thing here is not so much whether or not the literature is in line with the description of the

period offered by historical research, but the fact that literature circulates ideas about regicide and resistance.

This nicely demonstrates one of literature's affordances as a historical source: Because of its status as fiction, literature is able to explore ideas which could not be otherwise expressed in public, in this case because of the strict legislation on the freedom of the press in effect since 1799. The banishments of Bruun and Heiberg in 1799 and the severe sentence passed on Dr. Dampe in 1820 bear witness to the grave consequences of expressing radical ideas in this period. The restriction on the freedom of the press may well have deterred people from discussing radical ideas about the Danish monarchy publicly, should they have wished to, and medievalistic literature therefore appears as an apt medium for exploring such ideas. That is not to say that medievalistic literature simply functions as a cover for radical ideas of authors, but rather that it provides a platform for contemplating the implications of radical actions and acting out the radical thoughts of the period in an imaginary Danish setting. Therefore, I will suggest that the significant interest in resistance exhibited by the fictional literature about Danish medieval regents can be taken as an argument to the effect that there might have been more interest in resistance than what non-fictional historical sources may reveal. By this, I do not mean to imply that fiction can tell us whether authors, readers or audiences were against absolutism, the government, the king or the like. But I believe it reveals an interest in resistance, in exploring its many facets and understanding the nature of resistance. It may be objected that this literature has nothing to do with resistance in a Danish context, but is simply a reflection of the revolutions taking place throughout Europe at the time.[177] But the choice of Danish historical subject matter and the fact that there were no impediments for discussing foreign political events in public leads me to find this explanation inadequate. I think it makes more sense to also understand literature's representation of political resistance as an exploration of and contemplation on how resistance might look in a Danish context.

[177] For instance, when introducing to the historical novel, Brian Hamnett notes: "The turmoil of the half-century from *c.* 1790 to *c.* 1859, beginning with the French Revolution, the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, and finishing with the Revolutions of 1848, account for the frequent preoccupation with political violence in these novels, and decisively distinguish them from their later seventeenth- and eighteenth-century predecessors" (Hamnett 2011: 10–11).

According to Lindenberger, an affordance of the conspiracy play – a designation apt for many of the works treated in this chapter – is that it leads the spectator to find a middle ground. The analyses from this chapter agree with Lindenberger to the extent that none of the analysed works purely sympathise with the king or purely incite rebellion. The works definitely operate in a middle ground. But the analytical engagement with the works also reveals some incongruences with Lindenberger's notion of negotiation of middle ground: Firstly, the instances in which there are no middle ground to be found, for example with regard to the question of whether or not it is legitimate to kill a king. While there is of course plenty of grey-area surrounding the question of when and how you may legitimately commit regicide, the actual question of the legitimacy of regicide comes down to an 'either/or' answer, leaving little room for a middle ground. Secondly, and more importantly, the analyses have shown that the middle ground can be defined very differently even with regard to the same question. Some pieces of literature tend more towards regarding resistance as legitimate than others. While Lindenberger might be right in his suggestion that conspiracy plays compel the audience to find a middle ground, I believe it is important to remember that it is the author who sets the framework for the narrative and defines the extremes between which the middle ground is to be found. Thus, the middle ground in which the audience navigates is not necessarily extended between resistance as fully legitimate at the one pole and unwavering loyalty to the king at the other, but can – as we have seen – lie between quite differently defined poles. Overall, however, Lindenberger's description of the function of conspiracy literature has proven quite apt for the works analysed here; that it may represent different stances towards the question of resistance and explore the tensions between them.

This chapter has mapped out an array of attitudes to the right to resist found in the fictive literature about in particular Sweyn Grathe, Eric Clipping and the Interregnum. That the theme of resistance is so prevalent in these narratives may also help to answer one of the questions put forward in the introduction; why exactly the reigns of Valdemar the Great, Canute V, Sweyn Grathe, Eric Clipping, Eric Menved, Valdemar Atterdag and Christian II and the Interregnum have apparently possessed a special appeal to the authors of the late eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century. Apart

from Christian II, all of these rulers are in some way or another associated with murder. Canute V and Sweyn Grathe are killed; so is Eric Clipping; and the Interregnum sees Valdemar Atterdag's ascent to the throne as a result of the murder of Count Gerhard. These stories lend themselves to reflections on the legitimacy of removing and even killing a king.

While the stances on the right to resist vary quite a bit, there is a widespread consensus that if regicide is to be committed, it is most rightly to be carried out by the people, not by another king or someone in line to the throne. On the matter of *ius resistendi*, the people thus hold political agency, while the king is correspondingly passive. The people do not only possess political agency with regard to *ius resistendi*; on the contrary, popular political agency is a prevalent theme in the literary corpus examined here. This is the focal point of the next chapter which will deal with representation of popular political agency and politically passive kings.

Chapter 3

King and peasant work hand in hand

The previous chapter treated the people's right to resist an unfit ruler. This chapter will continue in the same vein and look more into how the literature studied in this dissertation distributes political agency between king and people, not just with respect to the right to resist, but with respect to political agency more broadly. With Rancière's terms, it will examine who is made perceptible as political subjects. The literature in the corpus often represents the people as politically active and as possessing political influence. It tends to portray an alternatively ordered society in which the fictive people either exercise or insist on having political rights, which the Danish people in nineteenth century did not possess, such as the right to elect the regent and the subjection of the king to the law. The overall argument of the chapter is that the corpus literature facilitates discussions about how political agency can be divided between the king and the people and that it thereby contributes to the concurrent debate on the Danish form of government. The chapter will focus on some of the most frequently represented political topics; considerations pertaining to who in the society can exercise political agency and how it may be exercised. The chapter will begin with a brief introduction to the politicisation of the Danish public in the first half of the nineteenth century and an overview over the processes leading to the institution of free constitution in Denmark. This will be followed by an analysis

of political agency in the corpus literature. The analyses will focus on the literature's depiction of divisions of political agency between king and people, form of government in relation to popular agency and representations of law as a civil right.

Politicisation of the public and the abolition of absolute monarchy in Denmark

In the years 1830 and 1831, revolutions permeated Europe. Particularly the July Revolution in France in 1830 and its demand for free constitution gave rise to fear among the Danish government that something similar might take place in Denmark. In order to prevent such events in Denmark, in 1831, the king and his advisors decided to establish consultative Assemblies of the Estates which were to be a public place of political debate. There were established four assemblies in Schleswig, Itzehoe, Viborg and Roskilde and they met for the first time in 1834. The Assemblies possessed no actual political power; they were meant as instances for providing advice for the king, but not as legislative entities. The Assemblies of the Estates were thus not established in order to encourage political activity, but to provide an outlet for political activities so that it would not develop or get out of control. Although the Assemblies were established in order to contain political activity, it turned out to have the opposite effect as it came to found the basis for an actual liberal opposition (Bonderup 2012; Carstensen 2012; Jørgensen 2014: 89; Rerup 1991: 344–345). Despite the king's efforts, the European revolutions and particularly the establishment of the Assemblies of the Estates gave rise to political opposition to the absolute monarchy and the composite state, which lead to a politicization of the public that provided the means for the transition to constitutional monarchy (Jørgensen 2014: 84; Nygaard 2011: 419).

The politicization of the public in the 1830s is evident in the increase of political writing and number of newspapers and periodicals dedicated to political debate.[178] It is particularly reflected in the debate on the freedom of the press that played out in the years 1834-1835. In the years following the inception of the Decree of the Freedom

[178] For a thorough exposition on the political newspapers and journals of the 1830s and their audience see Juelstorp 1992.

of the Press of 1799, a number of amendments were added which prescribed more control over all that was written and printed in Denmark. On the paper, censorship had not been reintroduced since its abandonment in 1770, but in practice, everything had to be reviewed before it could be published. In February 1834, the author Andreas Peter Liunge initiated the debate on the freedom of the press when he in the newspaper *Kjøbenhavnsposten* [The Copenhagen Mail] complained that in reality, freedom of the press did not exist in Denmark. A number of writings followed in newspapers and periodicals such as *Kjøbenhavnsposten*, *Dagen* [The Day], *Kjøbenhavns Flyvende Post* [Copenhagen's Flying Mail] and *Fædrelandet* [The Fatherland] arguing either for or against the accuracy of Liunge's contention. The agents in the debate had in common the conviction that the absolute form of government was no longer right for Denmark and a wish for political change (N.M. Jensen 2011).

By early 1835, it was rumoured that the government intended to give a new decree on the freedom of the press without first consulting the Assemblies of the Estates and that this new decree would limit the freedom of the press. A group of people, among others Joachim Frederik Schouw, Henrik Nicolai Clausen and Frederik Christian Sibbern, responded to the rumour by appealing to the king that the legislation should not be put in effect and that the Assemblies of the Estates should not be kept out of influence with respect to the matter. In February 1835, a petition was sent to the king in which was expressed that it should be up to the press itself to "remove the weed" and that it was unacceptable to bypass the Assemblies of the Estates. The group supporting the petition increased and eventually caused the king and government to abandon their plans for a new legislature on the freedom of the press. The group developed into *Selskabet for Trykkefrihedens Rette Brug* [The Society for the Proper Use of the Freedom of the Press], and the establishment of this society entailed the cessation of the debate on the freedom of the press (N.M. Jensen 2011).

Despite his foundation of the Assemblies, in the 1830's, King Frederik VI no longer enjoyed the public support he had earlier in his reign (Vammen 1984, 29). At this point, the king no longer created reforms, but was more concerned with maintaining absolutism, keeping the composite state intact and preventing the rising political

opposition (Jørgensen 2014: 89). The king was unsuccessful in his attempt to delimit political opposition, and in the 1830s, it became increasingly clear that it was no longer a question of whether absolutism would be abolished, but rather of when it would. When Frederik VI died in 1839 and King Christian VIII (1786-1848, reign 1839-1848) became king of Denmark, many expected the new king to provide Denmark with a free constitution as he had contributed to Norway obtaining free constitution during his brief time serving as *stattholder* there. The hopes for free constitution were disappointed, though, as Christian VIII ascended the throne as an absolute monarch (Vammen 1984, 29).

Christian VIII believed that the free constitution would become a reality, but that the people was not yet ready for it. Eventually, even his most conservative ministers recognised that the absolute monarchy was no longer viable. By 1847, Christian VIII had also realised that absolutism could not remain the form of government for Denmark any longer and he therefore initiated the process of transitioning to free constitution. In December 1847, he requested jurist Peter Georg Bang to draw up a proposal for a constitution. On January 20th 1848, Christian VIII suddenly died from septicaemia caused by bloodletting. Before he died, he arranged for a government consisting of capable conservative advisors for his son Frederik VII (1808-1863, reign 1848-1863), who possessed neither the abilities nor the inclinations to become king. On January 28th, the government published a constitutional rescript known as *Januarreskriptet* [the January Rescript] with a proposal for a new constitution for the composite state. The proposal built on the four regional Assemblies of the States, extended their authority and lightly democratised the right to vote, and the rescript further charted a procedure for the drawing up of and passing of the constitution (Jørgensen 2016, 2020; Vammen 1984: 29, 1998: 12).

After a new government was formed with Adam Wilhelm Moltke in charge, a draft for the constitution was written with the Belgian constitution of 1831 and partly the Norwegian constitution of 1814 as models. The constitutional draft was written by Ditlev Gothard Monrad and linguistically revised by Orla Lehmann, who were both national-liberal ministers in the government. Monrad and Lehmann proposed that the parliament, *Rigsdagen*, should consist of two chambers; an upper house, *Landstinget*, and a lower house,

Folketinget. The *landsting* was meant to function as a conservative guarantee against majority rule in the *Folketing*, as the creators of the constitution considered the peasants who had the right to vote here to be uneducated and impressionable and therefore feared for the political consequences of their voting (Jørgensen 2020).

A constitution, *Grundloven*, was finally passed on June 5th 1849. Because of the sudden death of Christian VIII, the February Revolutions in Europe and the First Schleswig War in the duchies (1848-1851), the constitution of 1849 became more liberal and democratic than was initially intended by the elite (Vammen 1984 29). The constitution divided the power into three entities; the judicial power was placed with the courts of law, the legislation with the *Rigsdag* and the king and the executive power with the king. The national-liberals wished for the monarchy to co-exist with popular representation in the free constitution, so that royal sovereignty was combined with popular sovereignty. The idea behind the constitution was that the king should take an actual part in the political process with respect to the government and *Rigsdag*, and particularly relating to foreign politics after an amendment of the constitution in 1855. According to the constitution of 1849, it was the king who appointed and dismissed ministers, so governments could only rule as long as they were supported by the king. Likewise, the king had to sign all laws for them to become valid. The king's position of power was stronger than that of the *Rigsdag*, and in this way, there was some level of similarity with the regent's position before the abolition of the absolute monarchy (Jørgensen 2020).

The rest of the constitution contained classic civic rights such as prohibition against arbitrary imprisonment, the inviolability of the proprietary rights and freedom of religion, press, association and assembly (Jørgensen 2020). With regard to the Danish transition to free constitution, it is also worth noting that it was not the case that a new ruling class gained power. Rather, the ruling class simply formally gained the power over the political system which it had already held informally for generations (Vammen 1984: 29).

The political developments in the Danish society also had their impact on literature. From the last half of the 1820s to the middle of the 1830s, the nature of literary criticism shifted from being predominantly aesthetic to political. Orientation about and development of political stances were formed in the literary criticism

of the belletristic periodicals, particularly *Kjøbenhavnsposten*, *Kjøbenhavns Flyvende Post* and *Maanedsskrift for Litteratur* [Monthly Periodical for Literature], which were all established in the late 1820s. The political commentary in the literary criticism abated after the establishment of the Assemblies of the Estates, when the possibilities for addressing political questions directly in public became more open (Auring et al. 1984: 176).

Political agency in literature

The special relationship between king and people

The literature in the corpus often emphasises the existence of a special relationship between the king and the people, which entails a sharing of political agency. The idea of popular sovereignty from the eighteenth century is still found in nineteenth-century literature, not necessarily in the form of a story of the origin of power, but expressed as an emphasis that the king should rule in accordance with his people. It is common to see a king described as bad because of his lack of regard for the people or a king described as good because of his respect for his people. The distinction of good and bad kings based on their attitude towards their people is, for instance, very prevalent in juxtapositions of Sweyn Grathe, Canute V and Valdemar the Great. In August Bournonville's ballet *Valdemar* (1835), which depicts the confrontations between the three pretenders, Valdemar the Great is represented as a good king because he is liked by the people, while Sweyn Grathe is represented as bad because of his bad standing with the people.[179] These positions are clearly outlined from the beginning of the ballet. The opening scene shows Valdemar participating in festivities with some peasants while Sweyn keeps to his guards, away from the people. Sweyn's actions at the Blood Feast are likewise represented as an act of disregard for the people. The execution of his co-pretender is a clear violation of the peace agreement between the kings, which had been depicted in the scene immediately before the scenes of the Blood Feast, and which is described as an expression of

[179] These points regarding Bournonville's *Valdemar* have been published earlier in the article "Romantic Regicide. Political Medievalism in Bournonville's *Erik Menveds Barndom*" in *Scandinavian Studies*, vol. 92, no. 1, 2020.

"the common will" (Bournonville 1920: 5).[180] Sweyn Grathe also offends the people by rudely banishing them from the feast, causing them to feel "so contemptuously treated" (Bournonville 1920: 10).[181] The importance of mutual respect between king and people is underscored one last time at the very end of the ballet, where the finale celebrates the loyalty and affection of the people towards the new sole king. The end of the ballet shows Valdemar receiving the crown and being celebrated by the people, who are described as his "loyal and devoted people" (Bournonville 1920: 16).[182] The happy end thus consists in king and people becoming united in harmony.

The nature and importance of the special relationship between king and people is also often commented on explicitly. For instance, in Balthasar Bang's rendition of the story, the play *Valdemar og Absalon* [Valdemar and Absalon] (1826), when Valdemar has escaped the Blood Feast and is setting off towards Jutland in order to prepare for the upcoming confrontation with Sweyn Grathe, he takes his leave of an old charcoal burner by promising: "I am now headed for the great fight, the fight for the freedom of the fatherland, and will the Heavens one day place me on the throne of Denmark, I shall honour the peasantry in You and never forget that king and peasant work hand in hand for a common purpose" (Bang 1826: 122–123).[183] Here is spelled out the nature of the special relationship between the king and the people: the king shall honour the peasants, and they are equal in the sense that they are working together for the same aim. The same sentiment is at the heart of Ingemann's historical cycle. Martinsen nicely sums this up when she observes that: "In the cycle *folket* [the people] is not subordinate to the king, but merely legitimising his rule" (Martinsen 2010: 208).

Another way in which the kings are frequently distinguished as good is by their protection of the people from the nobility. The nobles are frequently represented as villains who obstruct the relationship between the king and the people, oppress the people and try to usurp power from the king. A king may then distinguish himself by

[180] "Det almene Ønske"
[181] "Saa haanligt behandlede"
[182] "tro og hengivne Folk"
[183] "jeg gaaer nu den store Kamp imøde, Kampen for Fædrenelandets Frihed, og bringer Himlen mig engang paa Danmarks Throne, da skal jeg hædre Bondestanden i Dig og aldrig glemme, at Konge og Bonde arbeide Haand i Haand til et fælles Maal"

preventing the nobility from gaining too much influence and retaining the power between himself and the people. An instance of this can be found in Caspar Johannes Boye's drama *Svend Grathe* [Sweyn Grathe] (1825). In this version, the representation of Sweyn Grathe is much more nuanced and he is not depicted as a villain through and through. The play is prefaced by a quote by Shakespeare urging: "Make not too rash a trial of him! He | Was gentle, and not fearfull" (Boye 1850: 3). Sweyn Grathe in this version does not start out by being a particularly bad king, but changes for the worse when Valdemar transfers his loyalty from him to Canute V. His becoming the villain is explained with Valdemar's betrayal, as we are also told explicitly: "he was not evil until injustice | And kinsman's deceit and bad advice deluded | The weak heart" (Boye 1850: 137).[184] One of the ways in which Sweyn Grathe distinguishes himself as a good king is on the ground that he has defended the people from the nobility: "I have been to the peasant | And the burgher a safeguard against aristocratic haughtiness" (Boye 1850: 70).[185] The same sentiment is expressed in T.C. Bruun's play *Erik Glipping* when the queen's lady-in-waiting reassures the worried queen that: "the clergy and the nobility might be unsatisfied, | but the burgher and the peasant will, however, bless | a king, who has those as enemies | only because he wanted to assert the rights of the latter" (T.C. Bruun 1816: 8).[186] In Hollard Nielsen's novel *Ridder Niels Ebbesen. Danmarks Befrier*, Valdemar Atterdag distinguishes himself by being a king of the people and keeping the nobility and clergy at bay: "Valdemar Atterdag, who wanted to show that he was a king of the people, frequently went about the country and conducted things, where he particularly kept a watchful eye on the nobility and the prelates" (Hollard Nielsen 1847-1848: part 2: 181).[187] Oehlenschläger's Eric Clipping also prioritises the people over the other estates. When a dean names the squires and the clergy as two other powers and encourages Eric Clipping to join the church, he retorts:

[184] "han var ikke ond, før Uret | Og Frændesvig, og onde Raad bedaared | Det svage Hjerte"

[185] "Jeg har været Bonde | Og Borgermand et Værn mod Adelshovmod"

[186] "er Geistlighed og Adel utilfreds, | saa siigner Borger dog og Bonde | en Konge, der til Fiender hine har | kun for han disses Ret har villet hævde"

[187] "Valdemar Atterdag, som vilde vise, at han var Folkets Konge, meget hyppig drog om i Landet og holdt Thing, hvor han da fornemmelig havde et vaagent Øie med Adelen og Prælaterne"

You talk about two powers besides me?
You forget the third, the very best,
Am I only king of the knights? Lord of the monks?
No, I am a king of the people. By the blood of God!
I will be an honest king for my people,
Acquaint them with their rights,
Which the clergy and chivalry have stolen.
Recently, the people cheered at the death of two highwaymen,
When the executioner broke to pieces misused weapons;
It shall cheer again!
(Oehlenschläger 1853: 428).[188]

Here, the people comprise a power in society in line with – and actually superior to – the aristocracy and the clergy. It is worth noticing also that according to the king, there exists these three bodies of power, and that he does not consider himself a societal power. His function is to raise the people to their rightful place in society, as the supreme power.

The notion of the king distinguishing himself by protecting the common people against the nobility is particularly prevalent in Boye's *Erik den Syvende*. In the play, the nobility has obstructed the link between king and people, and we are introduced to a king completely out of touch with his people. The king thinks of himself as a friend of the peasant (Boye 1851: 70), but he is unknowingly cut off from information about the people by the aristocracy. As the peasant Thorbern remarks: "Robbers | And courtiers stand around him; otherwise he would hear | The sigh of the peasant" (Boye 1851: 13).[189] As the story develops, the king becomes aware of the deception and begins to re-establish his connection to the people, as he wishes to be loved by the people and be its equal (Boye 1851: 136–137). The king is encouraged by Thorbern to "Go out about the country, see with your own eyes | And hear with your own ears" (Boye 1851: 90)[190] and is told that by justice and kindness he may be highly loved by the simple man (Boye 1851: 90–91). The close connection between king and the people

[188] "I taler om to Magter uden mig? | Den Tredie glemmer I, den allerbedste, | Er jeg blot Ridderkonge? Munkedrot? | Nei, jeg er Folkekonge. Ved Guds Blod! | Jeg vorde vil mit Folk en ærlig Konge, | Indsætte det i sine Rettigheder, | Som Geistlighed og Ridderskab har ranet. | Nys jubled Folket ved to Stimænds Død, | Da Bødd´len sønderbrød misbrugte Vaaben; | Det juble skal igen!"

[189] "Røverpak | Og Hofmænd staae omkring ham; ellers hørte | Han Bondens Suk"

[190] "Drag om i Landet, see med egne Øine, | Og hør med egne Øren"

represented by the peasants is at the heart of the play, and is among other things expressed in terms of equality. For instance, the king does not want a peasant to kneel before him; he will rather shake hands as he will then know them to be true friends (Boye 1851: 137). The play is permeated by antagonism towards the nobility; not only are they the villains causing devastating problems for king and people, but they are also depicted as rather useless for the country. When the king has realised the aristocracy's deception of him, he confronts the nobleman Ove Dyre with a metaphor depicting the country as a field, the king as the farmer, the aristocracy as thistles and, it may be assumed, the peasants as rye:

> Ha! The thistle also grows, proud as a lord,
> On the field, where it is tolerated!
> There is no food in the bitter core,
> No nourishment in its stem; still it oppresses
> Every beneficial plant, and insolently
> Loads the wind with its woollen seeds,
> So that no fertile spot shall bear crops.
> You – you are the thistles on Denmark's fields
> And meadows! Deeply in the best soil
> The root has encroached, and the rye withers
> And becomes barren behind your broad leaf.
> With spiky helmet and sting-filled armour you will
> Protect yourself against the owner's hand?
> He let you grow to freely; now he pulls on
> An iron glove, and you will be pulled up by the roots!
> (Boye 1851: 95).[191]

The antagonism against the nobility and the king's favouring of the peasantry is unmistakable, and this sentiment is not only expressed in this passage, but repeatedly throughout the play.

The themes of cooperation between king and people and antagonism against the nobility are prevalent in much of the

[191] "Ha! Tidselen groer ogsaa, herrestolt, | Paa Mark og Ager, hvor den bliver taalt! | Der er ei Føde i den bittre Kjerne, | Ei Næring i dens Stængel; dog forkuer | Den hver en nyttig Vext, og overmodig | Belæsser Vinden med sit uldne Frø, | At ingen frugtbar Plet skal bære Grøde. | I – I er Tidslerne paa Danmarks Vang | Og Vænge! Dybt i Landets bedste Muld | Har Roden trængt sig ind, og Rugen visner | Og bliver gold bag Eders brede Blad. | Med pigget Hjelm og braadfuldt Pandser vil I | Beskjerme Jer mod Eiermandens Haand? | Han lod Jer groe for frit; nu trækker han | Jernhandske paa, og I skal op med Rode!"

literature examined here, but interestingly it is particularly at the heart of many of the corpus's renditions of the Christian II story. Hans Christian Andersen's *Kongen drømmer* [The King Dreams] (1844) is all about the connection between king and people and exclusion of the nobility. Its anti-aristocratic sentiments are for instance expressed when the king's lover Dyveke compares the three estates. When Dyveke and the archbishop Erik Walkendorf are discussing what they would do if they ruled over Denmark, Dyveke comments: "Every aristocratic head of cabbage should be mowed | of the stalk if it held its head too high!" (H.C. Andersen 1844: 8).[192] In Carsten Hauch's *Vilhelm Zabern. En Autobiografi fra Christian den Andens Tid* [Vilhelm Zabern. An Autobiography from the Times of Christian the Second] (1834), Christian II is likewise represented as an ally of the peasants and opponent of the nobility; at least that is how the king perceives of himself:

> The king spoke, as he used to, with Jesper Brockmand about the conditions of the peasants and meant that the nobility treated the peasants irresponsibly. "If only we could live to the day," he said, "when a peasant stood as close to out throne as a nobleman; before God we are all equal, thus it should also be with regard to the king." Brockmand objected that the country was large, the king could not know everybody, and therefore a selection was made of the best people, who was to stand closest to the throne. Mighty and great people, who wants for nothing, could speak more impartially for the welfare of the country than those who had to beg for their sustenance. – "Yes," said the king, "if the best people constantly surrounded our throne, there would be nothing to object, but the foremost people are still not the best, for they are consumed by arrogance, pleasure and idleness. However, I believe the day to be near when the oppression shall no longer sit in the lordly seat" (Hauch 1944: 139–140).[193]

[192] "Hvert adeligt Kaalhoved skulde meies | Af Stokken, hvis det kneisede for høit!"

[193] "Kongen talte, som han plejede, med Jesper Brockmand om Almuens Kaar, og mente, at Adelen behandlede Bønderne uforsvarligt. »Gid vi maatte leve den Dag,« sagde han, »at en Bonde stod vor Trone ligesaa nær som en Adelsmand; for Gud er vi alle lige, saa burde det ogsaa være for Kongen.« Brockmand indvendte, at Landet var stort, Kongen kunde ikke kende alle, derfor gjordes Udvalg af de bedste, der skulde staa Tronen nærmest. Mægtige og store, der selv intet trænger, kunde mere upartisk tale for Landets Vel end de, der var nødt til at trygle for sig selv til Livets Ophold. – »Ja,« sagde Kongen, »hvis de bedste bestandig omgav vor Kongestol, saa var intet at sige derimod, men de fornemste er endnu ikke de bedste, thi de fortæres

Christian II here becomes a representative of popular political agency with his insistence that he should be led by the people, not the nobility.

Wilhelm Holst's play *Christian den Anden* [Christian the Second] (1834) also revolves around the relation between king and people and exclusion of the nobility. The play takes place in 1523 and depicts the last days before Christian is forced to give up the Danish throne and flee the country. Towards the end of the play, Christian II has finally realised the situation his former actions have put him in and decides to attempt to ameliorate things:

> Still, everything can be changed for the better:
> The peasantry carries the yoke of the clergy,
> And the priesthood of the country must obey Urne;
> I can trust the burghers of the city –
> The German mercenaries are summoned
> From Gotland – and I am at the head of
> A mighty army, which shall destroy the spawn
> Of aristocratic caitiffs that defy
> My power. – *From now on, I am king of the burghers*
> (Holst 1834: 129).[194]

Christian II's transformation to a better king consists in him becoming truly a king of his people. As in Andersen's and Hauch's renditions, Christian II here joins forces with the people and tries to diminish the influence of the nobility. The very end of the play is likewise dedicated to highlighting the special relationship between the king and people without the nobility. The king has realised that he has run out of options and are about to leave the country when the burghers of Copenhagen arrive at the castle and try to prevent him from leaving. The burghers praise the king for providing them with freedom, and Christian II concedes that he has "from the mighty […] stolen the ember | Whereby I lightened your sun of freedom" (Holst 1834: 150).[195] Although Christian II laments that he has to leave his beloved

af Hovmod, Vellyst og Ørkesløshed. Dog den Dag tænker jeg at være nær for Døren, da Undertrykkelsen ej længer skal sidde paa Herresædet«"

194 "Endnu kan Alt forandres til det Bedre: | Almuen bærer Geistlighedens Aag, | Og Landets Præsteskab maa lyde Urne; | Paa Byens Borgere jeg stole kan, – | De tydske Leietropper kaldes hid | Fra Gulland, – og jeg staaer i Spidsen for | En mægtig Hær, der knuse skal den Yngel | Af adelige Niddinger, som trodser | Min Magt. – F r a n u a f e r j e g B o r g e r k o n g e"

195 "fra de Mægtige […] ranet Gløden, | Hvorved jeg tændte Eders Frihedssol"

people and country, he is comforted by the knowledge that "By me, the people and the king was first united" (Holst 1834: 152).[196] Christian II here becomes a symbol of the unification of king and people.

Andersen's, Hauch's and Holst's representations are in line with the rest of the depictions of Christian II in the corpus, and these few examples should serve to demonstrate how Christian II is used as a figure to unite royal power and the people while keeping the nobility from political influence.

Common for all the frequent depictions of the special relationship between king and people in the corpus is that it comprises a mutually beneficial relation in which the king ensures the right of the people and the people provide legitimacy to the king's position. In this way, the relationship entails a kind of equality. But, as it appears frequently in the corpus as well, the relationship consists not only in maintaining rights and positions for the king and people, but very much in keeping the nobility out of influence. That the popular agency is facilitated not only by the king's receptiveness to the people, but by the rejection of the nobility's right to political influence, brings to mind the special relationship between king and people claimed to be at the foundation of the institution of the absolute monarchy. The frequent, explicit articulations of the nature of the special relationship between the king and people as excluding the aristocracy from political influence thus functions as a reminder of the fundamentals of the absolute monarchical system: the king's position is a result of a political alliance with the people and that his power originates from the people.

Active people and passive kings

The literature surveyed here presents a variety of powerful and politically acting kings. There are, however, a number of rather interesting examples of politically or otherwise passive kings which also merit attention. We have already seen some examples of kings being distanced from the action in the previous chapters. For instance, as presented in chapter two, when Bræmer in his novel *Slaget paa Grathehede* has a group of peasants debating whether or not to kill Sweyn Grathe and eventually decide to do so in order to keep King

[196] "Ved mig blev Folk og Konge først forenet"

Valdemar free from guilt and for him not to be moved to forgive Sweyn. Here, the king is kept passively at a distance from the action, while the common people makes a political decision.

We also saw the people acting politically in order to keep the king clean of violent acts in Sander's *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis* in which Niels Ebbesen paves the way for Valdemar Atterdag's ascension to the throne. Here, Niels Ebbesen and his people are the active agents, while Valdemar waits passively by the border. Niels Ebbesen takes upon himself to decide upon and execute acts which could appertain to the king, as the play is troubled by the idea of having Valdemar committing violence in order to ascend to the throne. As Stig Andersen rhetorically asks at the Dane Court: "Through the blood of ten thousand brothers, he must wade to the throne of Jutland. Shall the future king, like the lion, learn to govern by committing murder?" (Sander 1798: 171).[197] The play instead has Niels Ebbesen carrying out the violent acts which cannot be associated with King Valdemar. Valdemar's hands are kept clean and the guilt of Gerhard's murder goes away with Niels Ebbesen's death. The transfer of agency from Valdemar to Niels Ebbesen keeps Valdemar free of association with violence, but it also makes him passive.

Valdemar's passivity or exclusion from the action appears also when turning to the edition history of the play. The first edition of the play ends with Valdemar arriving at Nørreriis just in time to witness the death of Niels Ebbesen. Valdemar enters with the wish to see Niels Ebbesen and pay his respects to his deeds, and when the feeble Niels Ebbesen attempts to stand up for the king, he dies. The play finishes with a short monologue by Valdemar in which he praises Niels Ebbesen and states that he will forever be honoured by the Danes. Thus, even though the character of Valdemar is only on stage for a few minutes, he holds quite a noticeable position as the finale of the play. In the second version from 1799, one of the most striking changes made to the final act is that the character of Valdemar has been written out.[198] In the second version, the play instead finishes with Niels Ebbesen rejoicing in the fact that he saved Denmark and

[197] "Igiennem ti tusinde Brödres Blod maae han vade til Jyllands Throne. Skal den vordende Konge, som Löven, lære at regiere, ved at myrde?"

[198] In the 1799 edition, Sander states as the reason for the changes that he have been guided by criticism offered by Rahbek, Baden and other unnamed critics (Sander 1799: 116).

ensured liberty of its people, but also worrying about the fate of his wife and daughter after his death, before he eventually dies. The king's small but significant appearance on the stage is removed, and this authorial choice gives the king an even more distant or removed role in the play.

Another interesting example of passivity can be found in Boye's *Svend Grathe*, in which royal passivity and activity is creatively intermingled. Towards the beginning of the play, Sweyn Grathe retells the story of Valdemar's father, the duke and pretender to the throne Canute Lavard, who was murdered by Canute V's father, another pretender to the throne:

> Denmark had a man,
> Originating from renowned noble stock
> As you and I; and had he been
> Slave-born, born by a ragged beggarwoman
> On the straw in the nook of an open cottage,
> His princely virtues would have ennobled him.
> From foot to crown dressed in golden iron,
> He stood, a god of war, by the borders of the country –
> A bulwark firm as stone, erected against the deluge of Wendland,
> Which rushes with foam against the plain,
> To transform the Eden of Denmark into a field of gravel.
> He did not try to win the throne; for he found it
> Sufficient that princes tried to win him,
> Entrusted their disputes to his honesty
> And willingly took peace from his hand.
> And furthermore, he was friendly and gentle;
> A friend of the inferior, magnanimous towards his enemy
> (Boye 1850: 17–18).[199]

This example is interesting because Canute Lavard is lauded for acting with passivity. He is said to stand like a god at the borders of

[199] "Danmark havde sig en Mand, | Udsprungen af navnkundig Herreslægt, | Som du og jeg; og om han havde været | Trælbaaren, født af laset Betlerqvinde | Paa Straaet i den aabne Hyttes Vraa, | Hans Fyrste-Dyder havde adlet ham. | Fra Fod til Isse klædt i gyldent Jern, | Han stod, en Krigens Gud, for Landets Grændser – | Et steenfast Bolværk, reist mod Vendens Syndflod, | Der styrter sig med Fraad mod Sletten ind, | At gjøre Danmarks Eden til en Gruusmark. | Ei beiled han til Thronen; thi det tyktes | Ham nok, at Fyrster beilede til ham, | Gav deres Tvist hans Ærlighed i Vold, | Og toge villigt Freden af hans Haand. | Og derhos var han vennesæl og blid; | Den Ringes Ven, høihjertet mod sin Fiende"

the country. He is standing still and thereby passively rather than actively defending the border. Likewise, he is described as a steadfast bulwark; the metaphor chosen for him is one of an immovable, passive object, the power of which lies exactly in its properties of being immobile. It is also emphasised that he did not actively try to win the throne, and from the context, it appears as a laudable attitude. Doing nothing is doing good. Here, the pretender's passivity does not mean that he does nothing or fulfils no purpose, but that he is a passive power. The power of passivity appears again in a conversation between the pretenders in which Sweyn Grathe says to Canute V:

> With womanly smily you angle for the Crown,
> Which shall be won with the vigour of manhood.
> Valdemar
> (seizes Canute's hand and steps closer towards Sweyn).
> Here we stand,
> With the rights of lords to the splendour of Denmark,
> And strictly demand its two thirds,
> For they belong to us. Stir up the people,
> If you can! You will soon hear word
> From Jutland whether our temple is capable
> Of bearing the princely jewellery, whether your derision,
> Your arrogance, whether a womanly smile has broken
> My vigour of manhood!
> (Boye 1850: 27).[200]

Here we have Sweyn Grathe's vigour of manhood opposed to Canute's womanly smile, which in this context may be interpreted as expressions of active and passive powers. With our knowledge that Sweyn's brute force will eventually be defeated by Valdemar and Canute's more moderate methods, and the fact that the play sympathises with Valdemar and Canute, the active power appears as the less desirable of the two. In Boye's play, thus, the good king exercises his power through passivity. There is a sort of passive action,

[200] "Med Qvindesmil du angler efter Kronen, | Der vindes skal ved Manddomskraft. | Valdemar | (griber Knuds Haand og træder nærmere mod Svend). | Her staae vi, | Med Herreret til Danmarks Herlighed, | Og kræve strengt dens tvende Trediedele, | Thi de tilhøre os. Ophids kun Folket, | Ifald du kan! Du snart skal høre Bud | Fra Jylland, om vor Tinding ei formaaer | At løfte Fyrstesmykket, om din Spot | Dit Overmod, om Qvindesmil har knækket | Min Manddomskraft!"

which may seem paradoxical, but is interestingly close to the role that the constitutional regents would come to hold in time.

Bournonville's absent king

A particularly interesting example of a king removed from the action can be found in August Bournonville's ballet *Erik Menveds Barndom* [The Childhood of Eric Menved] (1843).[201] A reason why ballet is a particularly interesting genre to study with regard to politics in Danish nineteenth-century literature is that it was exempted from censorship. While the king keenly employed his censorship towards dramatic productions at the Royal Danish Theatre, ballets were not censured (Aschengreen 1992: 49).[202] The dance critic Erik Aschengreen has attributed the absence of censorship towards the ballet to "the fact that ballet was not regarded as dangerous" (Aschengreen 1992: 50). The assumption that ballet did not pose a political threat in the way drama might may have provided it with a greater degree of liberty of expression than other text based art forms. That makes ballet particularly interesting for studying literary expressions of politics.

Bournonville's *Erik Menveds Barndom* was adapted from Ingemann's historical novel of the same title and premiered at the Royal Danish Theatre on May 15th, 1843 (N. Jensen 2020c). Is was critically acclaimed by both audience and critics and was performed fifteen times in 1843 (N. Jensen 2019, 2020c; *Kjøbenhavnsposten* 1843). The ballet employs the same main characters as Ingemann and the same pivotal events, but Bournonville has made one change which in particular makes his ballet stand out from the other Eric Clipping

[201] Existing research on Bournonville's *Erik Menveds Barndom* is very sparse. Dance critic Erik Aschengreen has mentioned the ballet in passing, briefly describing it as very royalist (Aschengreen 1980: 226). Knud Arne Jürgensen and Ann Hutchinson Guest have published two dances from the ballet in form of dance notations accompanied by a brief introduction which relates Bournonville's reflections on the ballet from his autobiography and some comments from a contemporary newspaper review (Jürgensen and Guest 1990). Jürgensen has also provided an exposition on the ballet which focuses on the musical score and its sources (Jürgensen 1997b).

[202] When Aschengreen mentions the king in this context, he is referring to Frederik VI, but the same laws of the freedom of the press were in effect under the reign of Christian VIII during which *Erik Menveds Barndom* premiered (H. Jørgensen 1944: 207–208).

renditions: he has excluded the king himself from the action.[203] Eric Clipping is referred to in the programme for the ballet, but he does not figure on the list of the cast and does not appear on stage. The ballet is also noticeable for playing down the regicide to the degree that it only takes place in the background halfway through the ballet. No motive is provided for the murder, and Marshal Stig is also excluded from this version. With the regicide set aside, the ballet's culmination is instead comprised in an abduction of Eric Menved and his younger brother, which is a plot entirely of Bournonville's invention and cannot be found in popular ballads or historical writings about Eric Clipping.

The following analysis[204] is based on the programme for the ballet, as – to my knowledge – a full record of the staging of the ballet does not exist. Fortunately, the programme is very detailed and rather more elaborate than ballet programmes today. The programme for *Erik Menveds Barndom* spans fifteen pages and describes the actions on stage in an observational-like manner in the style of stage directions. The text also describes details, which are not necessarily possible to convey in mime on stage, such as the inner feelings and thoughts of characters, intertextual references and the content of a letter. The programme was used by Bournonville in the staging process as a kind of manuscript when working with the composer and directing the dancers, and it was also distributed to the audience (Bournonville 1848: 47, 50–51; Jürgensen 1997: 85).

The ballet consists of four acts. The first takes place at Skanderborg Castle and introduces the main characters: Queen Agnes and her children the Crown Prince Eric Menved, Prince Christopher and Princess Merete; the king's seneschal Peder Hessel and his fiancée Inge who are the ballet's leading romantic couple and whose union is hindered by Inge's father; and the king's page Rane, who is the villain of the story. The second act plays out in the woods surrounding Skanderborg where Henner Friser, who in this rendition is an old sailor, lives with his granddaughter Aase. The act shows Aase and her lover, Peder Hessel's squire Claus Skirmen, asking for Henner Friser's permission of them to marry. After that, a group of Franciscan

[203] In his autobiography, Bournonville gives as his reason for omitting the king from the ballet that his appearance could be neither worthy nor edifying (Bournonville 1848: 169).

[204] This analysis has been published earlier in the article "Romantic Regicide. Political Medievalism in Bournonville's *Erik Menveds Barndom*" in *Scandinavian Studies*, vol. 92, no. 1, 2020.

monks appear: Claus Skirmen, being suspicious of them, persuades Henner Friser that they should follow them. They discover the monks to be conspirators in disguise, who are conducting their final meeting before setting out to commit the regicide. One of the conspirators is Lave Little, Inge's father. He expresses second thoughts about the regicide and is assaulted by the rest of the conspirators. Without Lave Little, the rest of the conspirators leave for Finderup in order to kill the king. The scene following the conspirators' departure shows Aase walking in her sleep, and the programme informs the reader that she dreams about the murder of the king. Henner Friser and Claus Skirmen turn up and find Aase and Lave Little. Having regained consciousness, Lave Little informs them of the impending regicide. The programme then describes there to be a fire in the distance and conveys that Lave Little and Claus Skirmen arrive too late to save the king. The act finishes with a depiction of the court receiving the news of the king's death. The third act picks up the narrative immediately after Eric Clipping's funeral in the cathedral of Viborg. Lave Little, who is weighed down by guilty conscience, decides to give a confession to a monk. The monk he chooses turns out to be Rane. Rane asks Lave Little for his help, but Lave Little rejects his request. Queen Agnes, who has in the meantime been grieving by the king's coffin in company with her children, steps forth to proclaim Eric Menved the new, rightful king of Denmark. Eric Menved swears revenge over his father's murderers, and Lave Little throws himself before the king and urges to be killed. His appeal is interrupted by the conspirators who have suddenly appeared and assails the king and abduct him together with his brother and Lave Little. The final act takes place at Ribehuus Castle, where the princes are imprisoned and Lave Little looks after them. Queen Agnes and her people arrive in order to rescue the princes. They disguise themselves as a procession celebrating midsummer. A battle erupts against the conspirators, which is won by the queen and her people. The ballet ends with Eric Menved forgiving Lave Little, Peder Hessel and Inge becoming united and the people celebrating the princes and the queen.

A particularly interesting scene of the ballet regarding the absent king is the depiction of the regicide. The regicide itself is not shown on stage other than as a burning barn in the background, but is instead conveyed through the sleepwalking peasant girl Aase who possesses a

kind of second sight in her dreams. In the programme, the scene is described this way:

> The Sleepwalker senses everything that is happening some distance away. In her mind's eye she sees the evil men attack; her anxiety and despair mount; she is crushed, turns, extinguishes the taper, and gently falls to the ground in peaceful sleep (McAndrew 1979: 450).[205]

This is a rather unconventional way of representing a regicide, and as the narrated action takes place in Aase's mind, it must have been quite difficult, if not impossible, to fully convey through mime. Clearly, the audience has been dependent on the written programme to completely understand the narrative of the ballet. A contemporary critic noted this condition in his review of the ballet: "To enjoy the whole composition with undiminished interest, it is required that the spectator has not only a meticulous memorization of the program but also detailed knowledge of Ingemann's historical novel of the same title" (*Fædrelandet* 1843: column 9075).[206] To approach an understanding of the implication of showing a peasant girl dreaming of the regicide rather than representing the regicide itself, I have found it conducive to turn to some of Jacques Rancière's thoughts on the politics of literature.

One of Rancière's contentions is that literature can be democratic by including different kinds of people. According to Rancière, the concept of "literary democracy" – an element of what he terms the "aesthetic regime of literature" – emerged with the Romantic era. Rancière describes literary democracy as a contrast to the classical order of representation, which is founded on Aristotle's principles of fiction (Rancière 2011: 11). In *Poetics*, Aristotle defines poetry by fiction and fiction as men who act. From this Rancière infers the politics of the poem to rank the "casual rationality of action" over the "empirical nature of life" (Rancière 2011: 9). This superiority of poems

[205] "Søvngjængersken fornemmer Alt, hvad der foregaaer i nogen Frastand; hendes indre Øie følger de Ondes anslag, hendes Angst og Fortvivlelse tiltager, hun standser tilintetgjort, vender og slukker Faklen og synker sagte til Jorden i rolig Søvn" (Bournonville 1843: 9)

[206] "For at nyde hele denne Composition med usvækket Interesse, forudsættes hos Tilskueren ikke blot en omhyggelig Memorering af Programmet, men ogsaa et nøie Kjendskab til Ingemanns historiske Roman med samme Titel"

containing action over history, which "simply" conveys deeds, Rancière sees as equal to the superiority of men partaking in the world of action over men inhabiting the world of life. This notion stems from Platon's *Republic*, in which he argues for the impossibility of artisans to participate in politics as their work takes up all their time. In Rancière's view, politics takes off in the moment this impossibility is rejected and the artisans insist on their position as speaking beings capable of taking part in a shared world. Rancière thus consider literature as democratic when it breaks with the order described above and treats all types of subjects as suitable subject matter. Democratic literature is defined by its rejection of the distinction between men of action and "those who merely live", by which it creates a new distribution of the perceptible (Rancière 2011: 13).

Within the conceptual frame of Rancière's thoughts, Bournonville's staging of the regicide may be interpreted as an expression of prioritising "life" over "action": The regicide, which is a pinnacle of action, like the king himself must be the apex of Rancière's men of action, is represented through a peasant girl, who in turn is the epitome of life and whose passivity is underscored by her being asleep. With Rancière in mind, the foregrounding of Aase can be understood as a literary democratic gesture as it opposes the classical order by representing life on the expense of action. Likewise, the hierarchy of action and history is levelled out in the ballet's representation of the regicide. As the ballet does not show the act of regicide, but instead indirectly refers to it, the understanding of the scene becomes dependent on the audience's recollection of history. History thus becomes part of the ballet without being converted into deeds performed by actors and thereby assumes a central position next to action in the ballet.

Like the king's role is in this way downplayed in favour of representation of common people, the people is similarly depicted as partaking in the political or royal agenda. At the end of the ballet, the kidnapped Eric Menved and his brother are held captive at Riberhuus castle and people from all classes arrive to free them. The people disguise themselves as a procession celebrating Saint John's Eve and capture Riberhuus in a carnivalesque dancing scene. In this dancing capture, people from all classes are intermingled, and the distinction between what Rancière would term men of action and men of life becomes disrupted. The crowd filled with "those who merely live"

comprise a literary democratic element, simply in its representation, but also in that the crowd takes active part in rescuing the young king and his brother, while the figure of the king is caught in a passive role as a captive child. The distinction of some classes of people as passive and others as active is here broken down, reflecting literary democracy deconstructing the classical order.

It might already be clear from the brief description above of the scene that the ballet's representation of the dancing capture of Ribehuus bears some resemblance to Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque. Bakhtin believes the medieval and renaissance carnivals to be fundamentally associated with time, as they are connected to times of crisis and prompted by change and renewal. He proposes that the carnival provides a limited time in which the participants may inhabit a sphere of community, equality and abundance (Bakhtin 1984: 9). He elaborates that "one might say that carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions. Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal" (Bakhtin 1984: 10). Another important aspect of the carnival according to Bakhtin is its suspension of hierarchy and the consequent notion of equality. As described, both levelling out of hierarchy and a notion of equality are present in the ballet's staging of the dancing capture. But where Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque implies an aspect of temporality with the impending end of the carnival and return to normal life, I will contend that it may be argued that the carnival in *Erik Menveds Barndom* does not necessarily end. The ballet instead ends with the carnival's alternative order in effect. A happy ending is a staple of Bournonville's ballets, and his endings generally consist in the restoration of harmony, often expressed through communal dances (Tobias 1997: 153). If it is assumed that the communal dance at the finale of *Erik Menveds Barndom* may also be considered as an attainment of harmony (which the successful liberation of the king and prince suggests), the order of the carnival may be understood as the desirable harmony, the ballet has worked towards. Thus the carnivalesque and equal order, with acting people and a passive king, may be interpreted as the ballet's concept of ideal order. The ballet thereby changes the political implications from the origin in Ingemann's novel. In Ingemann's version, the regicide leads

to a political crisis, but in the ballet, the regicide itself causes no repercussions. The concern of the ballet is mainly with the new king. With its representation of a regicide without political consequences and its alternative societal order, in which the people play the major part, within fiction Bournonville's ballet thus demonstrates a possibility of substituting one ruler for another without affecting the political status quo. And, as importantly, it shows the people playing an essential part for society, while the king is reduced to a rather passive role.

Sleeping kings

Another way in which the passivity of kings repeatedly appear in the corpus is in the form of sleeping kings. For instance, Andersen's *Kongen drømmer* has King Christian II sleeping in an alcove at the side of the stage through most of the play. The king in Andersen's rendition is the epitome of passivity; he is deprived of his royal status, he is imprisoned and asleep. In the literature examined here, the king's sleep is often associated with political passivity. An explicit example of this can be found in Ingemann's *Prinds Otto af Danmark* when King Christopher gives up his fight for Denmark with the words: "I have now almost gone mad from keeping vigil and thinking for the people and the kingdom. Now I will sleep and let the people take care of me, if they care to" (Ingemann 1859: part 1: 65).[207] There are numerous instances of sleep being used to convey the political passivity of a king, but the work in which it is employed most often and to the greatest effect is Boye's *Erik den Syvende*. In the play, the king's error is his heedlessness of the condition of the people, which is expressed as the king being metaphorically asleep. The king's sleep is equated with his neglect of royal duties, as it, for instance, is expressed by Rane: "Ha! – Can | You doze now, then you are not worthy | Of waking up again, not worthy of being king!" (Boye 1851: 71).[208] By employing sleep as the recurring metaphor for the king's neglect, his inattentiveness is separated from his person. Some of the guilt for the neglect is removed from the king, as while being asleep you cannot be

[207] "Jeg har nu næsten vaaget og tænkt mig gal for Folk og Rige. Nu vil jeg sove og lade Folket sørge for mig, hvis det gider"

[208] "Ha! – Kan | Du blunde nu, saa er du ikke værdig | At vaagne meer, ei værd at være Konge!"

blamed for being unaware. The sleep metaphor implies that the problem is not inherent to the king, but is solvable by 'rousing' the king. Thus the play presents the dying peasant Thorbern praying for King Eric "that the sovereign power | May again awaken" (Boye 1851: 91)[209] and the king's jester concluding that: "When his treasurer sings him to sleep, I cannot see why his jester should not awaken him" (Boye 1851: 78).[210] Likewise, when the other peasants insist that Thorbern's attempt to get the attention of the king will be in vain, Thorbern is assured that: "Eric's mind is not hardened; only drowsy" (Boye 1851: 75).[211] When the king is finally made aware of the condition of his country and takes up action, he also repeatedly refers to his neglect as sleep: "The night | has, sleepless, awaken my soul to reflection; | Now, I feel indignant about my carelessness!" (Boye 1851: 78–79),[212] "Come on, remorse! | And chase away the sleep from my bed" (Boye 1851: 92),[213] "Now I will keep awake and work!" (Boye 1851: 130)[214] and "The royal lion | Has arisen, powerfully, from its doze to fight" (Boye 1851: 139).[215] While the king regrets his inattentiveness, the blame for the neglect is placed on the nobility for 'humming the king to sleep', as the king says: "Two enemies – and the worst! – are subdued; | The dull indifference, which hummed | My royal sorrow to sleep, and the will to govern, | Which defied the law of reason" (Boye 1851: 139).[216] Being a wiser king towards the end of the play, the king is determined not to 'sleep' again, as is expressed by his jester, which the king has made his squire after his 'awakening': "You will not doze, | For these pious, kingly thoughts, I know, | Must force the sleep to flee; but the body | Needs rest" (Boye 1851: 154).[217] In this way, Boye's *Erik den Syvende* uses the metaphor of sleep to express political passivity in the king. Although this play is definitely the piece in the corpus which makes most extensive use of the metaphor of the sleeping king, it is by no

[209] "at Herskerkraften | Maa atter vaagne"
[210] "Naar hans Skatmester synger ham i Søvn, kan jeg ikke indsee, hvorfor hans Nar ikke skulde vække ham"
[211] "Forhærdet er ei Eriks Sind; kun døsigt"
[212] "Natten | Har, søvnløs, vakt min Sjæl til Eftertanke; | Nu harmes jeg ved min Letsindighed!"
[213] "Kom kun, Anger! | Og bortjag Søvnen fra mit Natteleie"
[214] "Nu vil jeg vaage og arbeide!"
[215] "Den kongelige Løve | Har reist sig, kraftig, af sit Blund til Kamp"
[216] "To Fiender – og de værste! – er betvungne; | Den sløve Ligegyldighed, der nynned | Min Kongesorg i Søvn, og Herskervillien, | Der trodsed mod Fornuftens Lov"
[217] "Ikke vil I blunde, | Thi disse fromme Kongetanker, veed jeg, | Maae tvinge Søvnen til at flye; men Legemet | Behøver Hvile"

means the only one. The metaphorically or actually sleeping king is thus another means by which the literature examined experiments with royal passivity and explores the power vacuum it leaves behind. A common characteristic among the literary pieces with sleeping kings is that the power vacuum caused by neglect is not attempted filled by anything other than the king. The king holds an integral role in the political layout of society, and there is no alternative to the society with the regent in charge. As long as the king is 'asleep', the country languishes, and its condition can only be amended by 'rousing' the king, and not by other means such as replacing him or changing the form of government.

While there are many examples of passive kings in the corpus studied here, it is important to underline that although they comprise a clear tendency in the literature, there are at least as many politically active kings to be found. And of course, the same king may be both passive and active, which is the case in the many instances of kings who 'awakens' to assume their royal duties. The passive kings are interesting to study as their passivity creates a power vacuum and opens up for experimentations with other actors taking on power, in particular the people. With Rancière's terminology it could be said that literature with passive kings renegotiates the division between "men of action" and "those who merely live".

Forms of government and popular agency

A recurrent feature in the corpus of literature examined is that the people participate in the political sphere in some way or another. The particulars as to how the people act politically vary from piece to piece, and this section will go through some of the different ways in which the people's political agency is depicted in order to throw light upon how the people were imagined to be able to partake in the political process.

The idea of popular sovereignty and the notion that the king's power originates from the people, which was a central theme in the late eighteenth-century literature examined in chapter one, is still very prevalent in the corpus literature from the nineteenth century. For instance, it appears in Boye's play *Svend Grathe* when the three pretenders argue about the division of the Danish regions between

them. As they cannot agree, Sweyn Grathe states that it is for the Danish people to decide, when they meet at the thing:

> The people will come to the thing; it shall judge
> Between us, perjured vassals of the realm!
> […]
> Valdemar.
> […] The Jutlandic people
> Bade Canute and me demand a part of the kingdom;
> Our arm is not defenceless, King Sweyn!
> Sweyn.
> And do you think I am inclined to break
> My sceptre and share the fragments
> With you?
> Canute.
> To no avail you tramp
> Against the sting of the popular will
> (Boye 1850: 26).[218]

The conflicting pretenders agree that it is the people who is to judge between them. Likewise, Valdemar and Canute are acting by the order of the people and maintain the futility of countering the popular will. Here, the popular will is the governing instance, and Valdemar and Canute are simply catalysts of the popular will. The political agency of the people consists in the people having the right to make political decisions which the kings have to follow.

The notion of popular sovereignty is also a main component in Ingemann's historical cycle. It is especially incarnated in the peasant Ole Stam from *Valdemar den Store og hans Mænd*, who vehemently maintains his right to speak at the thing, even though that attitude has forced him to live in hiding in the woods in order to avoid Sweyn Grathe and his supporters. Early on in the story, Ole Stam introduces himself this way:

> "Have you not heard of Ole Stam?"
> – The clever peasant answers him –

[218] "Til Thinge kommer Folket; det skal dømme | Imellem os, meensvone Rigsvasaller! | […]| Valdemar. | […] Det jydske Folk | Bød Knud og mig at kræve Deel i Riget; | Vor Arm er ikke værgeløs, Kong Svend! | Svend. | Og mener du, det lyster mig at bryde | Min Kongestav, og dele Stumperne | Med Eder? | Knud. | Uden Nytte stamper I | Mod Folkevilliens Braad"

"At the thing, I have spoken
And fought, as best I could.
I cared with all my power
About the old manners and customs of the country.
There, the inhabitant of Zealand, pliant and scared,
Was cowed by Prince Sweyn,
In palmy days I have said the word,
Which I, outlawed, does not regret:
Who the people did not give royal power,
Only a cowardly thrall obeys.
The inhabitant of Zealand cannot alone
Offer the name of king of the Danes,
As little as can each individual good man and true,
As Scanian or Jutlander.
I have cursed one and all,
Who elected Sweyn as king […]"
(Ingemann 1913: 17).[219]

Here is represented a peasant who is used to speak at the thing and elect his king. He stands firm on the right to speak his mind about political issues without having to fear the consequences. This is quite a contrast to the time of the poem's composition, where the Danish people were not allowed to express criticism of the king or the government, and infringement of this rule was severely punished. If Ole Stam's insistence on freedom of speech in political matters is interpreted as a comment on contemporary times, it may actually be quite radical. It is also worth noticing the choice to use the term 'thrall', which – as we also saw in chapter one – is a common word in the republican vocabulary. In a similar vein is expressed that if the people are to be truly free, and not slaves, they have to possess the right to elect their king. In the form of Ole Stam and other such characters, a remarkable republican strain runs through Ingemann's

[219] "„Har du om Ole Stam ej hørt?" | – Ham svarer snilde Bonde – | „Paa Tinge har jeg Ordet ført | Og stridt, som bedst jeg kunde. | Paa Landsens gamle Skik og Sæd | Jeg holdt af al Formue, | Der Sjællandsfaren, myg og ræd, | Lod af Prins Svend sig kue, | I Velmagt jeg det Ord har sagt, | Jeg, fredløs, ej fortryder: | Hvem Folket ej gav Kongemagt, | Kun fejge Træl adlyder. | Ej Sjællandsfaren ene kan | Dankonning-Navn tilbyde, | Saa lidt som enkelt Dannemand, | Som Skaaning eller Jyde. | Forbandet har jeg hver og en, | Som Svend til Konning kaared"

cycle – a version of republicanism, it should be underscored, which is combined with the monarchical social structure.[220]

His neglect of the people's right to speak freely is likewise what makes King Sweyn Grathe a bad king:

> The peasant speaks from the high stone:
> "Previously, the Danish king did not disdain
> Consulting good men and true at the thing;
> Now, as in heathen times,
> The sword must again shift among Danish men;
> The king does not listen to advice from the peasant,
> To appeals and to women's weeping;
> But one should not judge the book by its cover –
> Little strokes fell great oaks."
> Thus the peasant shouts with daring mind;
> King Sweyn, pale, rushes in through the castle gates.
> But the little grey peasant suffers for the word:
> Soon he lies gagged in the castle cellar
> (Ingemann 1913: 27).[221]

Ole Stam is severely punished by Sweyn Grathe for attempting to speak freely, and his imprisonment emphasises the gravity of the lack of freedom of speech. The emphasis on the people's right to weigh in on public matters and the republican notions are not necessarily expressions of the cycle bluntly promoting republicanism. But the cycle seems to idealise a combined monarchical and republican system in which the people elect their regents, but may not depose of them, as we saw in chapter two. Thus, as to the question of whether medieval Denmark was an electoral or inherited kingdom, Ingemann's historical novels seem to adhere to the first. For instance, we see that quite clearly expressed in *Prinds Otto af Danmark*, in which the reader is told that Otto, although the eldest son to the previous king, has not been elected because "he has lost the confidence of the people.

[220] Martinsen has argued that Ingemann's historical cycle is considerably influenced by republican ideas in multiple instances. See Martinsen 2010, 2012a, 2012b, 2015.

[221] "Bonden taler fra høje Sten: | ,,Dankonning agted det før ej ringe | Med Dannemænd at raadslaa paa Tinge; | Nu, som i hedenske Tid, igen | Maa Sværdet skifte blandt danske Mænd; | Ej Kongen hører paa Bonderaad, | Paa Kæremaal og paa Kvindegraad; | Men Hunden skal man paa Haar ej skue – | Stort Læs kan væltes af liden Tue." | Saa raaber Bonden med dristigt Sind; | Bleg farer Kong Svend af Borgeled ind. | Men liden graa Bonde det Ord Undgælder: | Snart ligger han knevlet i Borgekælder"

The brother has the most important votes" (Ingemann 1859: part 2: 80)[222] and "The will of the people is the law here. Denmark is still a free elective monarchy" (Ingemann 1859: part 2: 80).[223] By representing medieval Denmark as an electoral kingdom, the novels provide the people with an integral part in the political process. This is particularly interesting when taking into account the lack of popular participation in political decision-making in the novel's contemporary historical context. Even though Ingemann's historical cycle is undoubtedly a national project promoting loyalty to the monarchy, it promotes some rather republican ideas about popular political agency as well. It should be mentioned as well that although Ingemann's historical fiction promotes popular political agency, it is not without its reservations. A few places in the novels there can be observed a fear of the mob and worries about the uncontrollability of a great amount of common people.[224] Thus, while the idea of including the people in the political process abounds in the cycle, it is accompanied by a fear of the possible unpredictability of the common people.

Considerations about the extent of the people's participation in political decision making is also at the heart of Briem's drama *Ridder Niels Ebbesen*. The play revolves around the question of whether medieval Denmark was an elective or hereditary monarchy and through this it contemplates different degrees of popular political co-determination. We are told quite explicitly that this is the central conflict of the drama: "One side advocates for free royal election, | The other fights firmly for the law of succession. | The transfer of the pledge is, in addition, by some | Called illegal, while others think | That it is irrelevant to whom the tax is payed" (Briem 1840: 117).[225] In this rendition of the conflict between Niels Ebbesen and Count Gerhardt, both Prince Valdemar and Duke Valdemar of Schleswig are recounted as equally entitled to the throne. As Niels Ebbesen states: "The game is tied between both: | The family's generations, this far equally as near, | Meet in Valdemar the Victorious. | Just away with

[222] "han har tabt Folkets Tillid. Broderen har de vigtigste Stemmer"
[223] "Folkets Villie er her Lov. Danmark er endnu et frit Valgrige"
[224] For more about the mob in Ingemann's historical cycle see Martinsen 2015.
[225] "Frit Kongevalg forfægter et Partie, | Det andet kjemper fast for Arveloven. | Pantoverdragelsen dertil af Nogle | Kaldes ulovlig, medens Andre mene, | Det ligegyldigt er, hvem Skatten ydes"

Gerhard and all his monsters!" (Briem 1840: 20).[226] Gerhard's fault, according to Niels Ebbesen, is not his rule or the fact that he wishes to put Duke Valdemar on the Danish throne, but that he disregards the Danes' right to elect their king. In the beginning of the play, Niels Ebbesen is discussing the state of Denmark with his wife and mother, and his wife asks about the royal election. Niels Ebbesen replies that it has not been discussed because of Gerhard: "We know very well that Gerhard will put his sister's son | On the throne as his ward once more, | Insulting our right to vote; | Therefore, death itself shall open its gate, | The prisoners themselves break into pieces the chain, | Before he will open the prison for Otto" (Briem 1840: 20).[227] The problem is not Duke Valdemar as a king, but that Count Gerhard attempts to bypass the election process. According to the author's afterword, the aim of the play is to juxtapose the two principles for succession without valuing one over the other: "The ideas contending against each other – here: by Gerhard the right of succession and by Niels Ebbesen the freedom of choice – could have equally honourable and respectable advocates without one of them needing to be glorified by the darker sides of its opponent" (Briem 1840: 191).[228] However, the play does not unfold arguments for the opposing sides, and the conclusion of the play is a bit unclear. Apparently, Niels Ebbesen's killing of Count Gerhard is supposed to have ended the discussion of elective versus hereditary monarchy as well, as Niels Ebbesen's wife says towards the end of the play: "Whether the king henceforth shall be designated as carried | And in what generation the Crown shall be inherited, or | Whether he should be elected – this apple of conflict | Fell to the ground by the settlement of your sword" (Briem 1840: 188).[229] Although the play lacks arguments for and against hereditary and electoral monarchy, it is interesting that it takes up the question

[226] "Partiet lige staaer imellem begge: | Slægternes Ætled, saavidt lige nær, | I Valdemar den Seierrige mødes. | Kun væk med Geert og alle hans Utysker!"

[227] "Fuldvel vi vide, Geert sin Søstersøn | Paa Kongestolen, som sin Myndling, atter | Opsætte vil, forhaanende vor Valgret; | Derfor skal Døden aabne selv sin Port, | Selv sine Fanger sønderbryde Lænken, | Før Otto Fængslet han oplade vil"

[228] "De mod hinanden stridende Ideer – her: hos Geert Arveretten og hos Niels Ebbesen Valgfriheden – kunne have lige retsindige og agtværdige Forkjempere uden, at den Ene af disse trænger til at forherliges ved Skyggesider hos sin modpart"

[229] "Om Kongen skal herefter nævnes baaren | Og i hvad Ætled Kronen arves, eller | Om han bør kaares – dette Stridens Æble | Faldt ved Forliget af dit Sværd i Jorden"

for consideration and attempts to juxtapose the different principles of succession and inherently the degree of popular co-determination in the choice of successor.

An argument, one would perhaps expect to find in contemplations about the claims to political agency of regents and people respectively, is the idea of divine right of kings. Interestingly, the idea that the regent is appointed by God and that the people should simply accept this is not particularly prevalent in the corpus examined here. As mentioned previously, we see a strand of this kind of thought in the historical novels of Ingemann, but apart from that, it is not very widespread. When it appears in Holst's *Christian den Anden* (1834), it is in the form of a false assumption by the king:

> The king.
> The power,
> Which placed me on the throne of Denmark cannot
> Wish that an assailant impertinently shall push
> Me down and swing himself up on it.
> Urne.
> The Danish people has called for you to be king.
> The King,
> No, the heavens, bishop! – and no son of the dust;
> I was born to carry the Crown of Denmark.
> Urne.
> That fancy, exactly, has caused
> Your downfall, my king
> (Holst 1834: 131).[230]

This passage articulates what is a basic assumption in much of the literature in the corpus. The rule of the king is legitimised by the people, and it is a delusion to assume that the king rules by the grace of God only.

Another particularly interesting example of medievalistic literature considering popular political agency is the chapter entitled "The diet"[231] in the third instalment of Hollard Nielsen's three-volume

[230] "Kongen. | Den Magt, | Som satte mig paa Danmarks Throne, kan | Ei ville, at en Voldsmand fræk skal støde | Mig ned og selv sig svinge op paa den. | Urne. | Det danske Folk har kaldet Jer til Konge. | Kongen. | Nei Himlen, Bisp! – og ingen Støvets Søn; | Jeg fødtes til at bære Danmarks Krone. | Urne. | Just den Indbildning foraarsaget har, | Min Konge, Eders Fald"

[231] "Rigsdagen"

novel *Ridder Niels Ebbesen, Danmarks Befrier*. The chapter depicts the diet which is to choose between Count Gerhard and Prince Valdemar as the next king of Denmark. This version, however, employs the diet to experiment with the perils of the parliamentarian form – a highly relevant matter in 1847 by when it was clear that Denmark would make the change from absolutism to free constitution within a foreseeable future. The Dane Court is led by the shady bishop Tyge of Børglum, who manages to control the diet to his own advantage. The bishop has had a previous clash with Count Gerhard and has sworn to agitate the estates against him. He therefore intends to use his leadership of the diet to ensure that Gerhard loses the election. This is possible, because in this rendition's bleak conception of the Dane Court, it is ignorant and manipulable; as Tyge describes it, it is "the battlefield of orators, where there is often spoken with two tongues in one mouth and where one can find many a Janus head" (Hollard Nielsen 1847-1848: part 3: 109).[232]

The reader is informed about the particulars of the diet through Tyge's recount to his illegal Romany daughter Cymbeline. He begins with recounting his disappointment of the ignorance of the attendees at the diet:

> You should have seen your father, my girl! I assumed an expression as was my entire I a shrine, and I opened the parliament in the most ceremonious way. When I stopped talking, it appeared to me that I had been admitted to the heaven of statecraft and I now waited for all of its good angles to reveal themselves. But was I then a fool, Cymbeline! then I shall never become that again; for what happened? I was petrified by all the different dialects, which flowed into each other, raged and roared, and foamed and whirled like the most rapid stream. I imagined myself in the times of the Babylonian tower. The knight spoke like a peasant, and the peasant spoke as you know what. Yes Cymbeline! to use an old proverb, which have your grace: They talked nineteen to the dozen. I saw the sign of the ox on the foreheads of the warriors of the parliament. It was obvious that most did not understand a word of the loud wisdom, which filled the air, and that many did not even know what they said themselves. Eventually, I let my voice be heard and established

[232] "Rhetorernes Kampplads, hvor der meget ofte tales med to Tunger i een Mund, og hvor man forefinder mangt et Janushoved"

> order. However, that did not change the essence of the parliament, only the shape of it (Hollard Nielsen 1847-1848: part 3: 110-111).[233]

According to Tyge, the diet is a cacophony of incompetence. Furthermore, he describes the participants as weathercocks who are easily persuaded by each new speaker:

> "Now there appeared one single speaker at a time," – the prelate continued, – "but every speaker got the vacillating crowd on their side, so that they were even equally close. Indeed, the captured Prince Otto was unanimously bypassed; but Count Gerhard was up for election as well as Prince Valdemar. Count Gerhard's supporters were only few; but they were backed by ten thousand lansquenets and was for that reason more loud. […] Meanwhile, Stig Andersen almost put the crown on Count Gerhard by with his supple Parisian tongue referring to the ten thousand lansquenets[…]" (Hollard Nielsen 1847-1848: part 3: 112-113).[234]

As we see, the attendees are very easily persuaded by the different speakers. Tyge takes advantage of this by conducting the election directly after Niels Ebbensen has spoken and convinced the audience to vote for Prince Valdemar. Tyge's strategy works, and Valdemar is elected as king. The extent of Tyge's manipulation of the diet mostly becomes clear from Cymbeline's reaction to hearing the story. When

[233] "Du skulde have seet Din Fader, min Pige! Jeg gav mig en Mine, som om mit hele Jeg var en Helligdom, og jeg aabnede Rigsdagen paa den høitideligste Maade. Da jeg taug, syntes det mig, at jeg var optaget i Statsviisdommens Himmel, og jeg ventede nu paa, at alle dens gode Engle skulde aabenbare sig. Men var jeg dengang en Daare, Cymbeline! saa skal jeg aldrig mere blive det; thi hvad skete? Jeg blev forstenet over alle de forskjellige Mundarter, der fløde i hinanden og larmede og brusede, og skummede og hvirvlede sig som den strideste Strøm. Jeg troede mig hensat i det babylonske Taarns Tider. Ridderen talte som en Bonde, og Bonden talte som Du veed nok. Ja, Cymbeline! for at bruge et gammelt Ordsprog, som har Din Naade: Man talte op ad Stolperne og ned ad Væggene. Jeg saa Oxens Tegn på Rigsdagskæmpernes Pander. Det var aabenbart, at de Fleste ikke forstode et Ord af den høirøstede Viisdom, som opfyldte Luften, og at Mange slet ikke vidste, hvad de selv sagde. Endelig lod jeg min Stemme høre og bragte Orden tilveie. Dog forandrede det ikke Rigsdagens Væsen, kun dens Form"

[234] "„Nu fremstod der en enkelt Taler ad Gangen," – vedblev Prælaten, – „men enhver Taler fik den meningsløse Mængde paa sin Side, saa at man endda var lige nær. Vel blev den fangne Prinds Otto eenstemmigt forbigaaet; men Grev Gerhard var paa Valg saavelsom Prinds Valdemar. Grev Gerhards Tilhængere vare kun faa; men de havde titusinde Landsknægte i Ryggen og vare desaarsag desto mere høirøstede. […] Imidlertid var dog Stigot Andersen nærved at sætte Kronen paa Grev Gerhard, ved med sin smidige Parisertunge at henvise til de titusinde Landsknægte[…]""

Tyge has finished his story, she adds: "And I guarantee, Right Reverend! that you are not little proud of having controlled the parliament where all knights, priests and peasants had to obey your signals" (Hollard Nielsen 1847-1848: part 3: 120-121).[235]

Hollard Nielsen's depiction of the diet is notable for highlighting challenges inherent in parliamentarian procedures. It experiments with a worst-case scenario of ignorance and manipulation and unveils anxiety for the unpredictable crowd. The play thus demonstrates that popular political agency is not unequivocally represented as ideal or desirable in literature, but that a concern for the people's ability to partake in politics can also be found.

One of the literary pieces which most directly discusses forms of government is the anonymously written drama *Marsk Stig* [Marshal Stig] (1834). The play was published in print, but was not performed. In this rendition of the Marshall Stig story, Stig has obtained a copy of Magna Carta from England and wishes to recreate Denmark after its example. At the beginning of the play, Stig meets with the monk John and shares his intentions with Magna Carta with him:

> When I last was in your cell,
> I promised you England's charter of liberty.
> Robert de Ros has sent it with a priest
> Hither to Jens Grand. I will build a tower
> Against popular violence, against lordly coercion and stratagems.
> […]
> And am I enshrined before the peak is placed,
> The you shall gather, my family and relations,
> And build the crown around the tower of the people.
> Now I will go to the diet in Viborg
> To clear the ground.
> (*Marsk Stig. Tragoedie i fem Acter* 1834: 6).[236]

[235] "Og jeg indestaaer for, Høiærværdige! at Du ikke er lidet stolt af at have styret Rigsdagen, hvor alle Riddere, Klerke og Bønder maatte lystre Dine Vink"

[236] "Da sidst jeg sad i Eders Munkestue, | Da loved' jeg Jer Englands Frihedsblad. | Robert de Ros har sendt sendt det med en Klerk | Hid til Jens Grand. Jeg bygge vil et Taarn | Mod Folkevold, mod Herretvang og List. | […] | Og blier jeg skriinlagt, førend Tinden sættes, | Da skal I samles, al min Æt og Slægt, | Og bygge Kronen rundt om Folketaarnet. | Nu ganger jeg til Viborg Herredag | At rydde Grunden op"

As it also appears from this quote, in this play, Magna Carta is discursively constructed as an insurance of popular liberties. For Marshall Stig, Magna Carta is a charter of liberty and can be used to protect the people from misuse of power. We will return to the representation of Magna Carta in the next section of this chapter and for now focus on the play's representation of popular agency. Marshall Stig's aim is to draw inspiration from Magna Carta to build a 'tower of the people' surrounded by the Crown. Here, again, literature operates with a combined popular and monarchical rule.

As in many other Marshal Stig stories, the first parts of the play revolves around Eric Clipping's violation of Stig's wife, Stig's denunciation of the king and the murder of Eric Clipping. In this version, Stig is present at the murder, but cannot make himself participate in it because he finds the king to be too pathetic when he is begging for his life (*Marsk Stig. Tragoedie i fem Acter* 1834: 36). The regicide is followed by an assembly of the nobility and the clergy, in which they are to determine what to do about the government of Denmark. Two forms of government are at debate at the assembly. An abbot agitates for keeping the common people (*almue*) out of influence and instituting a kind of meritocracy:

> Abbot.
> Stupid, thoughtless, ignorant the peasantry
> Passes their lives in thraldom. Failure of crops, national scourge,
> Which God sends them for their sins,
> They blindly blame only on the head of the kingdom,
> The clergy and aristocracy of the kingdom. […]
> They cannot themselves
> Govern. A wise man does not give a knife
> Into a child's hand.
> Voices.
> No, no peasant realm!
> Abbot.
> […]
> Then let us here conclude a holy pact:
> Neither the blind crowd of the people nor the conditions
> Of an individual man shall counsel the happiness of us or our country;
> The best shall rule the country. –
> Many voices.

Hail sir Magnus,
The best shall rule!
(*Marsk Stig. Tragoedie i fem Acter* 1834: 38–40).[237]

On the other side of the debate is Marshal Stig's agitation for popular sovereignty through monarchy:

Stig (stands up)
What! the best shall rule?
Who is the best, who shall elect them?
Yonder high family belongs to the ring of the people,
What the people gave, it cannot take back
[…]
If you divide the kingdom among you,
Justice will be tied to the horsetail
And be dragged through the country or languish
In the cellar of the cloister. […]
But far as they country stretches the king shall rule.
[…] Only then the peasant will walk
As a free man behind his plough, and the burgher
Trustfully send out his ship to foreign countries
And call the returned his.
And the nobility of the country will raise the strong lance
And unanimous, when the feudal lord folds out
His banner. […]
[… Brings out Magna Carta] A people,
Who are our relatives, built their country thus.
Voices.
We know it; away, away with **Magna Carta**
(*Marsk Stig. Tragoedie i fem Acter* 1834: 40–43).[238]

[237] "Abbed. | Dum, tankeløs, uvidende hentræller | Almuen Livet. Misvæxt, Landeplage, | Som Gud tilskikker dem for deres Synder, | De skylde blinde kun paa Rigets Hoved, | Paa Rigets Geistlighed og Adel. […] De kan ei selv | Regjere. Klog Mand giver ikke Kniv | I Barnets Haand. | Stemmer. | Nei intet Bonderige! | Abbed. | […] | Saa lad os slutte her en hellig Pagt: | Ei Folkets blinde Masse eller enkelt | Mands Vilkaar raade vor og Landets Lykke; | De Bedste styre Landet. – | Mange Stemmer. | Hil Hr. Magnus, | De Bedste styre!"

[238] "Stig (reiser sig) | Hvad! de Bedste styre? | Hvo er de Bedste, hvem skal kaare dem? | Hiin høie Slægt tilhører Folkeringen, | Hvad Folket gav, kan det ei ta' tilbage | […] | Ifald I dele Riget mellem Eder, | Blier Retten bunden fast til Hestehalen | Og slæbes gjennem Landet, eller smægter | I Klosterkjelderen. […] | Men vidt som Landet gaaer, skal Konge raade. | […] Først da ganger Bonden | Som fri Mand bag sin Ploug, og Borgeren | Udsender trøstigt Skib til fremmed Land | Og kalder det Tilbagevendte sit. | Og Rigets Adel hæver Landsen stærk | Og enig, naar Lehnsherren folder ud | sit Banner. [… drager Magna Charta frem]

Marshal Stig believes that the freedom of the people and their sovereignty can only be asserted through monarchical power. His problem with Eric Clipping – apart from his violation of his wife – is not associated with his royal power, but with his disregard for civil rights; that he "with his sceptre bent justice | At the thing" (*Marsk Stig. Tragoedie i fem Acter* 1834: 44).[239] In order to realise his political objectives for Denmark, he wishes to elect Eric Menved as king and thereby atone the guilt of Eric Clipping's regicide (*Marsk Stig. Tragoedie i fem Acter* 1834: 45).

The play juxtaposes Stig's endeavours for asserting popular sovereignty with a fear of the masses. In the wake of the regicide erupts a peasant rebellion in which the peasants try to drive the king and nobility out of the country (*Marsk Stig. Tragoedie i fem Acter* 1834: 65–66). It is not entirely clear what has prompted the rebellion, but immediately before it appears in the narrative, Marshal Stig is presented with a forged version of his letter to Robert de Ros asking for a copy of Magna Carta. It seems that a misleading representation of Marshal Stig's endeavours may have caused the rebellion, which may be an explanation for the peasants' wish to also expel the king from the country. While the play is an ardent proponent of popular sovereignty, it also displays worries about the power of the people when out of control.

Stig is eventually unsuccessful in revising the political layout of Denmark according to the example of Magna Carta. The sentiment of the play seems to be that the Denmark of his time was not ready for the ideas of Magna Carta. However, at the end of the drama, Marshall Stig is buried, and after his funeral two gnomes appear. The appearance of these two supernatural beings is somewhat out of line with the otherwise realistic representation of the world of the play – the only other passage in the play which contains supernatural beings is a dream and thereby within the scope of the realistic – and thus stands out as significant. One of the gnomes hides in the copy of the Magna Carta, which has been placed under the head of the deceased Marshal Stig, and the other gnome makes the plant Good-King-Henry sprout out from a crevice by the grave. As gnomes are elementary

En Folkestamme, | Som er vor Slægtning, bygged' Landet saa. | Stemmer. | Vi kjende det; bort, bort med **magna charta**"

[239] "bøied' Retten med sit Kongespiir | Paa Thinge"

spirits guarding treasures ("Gnome" n.d.), this scene could be interpreted to mean that although Marshal Stig has died and his endeavours in favour of popular sovereignty are buried with him, the ideas are preserved for posterity and the seed has been laid for it to prosper later. Thus, the ending of the play seems to convey that although the thirteenth century was not ready for the ideas of popular liberty and political influence represented in the play, the contemporary times might be.

The literature about medieval kings surveyed in this section greatly emphasises the condition that the king should be elected by the people. Much of the literature represents election as an inherent part of the medieval monarchy, while some of it at the same time acknowledges the right of inheritance. By inscribing popular political participation in the common imagination of the national past, medievalistic literature may well have attached the idea of popular co-determination with a sense of historical familiarity, making the notion appear less outlandish. At the same time, the representations of election are quite in contrast to the absolutism of nineteenth-century Denmark, and this contrast must have been noticeable to the readers of these fictions and may therefore have prompted contemplation on political conditions extending beyond the literature.

With law shall land be built

Another way in which popular political agency, or at least popular political rights, frequently manifest themselves in the literature surveyed is through insistence that the society should be governed by law. One of the literary pieces in which law occupies the most prominent position is the anonymous *Marsk Stig* treated above. Stig's rebellion in this rendition is motivated by his wish to ensure rights and liberties for the people, which he tries to achieve by instating a set of laws. Towards the end of the play, when his endeavours have come to nothing and Stig has become an outlaw, he retreats to the island of Stromø in his final attempt to improve the political conditions of Denmark through legislation: "when I struck King Eric | I broke with the cowardly women-men, | Who make themselves into thralls for a king. […] Then we will go to Stromø – build the country | With Laws, like in days of old, Ulflioter built Iceland | For the generations

of Norway" (*Marsk Stig. Tragoedie i fem Acter* 1834: 51–52).[240] Stig committed the regicide in order to free the Danish people from slavery in the republican sense of the term and provide them with freedom through laws. This play is one of only few instances in which we are presented with the contents of the law which is promoted. In the beginning of the play, John reads a passage from Magna Carta aloud for Stig:

> Nullus liber homo capiatur vel imprisonetur vel dissesiatur de libero tenemento suo vel libertatibus vel liberis consvetudinibus suis: Aut utlagetur, aut exuletur, aut aliquo mode destruatur: nec super eum ibimus, nec super eum mittemus, nisi per legale judicium parium suorum vel per legem terræ. Nulli vendemus, nulli negabimus aut differemus justitiam vel rectum (*Marsk Stig. Tragoedie i fem Acter* 1834: 6–7).

The passage is chapter 39 of the Magna Carta that states that no free man shall be punished without fair trial according to the laws of peers and country ("Magna Carta: Parallel Text" n.d.). As this is the only content of the Magna Carta communicated in the play, Magna Carta comes to represent a law which ensures fair legal practice for the people. Throughout the play, it is continuously referred to as a charter of liberty (e.g. *Marsk Stig. Tragoedie i fem Acter* 1834: 48). Thus, the Magna Carta is not used in the play because of the particular laws it prescribes, but as an expression of the necessity of laws and a fair legal system for the liberty of the people.

Law in literature in this period has been dealt with excellently by Martinsen with regard to Ingemann's historical novels in her PhD dissertation *History as a Mass Experience. Re-examining the Historical Fictions of Bernhard Severin Ingemann in a Political Context 1824-1836* (2010). In the dissertation, Martinsen traces the idea of the original peasants' freedom in Ingemann's historical cycle and demonstrates how it is used to depict a republican monarchy. Some of Martinsen's main findings with regard to law in the cycle is that Ingemann was influenced by his father-in-law, Jacob Mandix (1758-1831), a liberal thinker who in his book *Borgerfrihed under det*

[240] "da jeg slog Kong Erik, | Da brød jeg med de feige Quindemænd, | Som keise sig til Trælle for en Konning. […] Saa drage vi til Stromø – bygge Landet | Med Love, som fordum Ulflioter Island | For Norges Slægter"

danske Scepter [Civil Liberty under the Danish Sceptre] (1785) argues that civil liberty is possible under the Danish absolute monarchy as long as the society is founded on a strong legal basis (Martinsen 2010: 206). Martinsen shows how Ingemann's historical cycle is informed by Mandix's notion that law is the instrument which may ensure civil liberty against arbitrary use of power (Martinsen 2010: 202). Particularly important in this respect is that the king himself must also be subject to the law. Martinsen gives as an example a scene from *Erik Menveds Barndom* where marshal Stig has called Eric Clipping to trial at the Dane Court. Before the trial, Eric Clipping removes his crown and thereby underlines that he is also a person subject to the law (Martinsen 2010: 203–204). A main point from Martinsen's analysis of law in Ingemann's historical cycle is that the people is not subordinate to the king, but legitimises his rule, and that king and people are political equals (Martinsen 2010: 208–210). According to Martinsen, Ingemann's monarch is therefore a constitutional representative rather than an absolute ruler (Martinsen 2010: 210).

I find Martinsen's interpretation of Ingemann's ideal monarch as a republican-monarchical construct rather convincing and will add that this construction is not exclusive to Ingemann but quite prevalent in the medievalistic literature about Danish kings of the time. A recurrent feature in this literature is that neglect of the law determines a ruler as bad. In Sander's *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis* (1797/1798), Count Gerhard is described as an unfit ruler among other things on account of his disregard of the laws in effect since King Canute (Sander 1799: 51). In Balthasar Bang's *Valdemar og Absalon* (1826), the line is drawn between the good King Valdemar the Great as representative for honour, duty and motherland (Bang 1826: 24) on the one hand, and the bad King Sweyn Grathe who puts his own will before the law on the other (Bang 1826: 7). In Ingemann's *Prinds Otto af Danmark*, one of the things characterising Valdemar Atterdag as a less desirable king is his unfair verdict over the knight Folqvard Lovmandsøn, the son of Peder Hessel, by which he is criticised for ignoring law and his coronation charter:

> Folqvard placed his sword before the king's foot and bowed. "For lawful and just judgement I do not fear, King Valdemar!" – he said calmly – "but beware of shedding innocent blood! Do not forget what you owe to the law of the country and the chivalry of Denmark!"

"What I owe you, I shall not forget! I shall teach discipline to the haughty, Danish knighthood!" – the king answered enraged. – "You can be as certain of the scaffold as I am that you are a reckless traitor and committer of lese-majesty."

"As long as the law does not bring down the son of seneschal Peder Hessel, your wrong opinion cannot harm a hair of this head!" – Folqvard spoke out with bold pride. –"The people of Denmark has not elected you as lord of the country in order to again get a lawless blood-government as that of Count Gerhard. Remember the destiny of the last tyrant in Denmark, lord! and what Danish courage and knightly manhood is capable of! The royal lineage has older and nobler shoots – and there will never lack Ebbesens in Denmark."

"What, what!" – the king exclaimed and laughed loudly. – "Now you save us from prolonged trial-nonsense, Knight Folqvard! No law can better convict you to have removed the head that your carry so high than does your own presumptuous words of rebellion."

"For my words, as for my actions, I will answer for as a free, Danish man!" – Folqvard continued undauntedly. – "No one can prevent me from stating what every man knows, but you seem to forget in your arrogance, King *Valdemar*! while you, however, with the great name of victory neither brings us greatness nor victory –"

"Clap him in irons!" – Valdemar ordered most bitterly – "take him to the keep for life prisoners at Nyborg! Before three days have passed, that rooster shall be finished cackling."

"Clap slaves in irons!" – Folqvard yelled – "throw convicted criminals into the dungeon! but are you a knight and man of honour, King Valdemar! then do not disgrace yourself and the Danish knighthood! – Will you avoid committing a crime against the crown of Denmark, then remember your coronation charter!"

"My main fortress is stronger than my coronation charter!" – the king replied with a proud smile and nodded (Ingemann 1859: part 2. 270-272).[241]

[241] "Folqvard lagde sit Sværd for Kongens Fod og bukkede. ,,For lovlig og retfærdig Dom frygter jeg ikke, kong Valdemar!" – sagde han rolig – ,,men vogt Eder for at udøse uskyldigt Blod! – glem ikke hvad I skylder Landsloven og Danmarks Ridderskab!"

,,Hvad jeg skylder Eder skal jeg ikke glemme! Det storagtige, danske Ridderskab skal jeg lære Tugt!" – svarede Kongen opbragt. – ,,I kan være saa vis paa Skafottet, som jeg er paa, at I er en dumdristig Forræder og Majestætsforbryder."

,,Saalænge Loven ikke fælder Drost Peder Hessels Søn, kan eders vrange Mening ikke krumme et Haar paa dette Hoved!" – tog Folqvard Ordet med kjæk Stolthed. – ,,Danmarks Folk har ei kaaret Jer til Landsherre, for at faae en lovløs Blodregjering her igjen, som Grev Geerts. Husk paa den sidste Tyrans Skjæbne i Danmark, Herre! og hvad dansk Mod og ridderlig Manddom formaaer!

In this passage, Valdemar Atterdag's shortcomings as king are expressed through his disregard for the Danish law and legal procedures, and likewise, Folqvard Lovmandsøn's indomitable belief in the same showcases their fundamental status in the Danish society. Folqvard insists that the king is also subject to the law and must follow the agreed upon legal procedures, such as not imprisoning a person without prior trial. Focus in the passage is more on the importance of having a fair legal structure as the backbone of the society and hawing law reigning supreme – also over the king – than on what should be the contents of the law. When it comes to law, Ingemanns novel is more concerned with the existence of law and fair legal processes as a fundamental right in society and represents these conditions as pivotal for a stable society.

In Otto Ferdinand Bræmer's novel *Valdemar Atterdag* (1831), King Valdemar and his son Duke Christopher are on a ship headed to war with Sweden. Christopher questions Valdemar about the Swedish king, and Valdemar uses his inquiries as a launching pad for lecturing the son about kingship:

> Surely, King *Magnus* is not at ease; […] although among the children of his country, always among enemies, and must fear as much for his neck as for his skull. But he has brought it upon himself on account of his own regime; see in him a warning of what happens to those who respect neither justice nor the law, which, however, he has himself provided and should be the foremost to abide by. *Magnus* is only a king and lord by name, was he instead

Kongestammen har ældre og ædlere Skud – og der vil aldrig savnes Ebbesener i Danmark."

,,Ei, Ei!" – udbrød Kongen og loe høit. – ,,Nu sparer I os selv for lang Rettergangs-Vrøvl, Ridder Folqvard! Ingen Lov kan bedre dømme Jer fra det Hoved, I løfter saa høit, end eders egne formastelige Oprørsord."

,,For mine Ord, som for mine Handlinger, vil jeg svare, som en fri, dansk Mand!" – vedblev Folqvard uforfærdet. – ,,Ingen kan formene mig at nævne, hvad hver Mand veed, men hvad I synes at glemme i eders Overmod, Kong V a l d e m a r! medens I dog med det store Seiersnavn hverken bringer os Storhed eller Seir –"

,,Slut ham i lænker!" – bød Valdemar, yderst forbitret – ,,før ham til Livsfangetaarnet paa Nyborg! Inden tre Døgn skal den Hane have afkaglet."

,,Slut Slaver i Lænker!" – raabte Folqvard – ,,kast lovfældte Forbrydere i Fangehullet! men er I Ridder og Mand af Ære, Kong Valdemar! saa vanærer I ikke Eder selv og det danske Ridderskab! – Vil I ei forbryde Danmarks Krone, saa husk paa jer Haandfæstning!"

,,Min Hovedfæstning er stærkere, end min Haandfæstning!" – svarede Kongen med et stolt Smil og nikkede"

> the most inferior man in the country who could eat his paltry diet in peace, he would be happier than now (Bræmer 1831: 45–46).[242]

The Swedish king is disliked by his people because of his neglect of law and justice, and this is so grave a dereliction of duty that it justifies the people's animosity. From the opposite perspective, regard for and protection of the law distinguishes a good regent and a sound country. In T.C. Bruun's *Erik Glipping*, the king repeatedly demonstrates conscience of this role. He recognises that: "as king of the Danes I | shall divide law and justice equally among everyone; | shall shield the home of inferiority against the violence of the castle; | shall assert the rights of the church" (T.C. Bruun 1816: 15),[243] that "I am a part of the people, which has elected | its king to do justice, | but not to exercise violence" (T.C. Bruun 1816: 52)[244] and that "Even during these days of adversity | We seek to enforce justice | Through beneficial, common laws" (T.C. Bruun 1816: 57).[245] It is thoroughly emphasised that the king's role consists in maintaining the laws of the country. Oehlenschläger's Eric Clipping also considers the upkeep of law an essential purpose of his. When marshal Stig makes a comment about the peasant becoming a thrall again, the king replies: "It shall not happen | As sure as I am a king. I will fight | Against the violence of the nobility, the clergy | And bring justice and law to the country. | The market towns has already gotten a district court, | By "The justice and shares of the kingdom" I limited | my own authority" (Oehlenschläger 1853: 410–411).[246] In Briem's *Ridder Niels Ebbesen* –

[242] "Sikkert er Kong M a g n u s ikke vel tilmode; […] skjøndt imellem sit Lands Børn, stændig imellem Fjender, og maa frygte ligesaameget for sin Nakke, som for sin Brask. Men dette haver han forskyldt, formedelst sit slette Regiment; see i ham et Varsel, hvorlunde den er stædt, som ei agter hverken Retfærdighed eller Lov, hvilken han dog selv haver foreskrevet, og fremmest burde holde! M a g n u s er kun Konge og Herre af Navn, om han i det Sted var den ringeste Mand i Landet, og kunde spise sin usle Kost med Rolighed, da maatte han prise sig lykkelig frem for nu"

[243] "som Danner-Konge skal | jeg dele Lov og Ret til alle lige; | skal skierme Ringheds Bo mod Borgens Vold; | skal hævde Kirkens Rettigheder"

[244] "Jeg er en Part af Folket, som har kaaret | sin Konge for at giøre Ret og Skiel, | men ikke for at øve Vold"

[245] "Selv medens disse Trængslens Dage | Vi søge at haandhæve Ret og Skiel | Ved gavnlige, almene love"

[246] "Det skal ei skee, | Saasandt jeg er en Konge. Kæmpe vil jeg | Mod Herrestandens, Geitslighedens Vold, | Og bringe Ret og Skiel og Lov i Landet. | Kiøbstæderne fik alt en Birkeret, | Ved ,,Rigets Ret og Dele" jeg indskrænked | Min egen Myndighed"

the play with the more reasonable Count Gerhard – the count also recognises the indispensability of the law as a foundation for society: "Only when obeyed, the law can build the country | Protect the people, firmly safeguard the throne" (Briem 1840: 42).[247] In Henrik Hertz's play *Valdemar Atterdag* (1839/1848), Valdemar Atterdag is likewise praised for saving the country from foreign law and "arbitrary commands" (Hertz 1848: 76),[248] echoing the republican notion of freedom as the absence of arbitrary power.

A particularly interesting example of literary treatment of law can be found in Boye's *Erik den Syvende*. In this rendition, the king is basically good, but he is erring because he fails to pay respect to his coronation charter (Boye 1851: 45). Importantly, he neglects to ensure the supremacy of the law; a serious shortcoming, as the king's court is said to be the place in which the law lives, or should live. As Thorbern mentions: "Plundered, deeply offended, | I sought refuge where the law lives, | Calling for its protection. I came | To the King's court" (Boye 1851: 59).[249] The king realises his shortcoming about halfway into the play: "I know very well: I did not find masterly wisdom | In every letter of the law, did I see a reason | For it, I sometimes deviated from its restraint, | And followed my own mind and discretion" (Boye 1851: 69).[250] The king's fault is his exercise of arbitrary power instead of following the law.

The play is interesting from a number of perspectives, but with regard to law, the storyline of the peasant Thorbern is particularly pertinent. On his way to a market with his cattle, Thorbern passes by the nobleman Ove Dyre's fortress. Ove demands twenty pieces of Thorbern's cattle without payment, and when Thorbern refuses to sign a document stating that Ove has paid for the animals, he is imprisoned. Thorbern manages to escape and searches out the king in order to inform him of the lawlessness of the nobility. However, he soon finds out that the king is surrounded by noblemen who impede the peasants's access to the king and the king's learning of their

[247] "Kun overholdt kan Loven Landet bygge, | Folket beskjerme, Thronen fast betrygge"

[248] "vilkaarlige Bud"

[249] "Udplyndret, haardt fornærmet, | Jeg søgte Tilflugt der, hvor Loven boer, | At fordre dens Beskjermelse. Jeg kom | Til Kongens Gaard"

[250] "Jeg veed ret godt: jeg fandt ei Mesterviisdom | I hvert et Lovens Bogstav, saae jeg Grund | Dertil, jeg afveg stundom fra dens Tvang, | Og fulgte frit mit eget Sind og Skjøn"

conditions. Thorbern fails to get into contact with the king as he is banished from the castle by Rane Lange when he discovers Thorbern's errand.

In the meantime, a group of peasants has gathered in order to free Thorbern from Ove's castle. Thorbern meets them, and after having informed the rest of the peasants of the nobility's prevention of his attempt to get to the king, they decide to attack Ove's castle. In the battle between the peasants and the nobles, Thorbern is caught again and is to be executed when the rest of the peasants intervene. Thorbern now has the means to escape, but instead of escaping, Thorbern asks the other peasants to use their superiority to bring him to the king. A peasant asks whether Thorbern is really ready to risk so much, and Thorbern replies that "My life belongs entirely to the law" (Boye 1851: 75).[251] He is determined to work for law in Denmark even at the cost of his life.

When Thorbern finally approaches the king, the king in company with his jester hears him from a distance:

> The king […]
> Who shouted?
> The jester.
> Go on and lie down, Eric! it was only a peasant.
> The king.
> What does he want? from where did he call for the king?
> The jester.
> He talked about something he called right and justice – but, as I said before, it was only a peasant!
> The king.
> You reckless jester! Cannot justice
> Be found for everyone at Eric's castle?
> The jester.
> Yes always – when the servant does not deny that it is home, or the lord of the house has something else with which to amuse himself. As to this imprudent peasant, who dared to awaken his majesty

[251] "Mit Liv tilhører Loven alt"

from his sleep, I am prone to consider him an honest man[252] (Boye 1851: 78–79).[253]

The approach of Thorbern awakens the king in the literal and figurative sense of the word and serves to remind the king of his duty to ensure justice for his people. Thorbern is given an audience with the king, and the king listens and realises how he has been deluded by the nobility to believe that the Danish peasants were well off. The conversation with Thorbern makes the king realise his "Duty | towards the life of the inferior!" (Boye 1851: 92)[254] and decide to re-establish his connection to the people so that he may ensure their rights. The king offers to pardon Thorbern from the death sentence passed by the nobles, but being afraid that the pardon will give the nobility cause to complain about the king's justice, Thorbern refuses with the words "I owe my broken life to the law; | I will not take it as a gift, for this | Would give the assailant reason of complaint against the king's justice" (Boye 1851: 92)[255] and he is executed.

Thorbern's self-sacrifice for the integrity of the law illuminates the great importance of the law. Boye's play thus addresses the importance of the existence of law as a civil right rather than discussing the particulars of the law. It demonstrates how law is a mechanism to regulate the relationship between king, nobility and people and to ensure the rights of the people. And it stresses that this system only works when the king keeps in touch with the people. Thus – and this is the case in the majority of the literary pieces in the corpus – when dealing with law, the heart of it is not so much the content of

[252] That the jester is telling the truth about the situation is underlined by the mix of prose and verse in the text. In the play, all characters except the jester speaks in verse, which reflects that he speaks the un-ornamented truth. When the jester is later made esquire to the king, his lines changes to verse as well as he becomes part of the establishment around the king and is no longer in a position to tell the truth directly in form of jesting.

[253] "Kongen […] Hvo raabte? | Narren. | Gaae du hen, og læg dig, Erik! det var kun en Bonde. | Kongen. | Hvad vil han? hvorfra raabte han paa Kongen? | Narren. | Han snakkede om Noget, som han kaldte Ret og Retfærdighed – men, som sagt, det var kun en Bonde! | Kongen. | Forvovne Nar! Er ei Retfærdighed | At finde for Enhver paa Eriks Borg? | Narren. | Jo altid – naar ikke Tjeneren nægter den hjemme, eller Herren i Huset har Andet at more sig med. Hvad ellers denne uforskammede Bonde angaaer, som understod sig at vække Majestæten op af Søvne, er jeg tilbøielig til at holde ham for en ærlig mand"

[254] "Pligt | Imod den Ringes Liv!"

[255] "Jeg skylder Loven mit forbrudte Liv; | Jeg vil ei tage det som Skjenk, thi dette | Gav Voldsmand Klagegrund mod Kongens Retfærd"

the law or the fairness or justice of it. What is emphasised is law as a civil right and a central element in the relationship between the king and the people.

A last tendency with regard to the treatment of law in the corpus to be touched upon here is the frequent mentions of the laws instated by Valdemar the Victorious. The Jutish Law of 1241 (*Jyske Lov*) was one of the Danish provincial codes and was in effect from the thirteenth century until 1683. The Jutish Law consists of a preface and three books. The preface explains why laws and rules are necessary for a society and why they should apply to all members of the society, and it opens with the famous line that "With law shall land be built" (Vogt 2019).[256] The three books contain legal provisions pertaining to family law and law of wills and succession, to the process of the court and production of evidence and to military service, punishment, penalties and regulations of the community of the village (Vogt 2019). Valdemar the Victorious' Jutish Law is mentioned frequently in the corpus, and in Peder Dybdahl's *Marsk Stig eller Feldmarskalk Stig Andersen Hvides Levnetsbeskrivelse* [Marshal Stig or Field Marshal Stig Andersen Hvide's Biography] (1826), a stylistic intermingling of history and fiction, it is referred to in this way:

> *Valdemar* [the Victorious] exercised a much nobler deed [than conquering countries]: he enacted good laws and decrees, which in some places are still in effect. Thus this regent made himself much more illustrious in peace than in war, so that he adorns the kings who reigned in Denmark before the Oldenburg stock assumed the rule (Dybdahl 1826: 22).[257]

Here Valdemar is praised for his laws, but the content of them are not described. It is commonplace in the literature examined here that Valdemar's Jutish Law is referred to as good and beneficial for the society, but that it is not described in detail. In Hollard Nielsen's *Ridder Niels Ebbesen. Danmarks Befrier*, for instance, the Jutish Law is referred to as "The holy rules of the people, collected in the time of

[256] "Med lov skal land bygges"

[257] "W a l d e m a r [Sejr] øvede nu en langt skjønnere Daad [end at erobre lande]: han udgav gode Love og Anordninger, som paa visse Steder ere gjeldende endnu. Saaledes gjorde denne Regent sig langt berømmeligere i Fred, end i Krig, saa at han er er [sic] en pryd for de Konger, der regjerede i Danmark, førend den oldenborgske Stamme kom til Regimentet"

King Valdemar the Lawgiver" (Hollard Nielsen 1847-1848: part 1: 158).[258] Likewise, when Niels Ebbesen confronts Count Gerhard, their conversation pertains to law and in particular the Jutish Law:

> "Your grace's whims are not the law in Denmark," Niels Ebbesen said as he tightened his rein in the same proud manner.
>
> "Here is the law, Knight Ebbesen!" – Count Gerhard replied and tapped his sword with a look which gleamed with indignation.
>
> "There is a law in Denmark, Count Gerhard! which has come from the people's customs from of old and was given to us from the high-born King Valdemar the Victorious," – the knight from Nørreriis said with a look which was as open as unchangeable. – "It begins with the royal words that with law shall land be built. […] Your tyrannical sword is no law, but a national scourge. It shall not be thus. The law of the high-born King Valdemar shall come in effect again for so far as the Danish tongue is spoken[…]" (Hollard Nielsen 1847-1848: part 3: 176-177).[259]

Here is juxtaposed the Jutish Law and the arbitrary power of Gerhard arising from his whims and exercised by his sword. The novel has earlier lamented that a country without a king will be in a natural state in which the right of the stronger reigns (Hollard Nielsen 1847-1848: part 1: 145). The law, in particular Valdemar's law, is a means to vanquish the natural state and replace fist-law with a more fair system. Again we see that the law is not so much highlighted for its content, but for the way it brings a certain order to the society.

It appears from the quotations presented in this section that when law is dealt with in the literary corpus surveyed, it is often simply referred to rather than described in detail. That is also the case for coronation charters, which are often metioned, but rarely described in detail. For instance, coronation charters are referred to in Samsøe's

[258] "Folkets hellige Vedtægter, samlede i Kong Valdemar Lovførers Tid"

[259] "„Eders Naades Lune er ikke Lov i Danmark," sagde Niels Ebbesen, idet han strammede sin Tøile paa samme stolte Maade. | „Her er Loven, Ridder Ebbesen!" – svarede Grev Gerhard, og slog paa sit Sværd med et Blik, som funklede af Forbittrelse. | „Der er en Lov i Danmark, Grev Gerhard! som er oprunden af Folkets Sædvaner fra gammel Tid og givet os af den høibaarne Kong Valdemar Seier," – sagde Ridderen fra Nørreriis med en Mine, der var ligesaa aaben som uforanderlig. – „Den begynder med de kongelige Ord, at med Lov skal man Land bygge. […] Eders tyranniske Sværd er ingen Lov, men en Landeplage. Det skal ikke være saaledes. Den høibaarne Kong Valdemars hellige Lov skal atter gjelde saa vide [sic], som det danske Tungemaal tales […]""

Dyveke (1796) (Samsøe 1805: 179), Sander's *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis* (Sander 1798: 149), Holst's *Christian den Anden* (Holst 1834: 27), Briem's *Ridder Niels Ebbesen* (Briem 1840: 40-41), Hollard Nielsen's *Ridder Niels Ebbesen* (Hollard Nielsen 1847-1848: part 1: 191) and Hertz's *Valdemar Atterdag* (Hertz 1848: 31). Although coronation charters and law in general are often referred to, the reader or audience are rarely informed of the content of these laws. What is of importance seems to be the existence of and compliance with the laws rather than the particulars of these laws. When law appears in the corpus, it is seldom used to discuss which laws are fair or which should be in effect, but they are used to ascertain that Denmark should be governed by laws. When law is addressed, it is in its capacity as a civil right. The insistence on the right to have the society governed according to a set of laws is of course a stable in republican thought, as law is a means by which to prevent arbitrary exercise of power. Thus, in its depictions of laws, the literature here presents a combined republican and monarchical form of government, like the one Martinsen described in Ingemann's historical cycle. Also, by dealing with the medieval coronation charters in particular, the literature shine light on a period in Danish history, in which the king was subject to the law to a much wider degree than in the time of the production of the literary pieces. Thus by focusing on the right to have laws and having the king subjected to these laws, the literature emphasises conditions which were absent in the society of its recipients.

From the analyses in this section it appears that law is a central subject in the literature surveyed here. The Middle Ages are represented as multifaceted with respect to law. On the one hand, the period is often described as a time in which the law is violated by less competent rulers, but on the other it is described as the time of Valdemar the Victorious's good laws and the people's fight to keep his laws in effect. The notion of the Middle Ages as the time in which the Danish laws developed is pinpointed in the foreword to Dybdahl's *Marsk Stig eller Feldmarskalk Stig Andersen Hvides Levnetsbeskrivelse*, in which he comments:

> It also shows the objectionable customs of those times and that no order prevailed by the laws of the governments of that time. A king had in those time no authority. The stronger tyrannised the weaker. […] *Canute the Great* gave a law; but it does not seem to have been

> in effect for others than courtiers and is called Court leet. […] *Valdemar the Great* improved the laws much; but the laws was not put on proper footing before his son, *Valdemar the Second*, came to the government; then *Valdemar's* law came in effect in Denmark until the time of *Christian the Fifth*. And the we got the good and pure laws which consolidates everyone's rights (Dybdahl 1826: V–VI).[260]

The widespread engagement with the theme of law and the decision to set the narratives in a time which seems to be thought of as essential to the development of the Danish laws is particularly interesting with respect to the laws in effect at the time of the composition of the literature. Especially the prevalent contention that the king should also be subject to the law is pertinent, as the absolute regents were only subject to the very few restrictions of the royal law as described in chapter one. The rather significant difference between the relations between the king, the people and the law described as ideal by the medievalistic literature analysed here and the political reality in nineteenth-century Denmark makes it apt to understand it as a comment on the political structure of the country and alternative ways of organising it.

Sub-conclusion

This chapter has presented some main tendencies in the literary corpus pertaining to political agency. Among the most common features are representations of politically acting people, sometimes combined with a politically passive king, representations of things, electoral scenes or references to election and emphasis on the importance of law. The medievalistic literature depicting Danish kings treated here demonstrates numerous instances of political agency being shared between the king and the people. As this chapter

[260] "Ogsaa viser det de Tiders Uskikke, og at ingen Orden herskede ved de Tiders Regjerings Love. En Konge havde i de Tider ingen Authoritets-Myndighed. Den Stærkere tyranniserede over den Svagere. […] K n u d d e n S t o r e udgav en Lov; men den synes ikke at have været gjeldende for Andre, end Hofmænd, og kaldtes Gaardsret. […] W a l d e m a r d e n S t o r e forbedrede Lovene meget; men Lovene bleve ikke satte paa nogen ordentlig Fod, førend dennes Søn, W a l d e m a r d e n A n d e n, kom til Regjeringen; da blev W a l d e m a r s Lov gjeldende i Danmark til C h r i s t i a n d e n F e m t e s Tid. Og da fik vi de gode og rene Love, som befæste enhvers Ret"

has centred much around the people as a category, the definition of the people in the literature treated should be addressed. Generally, there is not much reflection in the literature dealt with here on the definition and delimitation of the concept of the people. The people as a group is often referred to, but inclusions and exclusions from the concept are seldom addressed. The people in the cases dealt with here tends to be defined in relation to the king and the nobility rather than as an entity in itself. This chapter has shown examples of different subcategories of people, as for instance peasants and burghers, which appear to hold the same status and serve the same function. Likewise, we have seen the king referred to as a king of the burghers (e.g. Holst 1834: 129), king of the people (e.g. Oehlenschläger 1853: 428) and king of the peasants (e.g. Bang 1826: 122–123), but these prefixes do not set different standards for the king. In all cases, the king is a king of the people, peasants or burghers if he reigns in accordance with his people. The people in the literature surveyed here is thus quite a broad and loosely defined category, which generally includes everyone who is not part of the royal, aristocratic or clerical estates. The literature is much more preoccupied with contemplating how political agency may be shared between the king and the people than addressing which members of the people particularly should exercise this agency.

The depiction of people exercising political agency is also significant in itself. With Rancière's concepts, literature performs politics by making things visible. Rancière's line of thought is conducive for understanding the implications of literature's depiction of politically acting people. By letting the people be seen and heard in a political context, the literature makes the people perceptible as a political subject in a way that it was not in the first half of the nineteenth century. The literature's representation of people as politically acting and participating in political processes contributes to rendering the idea of popular political co-determination tangible in a Danish context. The literature thereby becomes political by representing an alternatively politically organised Denmark.

It is also significant that this alternatively organised Denmark is realised through medievalism. In her book *A Dream of Order. The Medieval Ideal in Nineteenth-Century English Literature* (1971), Alice Chandler argues that nineteenth-century English literary medievalism may be conceived of as an organising principle. According to Chandler, the English medievalism of this period emerged as a

reaction to the radical changes of modernity, particularly the French revolution and the Industrial Revolution. Her main argument is that nineteenth-century English writers used medievalism in order to create a coherent world-view that could respond to the chaotic present. The Middle Ages thus provided the nineteenth-century writers with an ideal for the societal order in the present English society, and this Chandler claims to be one of the main features of the English medieval revival (Chandler 1971).

This mechanism described by Chandler – that medievalism was used to create an alternative societal order responding to the political situation of the present – might very well be what is at play in the literature examined here as well. In the Danish literature studied here, it is, however, not the case that the Middle Ages in itself is represented as an ideal society, as it is in the literature, Chandler discusses. Rather, it is represented as a time of political unrest. But, in the time of political unrest, ideas of the ideal – or at least the good – society exists and is fought for, so the idea of the good society is found in the fictional Middle Ages of the Danish literature as well. Thus, the medievalism of the literature discussed here might function the same way as that described by Chandler; as a reaction to contemporary political conditions. If we assume this to be the case, this could also provide an explanation to why the medieval regents first occur in the literature published after the French Revolution according to the diagram in the introduction. Also, as mentioned before, by embedding this alternatively ordered society in the national, medieval past, the literature gives legitimacy to the vision, as was this political situation part of the old ways of the country rather than a new idea. Medievalism thus assimilates the new political ideas put forth in the literature by making them appear native to Danish history and thereby lending them legitimacy. Medievalism can be understood as a reaction to societal change and as a way to create an alternative society capable of countering or encompassing these changes.

An important thing to notice is that the popular agency in these literary works, which in some respects may be considered as a republican notion, is combined with monarchy. What we see across all these pieces of literature is a kind of republican monarchy, as described by Martinsen in Ingemann's historical cycle. The republican monarchy thus turns out not to be exclusive to Ingemann, but rather widespread in the literature of his time. A significant part of the

literature studied here is published after Ingemann's novels and therefore might be influenced by his depiction of monarchy, but it is still worth noticing that the monarchical form of government combined with republican elements recurs so often in the literature. As we have seen in this chapter, there is some variety as to which elements of popular agency are emphasised in different works and to what degree, but what can be concluded is that this literature clearly experiments with combining the monarchical form of government with different kinds of popular agency. The combination of monarchy and popular political co-determination found in the literature examined here to a certain extent resembles the form of government introduced after the abolition of absolute monarchy, where the government was divided between the king and representatives for the people. In the Danish, medievalistic literature of the first half of the nineteenth century, we thus find precursors to the combination of monarchy and popular rule which were established with the constitution of 1849.

Chapter 4

King of the nation

The previous chapter showed how the people in many cases are provided with political agency in the medievalistic literature examined. As the role of the people is reconsidered in literature, so is the role of the regent. The kings are not only presented as political heads of state, but also as a cultural focal point. A good king not only distinguishes himself by serving the political interests of the country, but also by appreciating and incarnating its culture. An example of this can be found in Ole Bang's play *Kongen vaagner* where the ideal King Hans (1455-1513, reign Denmark and Norway 1482-1513 and Sweden 1497-1531) is described in this way: "A mug of beer | Brewed in Denmark was dearer to him | Than even the most priceless Spanish wine" (Norby 1846: 16).[261] King Hans is lauded for appreciating Danish culture, and in this way, the figure of the king becomes associated with cultural representation.

A nationalisation also occurred of the actual king in the nineteenth century. Historian Rasmus Glenthøj has identified how a nationalisation of King Frederik VI began in the first part of the nineteenth century:

> the bourgeoisie in Denmark and Norway (before 1814) in the period [1807-1830] seem to begin to "nationalise" the king by associating

[261] "et Kruus Øl, | I Danmark brygget, var ham kjærere, | End selv den kosteligste spanske Viin"

> Frederik VI with the nation's language, culture and his "domestic" descent and thereby an example for his countrymen [sic.]. […] Hereby, the king no longer incarnated the state, but the nation (Glenthøj 2012: 142).[262]

This chapter[263] will argue that this process not only happens with regard to Frederik VI, but that the figure of the king in general is nationalised by the literature in the corpus. It will be argued that the literature analysed here tends to represent the king as a token of Danish nationality and thereby integrates the king into the nationalistic ideology.

Although considerations about the function of the king can be found in many of the literary works in the corpus, the chapter will focus on the period c. 1830-1848. This is because this is the time during which – as described in chapter three – it became increasingly clear that the abolition of absolutism was going to happen; the question was simply when it would (Vammen 1984: 29). A pressing question of this time must of course have been what would be the role of the king after the abolition of the absolute monarchy. This chapter will therefore concentrate on analysing representations of the role of the regent in literature from the 1830s and 1840s. A striking detail with respect to the corpus literature published during this period is that apart from Ole Johan Samsøe's *Dyveke* (1796), all the works found about Christian II are published here. This tendency prompts the question why this king appears almost exclusively in this particular period. This chapter therefore has two interrelated foci; to demonstrate that a nationalisation of the king takes place in the literature analysed here and to consider why the majority of the representations of Christian II appears in the 1830s and 1840s. The two foci are not separate as many of the works about Christian II contemplate the role of the king in the Danish national community. For the analysis, I have chosen to focus on three of the Christian II renditions, which reflect most on the role of the king. These works are Andersen's *Kongen*

[262] "borgerskabet i Danmark og Norge (før 1814) i perioden [1807-1830] synes at påbegynde at "nationalisere" kongen ved at forbinde Frederik 6. med nationens sprog, kultur og hans "indenlandske" afstamning og dermed et eksempel for sine landsmænd [sic.]. […] Hermed inkarnerede kongen ikke længere staten, men nationen"

[263] An earlier version of this chapter was submitted as part of my master's thesis in 2018.

drømmer (1844), Carsten Hauch's *Vilhelm Zabern* (1834) and Ole Bang's *Kongen vaagner* (1846). Before turning to the analysis of the nationalisation of Christian II in these literary pieces, the chapter will give an introduction to the perception of Christian II up to and in the nineteenth century, present some of the main thoughts from nationalism theory pertinent to the literature analysed here and outline the history of nationalism in the Danish culture in first half of the nineteenth century.

Christian II's historical legacy

Christian II's reign lasted from 1513 to 1523 and is among other things characterized by the reforms he instituted to improve the conditions for the common people. The most well-known is his Land and City Law from 1522, which to a certain degree strengthened the legal position of peasants and commoners. Christian II was quite engaged with the lover classes of society and filled some of the higher official positions of his government with common people, which exacerbated his already strained relations with the nobility. In the nineteenth century, he became a popular figure among Danish writers because of this reputed predilection for peasants and commoners over the nobility (Mogensen 2012).

A defining event during the reign of Christian II, which particularly preoccupied the Romantics, is the Stockholm Bloodbath in 1520. In the years following the death of the Danish King Christopher of Bavaria (1416-1448, reign 1440-1448) in 1448, a dispute arose between Sweden and Denmark over who was to rule the Kalmar Union. This led to a succession of wars between the two countries where several Danish kings attempted to regain power over Sweden. Also Christian II, during his reign, led an attack against Sweden with the aim of overthrowing their regent and re-establishing the union. He succeeded in conquering Stockholm in 1520. At Sweden's capitulation, Christian II promised his enemies impunity, but during the following coronation celebrations, Christian II had 83 Swedish nobles, clericals and prominent burghers executed at what came to be known as the Stockholm Bloodbath (Mogensen 2012).

Sweden did not remain on Danish hands for long. Shortly after the bloodbath, the leader of the Swedish opposition Gustav Vasa

(1496-1560) managed to reclaim power over Sweden, and in 1523 Denmark's rule over the country ended. This also became the end of the Kalmar Union. By this time, Christian II had become widely unpopular with the Danish people because of the duties he had imposed on the peasants in order to finance the war. The nobles' already existing discontent with Christian II had also increased. The Jutlandic nobles renounced their oath of allegiance and symbolically burnt Christian II's new laws. They united with Frederik, Christian II's uncle on this father's side, and a large number of peasants soon joined their cause. Confronted with the rebellion, Christian II was forced to flee the country. In 1531, under the promise of negotiation, he was lured back to Denmark by Frederik, who had seized power after Christian's departure. Frederik, however, had him imprisoned in Sønderborg Castle, and Christian II lived in captivity for the remaining 28 years of his life (Mogensen 2012).

In addition to the Stockholm Bloodbath, Christian II is particularly known for his longstanding affair with the Dutch commoner, Dyveke. This relationship enabled her mother Sigbrit to rise to a significant position of power within Christian II's government, in which she assumed a role similar to that of a financial minister (Mogensen 2012). The affair sparked quite an interest in the Romantic imagination, and it often constitutes a central narrative strand in the nineteenth-century literature, including some of the works analysed in this chapter.

The image of Christian II has changed somewhat from his lifetime to the nineteenth century. In the first historical accounts of Christian II's reign, written by his contemporaries Poul Helgesen and Olaus Petri, Christian II was depicted as unambiguously tyrannical (Bisgaard 2017: 102–108). This unfavourable image persisted throughout the sixteenth century only to become slightly more nuanced with Ludvig Holberg's history of Denmark written in the eighteenth century (Bisgaard 2017: 108, 113). The perception of Christian did not change significantly until the beginning of the nineteenth century. In Hans Heinrich Behrmann's *Christian den Andens Fængsels- og Befrielseskrønike* [Christian the Second's chronicle of prison and release] from 1812 can be found the most positive portrayal of Christian II in Danish historcal writing. Here, for the first time, Christian II is represented as a talented king whose ideas were ahead of his time. His life is reinterpreted as a tragedy and

this perception came to last for the rest of the century (Bisgaard 2017: 113–116) – not least in the literary works treated in this chapter, in which the image of Christian II as a tyrant and a tragic figure often intersect.

Nationalism

The link between medievalism and nationalism in the nineteenth century is well established. Medievalism was an integral part of the European nation building processes, as the search for the national past in many instances lead to the country's Middle Ages (see e.g. Simmons 2016). Within nationalism theory, there have been numerous attempts at defining nationalism and the function of the concept. A prominent thinker within nationalism theory is Benedict Anderson. In his influential book *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1991), he explains the nation as an imagined community. By this he means that the nation is comprised by individuals who feel a sense of community with the other members of the nation, which they however – in contrast to other kinds of communities – for the major part will never meet (Anderson 2016: 6). Some of the means to establish this sense of community is according to Anderson through print capitalism. With the spread of the printing press, it became possible to distribute the same literature over large areas.[264] A particularly important instance of this is the newspapers. Nationwide reading of newspapers and other literature creates a community of readers in which they can identify as parts of the same nation. According to Anderson, the reading of literature is thus a constituent of nationalism (Anderson 2016: 9–46).[265]

[264] With the contention that nationalism is made possible by the spread of printing presses, Anderson's theory subordinates itself to the modernist paradigm of nationalism theory. There are four major paradigms within the field: Primordialism, which contends that nations have always existed; perennialism, which contends that nations have continuously emerged and disappeared; modernism, which contends that nations and national identification did first emerge around the time of the French Revolution and the turn of the century; and etno-symbolism, which rejects the idea of the modernist break and instead focuses on how the national community is founded in common symbols, myths, history and the like (Smith 1999: 3–9).

[265] This notion has been reiterated in much of the theory on the historical novel. There is a wide consensus among literary scholars that the genre of the historical novel emerged at the same time as and in close interaction with nationalism. The novel represented the people in their plurality, and it was a media, like the newspaper,

Anderson's and other modernist and post-modernist understandings of nationalism has been challenged by the ethno-symbolist paradigm, particularly advanced by Anthony D. Smith. Ethno-symbolism critiques the modernistic paradigm for not being able to explain the emotional attachment of members of a nation towards their nation, which for instance appears in the willingness to die in war for the nation. Ethno-symbolism defines the nation as a group of people who shares historical territory, common myths and historical memories and a common public culture. This paradigm claims that nationalism is powered by myths, memories, traditions and symbols of ethnic heritage and that the national identity is reconstructed in every new generation from these myths, memories, symbols and traditions (Smith 1999: 3–28).

Another nationalism theory, which also illuminates the function of literature with respect to nationalism, is Miroslav Hroch's model of the phases in the development of a nation. According to Hroch, small nations have developed in the following tripartite pattern: Phase A is a period of scholarly interest, which includes study of the language, culture and history of the nationality. Scholarly interest is succeeded by phase B, a period of patriotic agitation, which Hroch refers to as a "fermentation-process of national consciousness" (Hroch 1985: 23). The last phase, C, denotes the rise of a mass national movement in which the emerging national consciousness of the two previous phases has spread to the general public (Hroch 1985: 22–23). In Hroch's model, cultural nationalism is thus represented as precursor to political nationalism. Like Anderson, Hroch's model identifies literature as an essential part of national development.

Another way in which the matter of emotional attachment to the nation is considered is through theories centring on emotion. A prime proponent of these is the historian Barbara Rosenwein with her concept of emotional communities. An emotional community is the same as a social community, but approached from a perspective of feelings. In order to understand nationalism, Rosenwein maintains that it is necessary to understand the emotional bonds between people, modes of emotional expression and similar in the national society (Rosenwein 2002: 842). Emotional communities is a cognate of Benedict Anderson's imagined communities, but by emphasizing the

which connected the entities of the nation (Brennan 1990: 48; see also de Groot 2010; Hamnett 2011; Lukacs 1963).

emotional aspects of history, it accommodates the frequent criticism that Anderson's concept cannot account for emotional devotion to the nation. Rosenwein thrusts emotions into prominence within nationalism theory by suggesting that we understand a society through the emotional bonds between its members. This is an understanding of the national community with good explicatory force for the literature analysed in this chapter.

Nationalism in Danish nineteenth-century culture

As in many other European countries, nationalism was an integral part of Danish nineteenth-century culture. Danish nationalism was influenced by Johann Gottfried Herder's ideas about nationalities and the spirit of the people put forth in a number of works from the 1770s until the end of the century (Auken et al. 2008: 50). Herder defined the nation along the lines of its history, its language and its culture. In Herder's understanding, every culture is unique and has value in itself. In contrast to more widespread enlightenment thought, Herder did not believe there to be an ideal society suitable for all cultures, but maintained that each culture had to be understood on its own terms. For Herder, the most important expression of the nation was the language. Therefore, the specific character of a nation could be found in original expressions of language such as popular poetry and the like. Herder's ideas prompted collections of folklore and folktales across Europe, not least in Denmark (Tine Damsholt 2002: 33–35). Herel the search for original Danish nationality was performed in particular by Grundtvig and Oehlenschläger's in their work on reviving Nordic mythology, Saxo, popular ballads, Danish history and Danish nature. The influence of Herder is also visible in J.M. Thieles collection of legends among the peasantry published as *Danske Folkesagn* [Danish Legends] (1818-1823) and in N.M. Petersen's linguistic history *Det danske, norske og svenske Sprogs Historie under deres Udvikling af Stamsproget* [The History of the Danish, Norwegian and Swedish Languages under their Development from the Parent Language] (1829-1830). Two other central publications from the nineteenth-century search of Danish nationality are Rasmus Nyerup and Knud Lyne Rahbek's *Bidrag til den danske Digtekunsts Historie* [Contributions to the History of the Danish Art of Poetry]

(1800-1828) and Rahbek, Nyerup and Werner Abrahamson's *Udvalgte danske Viser fra Middelalderen* [Selected Danish Ballads from the Middle Ages] (1812-1814) (Auken et al. 2008: 53–56).

The research in language, literary history and history was an attempt to discover the spirit of the people in the past. The search for the Danish people was a discovery of the connection between language, history and nationality (Jørgensen 2014: 86). Nineteenth-century scholars and writers saw it as imperative to awaken the spirit of the people and make the people aware of their nationality. This was realised through research and publication of old ballads, stories et cetera, but also through the establishment of folk high schools where the people were to be cultivated to become part of the nation by learning of the heroes of the past and popular achievements. Through these nationalising endeavours, the people were to become a historical and contemporary political subject. And with the nationalisation of the art and the people, the nationalisation of the state followed (Tine Damsholt 2002: 36–37).

In Denmark, nationalism evolved from and in parallel with patriotism. As mentioned in chapter one, a basic distinction between the concepts is that patriotism is based on devotion towards the state, its symbols and institutions, which are represented by the king. Patriotism has to do with territory, and the patriotic ideology included the entire composite state, that is Denmark, Norway and the duchies. Nationalism, on the other hand, is only connected to the national state of Denmark and is expressed through valuation of Danish language and culture. The term nationalism is derived from *natio*, Latin for birth, and contrary to patriotism, one's place of birth bears significance for one's inclusion in the national community. A central difference between the two ideologies is that the patriotic ideology has the king at its centre and nationalism has the people at its centre. Furthermore, while patriotism was associated with the absolute monarchy, nationalism was associated with the endeavours for a free constitution (Jørgensen 2018; Rerup 1991: 326–344; Vogelius 2012: 273–285).

The main societal ideology in the Danish composite state around the year 1800 was state patriotism and it was a-national as it included three major nationalities; Danish, Norwegian and German (Rerup 1991: 326). From the eighteenth century, Denmark inherited the patriotic concept of the people being synonymous with the citizens and

that citizenship, not nationality, defined the relation between the individual and the state. Multiple nations coexisted within the king's realm and they were united through the king and the social contract (Tine Damsholt 2002: 33). During the course of the first decades of the nineteenth century, nationalism emerged and grew to prominence. In the early 1800s as well, literary nationalism emerged and found expression in Romantic literature by authors such as Grundtvig, Oehlenschläger, Ingemann and many more. According to historian Lorenz Rerup, the literary nationalism resembled the political nationalism in that it had the people at its centre, but diverged from it in that the people could not act politically in the liberal sense of the word, but only take a moral stance (Rerup 1991: 329–330, 344). The composite state patriotism remained the main state ideology until the 1840s, by when it was overtaken by the Danish and Schleswig-Holstein national ideologies which had been on the rise since the late 1830s (Rerup 1991: 326–344; Vogelius 2012: 273–285). Between 1838 and 1842, language went from being a practicality to being an important expression of nationality and a political issue. And in the early 1840s, national-liberal movements in Copenhagen and Schleswig-Holstein began insisting that there should be convergence between people, state and territory (Jørgensen 2016, 2020). In the 1840, the political discourse was still characterised by contract theory, but it had become intertwined with a national discourse. The idea of popular sovereignty was more central than previously, but it had become increasingly difficult to maintain the interpretation of the absolute monarchy as the outcome of a social contract. The strict legislation on the freedom of the press meant that the government could no longer be conceived of as an opinion led absolute monarchy, and the social contract could therefore no longer explain the societal layout on its own. The contract theory, which in the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century legitimised the gathering of different nationalities under the Danish king, could neither legitimise a state in which the people was the sovereign. There emerged a problem of delimiting the extent of the state. Nationalism became the explanatory model to remedy this issue. By defining the people not only as identical to the citizens, as in the patriotic ideology, but identical to the nation, as in the national ideology, a delimitation of the state was provided. The state would mirror the nation and be delimited to the Danish nation (Tine Damsholt 2002: 33).

According to historian Claus Møller Jørgensen, the development of Danish nationalism is in line with Hroch's description of nationalism in small nations. Jørgsensen defines the period from 1800 as phase A because of the literary nationalism emerging in that period. Phase B begins in 1842 when the nationalism becomes politicised, and phase C sets in after 1848 in the form of mass nationalism (Jørgensen 2018).

The following analyses will not be about nationalism generally in the analysed literature, but will specifically focus on how the figure of the king is associated with nationalism. As outlined in this section, in the first half of the nineteenth century, the king was primarily associated with the patriotic ideology which was declining in the 1830s and 1840s. The analyses will examine how the figure of the king is provided with a role within the national ideology which otherwise has the people – and not the king – at its centre.

Nationalisation of kings in literature

Andersen: Loving monarchy

Kongen drømmer was written by Hans Christian Andersen and performed at The Royal Danish Theatre eleven times in 1844 and three times in 1857 (N. Jensen 2020d).[266] *Kongen drømmer* takes place in Sønderborg Castle where Christian II has been imprisoned in the years following his dethronement. The king lies asleep in a retired alcove, while his faithful soldier Benth, who accompanies him in his captivity, tells the audience about the king's past. His narrative is superseded by a performance of two of the king's dreams which show two incidents of his life in flashback. The first dream is about Christian II's first meeting with Dyveke during a stay in Bergen, and the other takes place some years later when Dyveke and her mother

[266] The existing literature on *Kongen drømmer* is very sparse. The play is mentioned in Gustav Albeck, Oluf Friis and Peter P. Rohde's *Dansk litteratur historie. Bind 2. Fra Oehlenschläger til Kierkegaard* [Danish Literature History. Volume 2. From Oehlenschläger to Kierkegaard] from 1967 as a preliminary study to a historical novel on Christian II in the style of Walter Scott (Albeck, Friis and Rohde 1967). A detail from the play is considered in a one-page article from 1975 by Helge Topsøe-Jensen, where it is traced how a remark uttered by Dyveke describing a clog she used as a toy ship in her childhood stems from an elided passage from a draft to *Ole Lukøie* (Topsøe-Jensen 1975: 204).

have moved with Christian II to Copenhagen. In the meantime, the king has married Queen Elisabeth and Dyveke has therefore withdrawn from his company. In the second dream is depicted the nobility and clergy's discontent with Dyveke, which is caused by her relationship with the castellan Torben Oxe. The scene also informs the audience about Dyveke and Torben's plans for their imminent elopement. The scene continues to show a Dominican monk poisoning a basket of cherries sent to Dyveke by Torben Oxe to signify that all is ready for their flight. Dyveke eats some of the cherries, and Christian enters to witness her death. The dream concludes with the king swearing to take revenge on Torben Oxe as he assumes him to be the murderer. Benth then goes on to tell the audience about how the king went mad as a result of Dyveke's murder, which lead him to commit the Stockholm Bloodbath. Benth then falls asleep, and the king awakens. A knight enters with the happy news that King Frederik I is dead and Christian III has become king of Denmark. Peace is restored now that the power is returned to its proper place. The knight reveals himself to be Christian III and he promises Christian II his freedom. The play finishes on this happy note, but for the detail that in the meantime Benth has died.

The play's composition around two dream fragments allows it to be very selective as to which events in Christian II's life are emphasized and which are not. The same applies to the meaning they are ascribed. The empathy in *Kongen drømmer* lies with the king who is depicted as the people's protector against the nobility, who comprises the play's antagonistic force. The king's qualities are determined by his relationship with the people, which is characterized by mutual affections and asserts him as a good king. This is expressed, for instance, by Benth in the beginning of the play when he considers whether Christian II will ever reclaim the throne. He comments that if that is the case: "The common man would be happy about it | You love him, he loves you back!" (H.C. Andersen 1844: 6).[267] It is also the prospect of making Christian II's love for his people stronger which in the first place persuades Dyveke to join Christian II at the ball which will cement their future together. Dyveke initially refuses Christian II's invitation and begins to leave. What changes her mind is Christian II's comment that her being his mistress will enable him to embrace

[267] "Den simple Mand vil blive glad derved, | Du elsker ham, han elsker Dig igjen!"

the triple kingdom with love, which will lead to happiness for the people: "I will wrap my strong arm around them [Denmark, Norway and Sweden], | With equal love, for the happiness of the people! | But I must be great and better! You | Can make me thus!" (H.C. Andersen 1844: 19–20).[268] Christian II's profound love for the people stems from his upbringing among commoners, which has taught him to appreciate and acknowledge their importance for the retention of the crown and country:

> There I learned to love the poor man;
> To know the commoners, the root of the country;
> If they are dismissed, the throne will wither away!
> I love the root, honour it.
> If the nobility will not become the fruit of the tree,
> I will remove the worm-eaten flowers,
> And not gently! – To be harsh
> Towards inferiors, that is exactly what I have learned from them!
> (H.C. Andersen 1844: 17).[269]

There are several significant points to be found in this paragraph. The king's love for his people is emphasized as crucial for the monarchy and the people are referred to as the foundation of the country and essential to the retention of the Crown. Furthermore, we are informed that society is sustained by the king and the people, while the nobility is a dispensable factor. Lastly, but very importantly, the nobility is perceived as a source to the king's ruthlessness, which is a central feature of the drama.

In *Kongen drømmer*, the nobility is portrayed just as one-dimensionally bad as the king is depicted as good. For example, we are told that a drunk nobleman has killed a commoner peacefully walking by. Christian becomes furious: "A drunk nobleman has killed a commoner! | They pretend to be masters, these children of the blood! | The old, harsh noble blood. Damn! | I shall bleed them thoroughly

[268] "Jeg slynge vil min stærke Arm omkring dem [Danmark, Norge og Sverige], | Med lige Kjærlighed, til Folkets Lykke! | Men stor og bedre maa jeg være! Du | Kan gjøre mig dertil!"

[269] "Jeg lærte der at elske fattig Mand, | At kjende Borgerstanden, Landets Rod; | Forkastes den, vil Kongetronen visne! | Jeg elsker Roden, holder den i Ære. | Vil Adelen ei blive Frugt paa Træet, | Jeg piller de ormstukne Blomster af, | Og ikke lempeligt! – At være haard | Mod Undermænd, har jeg just lært af dem!"

one day" (H.C. Andersen 1844: 16).[270] The bloodletting of the nobility here appears as a foreboding of the Stockholm Bloodbath. In the drama, the Bloodbath is presented as a strike against the nobility rather than against the Swedes,[271] and Christian's treatment of the nobility in this instance is juxtaposed with the nobility's treatment of the common people: "You [Christian II] seized the nobleman by force | Like he seized the poor man; You broke the wing | Of the proud raven; then sounded across the country | A raven's caw about *Christian the Evil*!" (H.C. Andersen 1844: 35).[272] The play goes further and frames the nobility as the cause of the Bloodbath. After waking from the dream about the clergy and nobility's murder of Dyveke, Christian II comments on the events in the dream: "There they killed my dove! – From that hour | Came heavy clouds, blood! – In Stockholm it flowed! – | The Danish nobility broke the oath it swore to me" (H.C. Andersen 1844: 37).[273] The events during the bloodbath are recounted in direct continuation of Dyveke's death so that the king's actions appear as sudden madness evoked by his loss. In reality, three years passed between the two events. Benth defends the king's actions by claiming that he was not himself at the moment of the Bloodbath. He presents it as an emotional reaction to the nobility's murder of Dyveke and comments: "At the time, your good spirit had left you; | They had murdered her, Dyveke! | And you became wild and dark! Though, what you did, | The nobleman so often did to the peasant" (H.C. Andersen 1844: 35).[274] In Andersen's play, the Bloodbath is thus explained away as an inopportune vent for the king's powerlessness caused by the nobility and as no worse a crime against the nobility than what it itself subjects the common people to.

[270] "En drukken Adelsmand har dræbt en Borger! | De spille Herrer disse Blodets Børn! | Det gamle, barske Adelsblod. Guds Drosz! | Jeg skal aarelade dem til Gavns en Gang"

[271] The national divides are downplayed by a comment made by Christian II to the effect that the same blood runs through the veins of Norway, Sweden and Denmark (H.C. Andersen 1844: 19).

[272] "Du [Christian II] greb med Vælde fat paa Adelsmanden, | Som han paa fattig Mand; Du knækked Vingen | Paa stolten Ravn; da lød ud over Landet | Et Ravneskrig om C h r i s t j e r n d e n O n d e!"

[273] "Der dræbte de min Due! – Fra den Time | Kom tunge Skyer, Blod! – I Stokholm flød det! – | Den danske Adel brød den Eed, den svoer mig"

[274] "Din gode Aand var dengang veget fra Dig; | De havde myrdet hende, Dyveke! | Og du blev vild og mørk! dog, hvad Du gjorde, | Det gjorde Adelsmanden tidt ved Bonden"

In Andersen's drama, we are introduced to a king who is a good ruler because of his love for his subjects. The entire play revolves around the love between the king and his subjects, and the national community is thus very much represented as an emotional community. Christian II is defined as a good king solely on account of his emotional relationship to his people. His acts performed at the Stockholm Bloodbath are framed as frustration with the nobility, which is not really included in the national community – they are represented as worm-eaten flowers which can be removed from the national tree without harming it, while the people comprise the essential root. In this way, the attention is diverted away from the political aspects of the Bloodbath, which is instead presented within an emotional framework. The king in this rendition is very politically passive. The play takes place in a period of the king's life when his reign is over, he is removed from power and imprisoned and thus very much pacified. Instead of representing the king in a position of power, the drama positions the king in an emotional relation to his people and in this way, it gives expression to conceptualising the relationship between king and people in other terms than of political power.

Staged at the Royal Danish Theatre in a period with an increasing number of voices publicly crying out for free constitution, the quite idealistic and unreflected depiction of the king in the play is somewhat conspicuous. At the very end of the play, however, it makes a couple of comments about the conditions of Denmark when it is without a king, which might be understood as a contemplation which would also have been pertinent to a contemporary audience. When Christian III informs Christian II of the developments in Denmark during his imprisonment, he refers to the Interregnum (1533-1534) following the death of Frederik I as "the misfortunes | Our country fell into when King *Frederik* died! | The election of a king was postponed, the clergy | Wanted to do as they pleased" (H.C. Andersen 1844: 40).[275] He then proceeds to describe the foreign aggression and rebellion that occurred while Denmark was without a king. Christian III also comments on whether or not power might be divided when he proclaims that "The happiness of our *Denmark* depends on having one king only, | The small country cannot endure being divided" (H.C. Andersen 1844:

[275] "den Ulykke | Vort Land faldt i, dengang Kong F r e d r i k døde! | Et Konge-Valg blev udsat, Geistligheden | Helst vilde skalte, som den syntes bedst"

43).[276] A corresponding stance is found in Christian II's remark on the Interregnum that "Everything is strife | Everything is parties!" (H.C. Andersen 1844: 38)[277] juxtaposing party formation with strife. The play is thus very dismissive of the idea of dividing power in Denmark and it stands strongly on its contention that there should be only one king in Denmark. In this way, the play reveals itself to be rather conservative.[278] At the same time, the play considers the national community within an emotional register and represents an understanding of society as based on an emotional bond between the king and his subject.

Hauch: Something rotten

Carsten Hauch's *Vilhelm Zabern. En Autobiografi fra Christian den Andens Tid*[279] is a fictitious autobiography presented as written by the

[276] "Vort D a n m a r k s Lykke vil at Een er Konge, | Det lille Land ei taale kan at deles"

[277] "Alt er Strid, | Alt er Partier!"

[278] *The King Dreams* is also one of the few examples of a literary work from the corpus referring to divine right to rule: In the beginning of the play, Benth comments that Christian II's features indicate that he was born to rule (H.C. Andersen 1844: 6).

[279] Existing secondary literature about *Vilhelm Zabern* is for a great part dedicated to analyses of its characters. Kjeld Galster's article "Dyveke og Hans Faaborg i "Vilhelm Zabern"" [Dyveke and Hans Faaborg in "Vilhelm Zabern"] (1931) argues that Hauch's Dyveke is based on Lotte Oehlenschläger, Adam Oehlenschläger's daughter, and that the subsidiary character of the unscrupulous gambler Faaborg is a textual version of Johan Ludvig Heiberg (Galster 1931). In their literary history, Albeck, Friis and Rohde highlight the novel on account of its psychological portraits (Albeck, Friis and Rohde 1967: 228). In his book *Den faktiske sandheds poesi. Studier i historieromanen i første halvdel af det 19. århundrede* [The Poetry of the Actual Truth. Studies of the Historical Novel in the First Half of the 19th Century] (1996), Ole Birklund Andersen examines *Vilhelm Zabern* as a *Bildungsroman* and as a historical novel. Here, also, a considerable part of the chapter is devoted to discussing the characters and their relationships. As to the political aspects of the novel, Birklund Andersen argues that the king embodies rebellion against the divine, social, ecclesiastical and private order and that "The crux of this rebellion is that the king in his licentious passion pursues his individual interests everywhere at the expense of totality and social and political equipoise" (Birklund Andersen 1996: 134) ("Kernen i dette oprør er, at kongen i sin tøjlesløse lidenskab overalt forfølger sine individuelle interesser på bekostning af helheden og den sociale og politiske ligevægt"). He further observes that particularly the political contradistinction between nobility and bourgeoisie is pivotal to the story. While still prioritizing characters and claiming that Dyveke is the center of the novel, the second volume of Sune Auken, Knud Michelsen, Marie-Louise Svane, Isak Winkel Holm and Klaus P. Mortensen's *Dansk litteraturs historie* [The History of Danish Literature] (2008) also deals with some political aspects of the novel. It is noted here that Hauch was preoccupied with the forces emanating from the center of power and that his novels contain diverse examples of characters' lives

Norwegian title character. Vilhem Zabern meets Dyveke when she and her mother Sigbrit move to Norway from the Netherlands. Vilhelm Zabern falls for Dyveke, but her feelings are very ephemeral and Sigbrit opposes the relationship between them, so nothing ever comes of it. When Dyveke moves to Copenhagen to be with Christian II, Vilhelm Zabern follows her and obtains a position in the king's employ. In this position, Vilhelm Zabern becomes acquainted with the corrupt web of power that dominates the king's surroundings. Through his job, he experiences the nobility and royals at close hand and learns about some of their plots and schemes. One of Vilhelm Zabern's first tasks is to travel to the Netherlands to accompany the future Queen Elisabeth to Denmark for her marriage to Christian II. From then on, we are told that Dyveke withdraws from the king and not long afterwards, she commits suicide. Christian II suspects Dyveke and the castellan Torben Oxe of having had a relationship and therefore has the innocent Torben Oxe executed. Afterwards, the king sets off to Sweden where he wins the war and reunites the three Scandinavian countries under the same crown. On his victorious return, however, Vilhelm Zabern finds the king discouraged and depressed. He then witnesses the king's planning of the Stockholm Bloodbath, but no account is given of the event itself, as Vilhelm Zabern does not participate in it himself. The novel ends with Vilhelm Zabern returning to his native Norway with his new wife, the sister of Gustav Vasa. Here Vilhelm Zabern receives a short visit from the now exiled and disillusioned king before he is lured back to Denmark and imprisoned.

By being recounted as an autobiography focalised through a commoner from Norway – a long way from Copenhagen – the novel

being determined by their meeting with the sphere of power and its corruption and egoism (Auken et al. 2008: 154). They attribute the novel's range of emotions, notably characterized by division and restlessness, to Hauch's own time and its political tensions (Auken et al. 2008: 156). The chapter says of Hauch's historical novels that they covertly deal with the system of power and its influence on individuals. They all feature a main character whose personal rights and freedom are jeopardized in the encounter with political supremacy. The suggested implication of this is that: "Behind it all, Hauch continuously discusses his time's – that is that of the Restoration and the absolute monarchy – delicate question of the utopia of freedom and the democratic rights" (Auken et al. 2008: 154) ("Bag ved det hele drøfter Hauch bestandig sin tids – det vil sige restaurationstidens og enevældens – ømfindtlige spørgsmål om frihedens utopi og de demokratiske rettigheder").

provides an outside perspective on the events portrayed in the book. Vilhelm Zabern sees the conflicts in Copenhagen differently, because he, at least to begin with, is not an integrated part of them. Where Andersen's drama is very nationally oriented and assumes love between the king and the people, Hauch's novel takes off from more of a neutral ground. It critically investigates the conditions surrounding the royal power, without idealising it, and uses the outside view of the focalisation to create a depiction which appears less 'partial' than Andersen's.

In this version, much in contrast to Andersen's very emotional drama, the affections between the king and the Danish people are absent. When Christian II plans the Stockholm Bloodbath, Queen Elisabeth expresses concern for his choice of advisors. As a voice of reason and virtue, she emphasizes that:

> they have no love for you and your country, King Christian! They only cater to your whims for their own advantage; if you shed the blood of your subjects, if your name is marked as that of a tyrant for posterity, what will they suffer! What do they care! As long as they can acquire the power and wealth they desire (Hauch 1944: 216).[280]

Christian II rebuffs Elisabeth's apprehensions and refers to the weakness of his father's reign. Elisabeth concedes that King Hans did not possess Christian II's abilities, but objects that he was a kinder lord and, importantly, that he was loved. The lack of affection between Christian II and his people is starkly contrasted by the love of their country expressed by the Swedish people, represented by the mother and sister of Gustav Vasa. While away on business in the Netherlands in the beginning of his employment with the king, Vilhelm Zabern is lodged across the street from these two women. Here he listens to the daughter Coecilia sing and observes on her songs that: "They all breathed the most blazing love towards their country, they either dwelt on distant ages of heroes or lamented the beloved country's severe degradation, from time to time they were mixed with dim

[280] "de har ingen Kærlighed til dig og dit Land, Kong Christian! De smigrer kun dine Luner for Fordels Skyld; hvis du udgyder dine Undersaatters Blod, hvis dit Navn staar stemplet som en Tyrans for Efterverdenen, hvad lide de derved! Hvad agter de derpaa! Naar de blot kan erhverve sig den Magt og den Rigdom, de ønsker"

predictions of a future liberator" (Hauch 1944: 118).[281] The Swedish women love their country and this love is associated with a future liberator, which the reader recognises as Gustav Vasa. The scene is thus set for the liberator to enter into an emotional relationship with the Swedish people. No such love is expressed between Christian II and his people. On the contrary, when Christian II visits Vilhelm Zabern in Norway at the end of the novel, he sees Dyveke's portrait and comments that he has never loved anyone but her (Hauch 1944: 265). The king is not, however, indifferent towards his people. He promotes equality for the peasants, so even though there is no love between them, the king shows some consideration for the people.

In *Vilhelm Zabern*, there is no attempt to defend the Stockholm Bloodbath, as is the case in Andersen's drama where the nobility is made responsible for the king's actions. In the novel, the Bloodbath is presented as a deliberate action by the king. Weight is given to the fact that innocents will die, and the length of the text dedicated to contemplations on the implications of carrying out the executions underlines the king's own responsibility for his actions. Of course, his intense emotions caused by Dyveke's death are present in the novel too. After Dyveke's funeral and just before Christian II has Torben Oxe executed because he suspects him to be Dyveke's lover and murderer, the narrator remarks that the king from then on became markedly crueller (Hauch 1944: 194). Vilhelm Zabern as narrator comments on the internal incongruence in the king's reasoning, but whether his actions are due to madness caused by the loss of Dyveke or a cover for political schemes is not revealed. As the king revenges the supposed murder of Dyveke by executing Torben Oxe, the Bloodbath does not fully appear as Christian II's immediate reaction to the loss of his mistress, as it does in Andersen's version. An excess of emotions is not here used to justify his deed, and Christian II by no means appear as an ideal regent as in Andersen's version.

The novel does not take as clearly a stand as Andersen's play on the question about the best form of government for Denmark, but the ending contains a hint of political comment. It emphasizes the need of abilities for pre-eminence in order to occupy a prominent role in society. After Sweden's independence, Gustav Vasa is willing to

[281] "De aandede alle den mest flammende Fædrelandskærlighed, de dvælede enten i fjerne Heltetider, eller klagede over det elskede Lands dybe Fornedrelse, undertiden var de blandede med dunkle Spaadomme om en tilkommende Befrier"

disclose the marriage between his sister and Vilhelm Zabern, which had until then been kept a secret. Vilhelm Zabern and Coecilia rejects the offer to be acknowledged as part of the royal family as they feel more suited for a life in solitude. As to their children, however, Vilhelm Zabern says they are welcome to adopt a more pre-eminent position, if they can handle it:

> As regards my children, on the other hand, they may, when they grow up, in that respect do as they please. If they want a pre-eminent position and have the strength to bear it without being deceived by vain delusion, then I will not prevent them from fulfilling the destiny which God calls upon them (Hauch 1944: 264).[282]

The underlying idea here is that one should only assume a certain position in society if one has the abilities needed to fill it. Abilities are also of more importance than the fact that the position is pointed out by God, which, for example, is the case with the king's position. This view on abilities appears as an echo of Queen Elisabeth's admonitions at Vilhelm Zabern and Coecilia's wedding shortly prior to this passage. Commenting on their love for each other, she warns them against wild passion and lack of self-restraint: "be on guard for the burning passion that does not only disturb the happiness of this world, but can make the soul suffer from such delusion that even the best aptitudes cannot prevent its downfall. Self-control, my children, is the prerequisite for all virtues" (Hauch 1944: 262).[283] Balanced emotions and self-control are pointed out as essential properties. Without this, even innate aptitudes or abilities will fall short. Hereby is stressed that a certain constitution is required for inhabiting a position of pre-eminence. Christian II, in this realm of understanding, does not appear as an ideal regent because he clearly lacks self-restraint. He is too controlled by his emotions, which leads to his tyrannical behaviour.

[282] "Hvad mine Børn derimod angaar, da maa de, naar de vokser til, i dette Punkt handle, som de vil. Ønsker de udvortes Højhed og har Kraft til at bære den, uden at daares af forfængelig Indbildning, da skal jeg ikke hindre dem fra at gennemgaa den Skæbne, hvortil Gud kalder dem"

[283] "vogter Eder for de vilde Lidenskaber, der ikke blot forstyrrer denne Verdens Lykke, men der kan hilde Sjælen i et saadant Selvbedrag, at de bedste Anlæg ikke kan hindre dens Undergang. Selvbeherskelse, mine Børn, er Betingelsen for alle Dyder"

Both Andersen's play and Hauch's novel have emotions at the heart of their narrative and both represent feelings between the people and the king as foundational. Both consider the relation between king and people in an emotional register, but from opposite perspectives. Andersen's drama shows the importance of love between king and people through depiction of a king who loves his people, while Hauch's novel implies it by drawing attention to the absence of love between the king and his people as damaging to the country. The novel furthermore reflects on what form the emotions of the regent may take. While *Kongen drømmer* attempts to explain away the tyrannical side of Christian II manifested through the Stockholm Bloodbath as an act of passion, *Vilhelm Zabern* explores which kinds of love are suitable for a king and rejects passionate love as suitable. In Andersen's drama, Christian II's love for Dyveke functions as a promotion of his love for his people, but in Hauch's version it has the opposite effect; Christian II's love for Dyveke enables Sigbrit's political ascent, which is damaging to the Danish people. A nobleman express it in this way: "as long as the love for Dyveke persists, Sigbrit will reign, and as long as she will reign, there is no happiness in sight for our wretched country" (Hauch 1944: 115).[284] In *Vilhelm Zabern* there is thus a clear differentiation between the passionate love Christian feels for Dyveke, which is damaging to the country, and the affection he should be feeling for his people, which would be of benefit to the country. Hauch's *Vilhelm Zabern* and Andersen's *Kongen drømmer* thus differ in their representations of types of love between king and people, but have in common that they frame the king within an emotional context, both with regard to the focus on his emotional life, but also in their representation of the national community as an emotional community.

Bang: A king out of touch

Kongen vaagner is a drama published under the name S. Norby, a pseudonym for the royal physician Ole Bang/Oluf Lundt Bang (1788-1877) (N. Jensen 2020a; S. Rasmussen 2006: 1628; Snorrason 2020). The play was rejected by the Royal Danish Theatre and was published

[284] "saa længe Kærligheden til Dyveke varer, hersker Sigbrit, og saa længe hun hersker, er der heller ingen Lykke at vente for vort stakkels Land"

in print instead (S. Rasmussen 2006: 1628). The print version of the play is prefaced by a seven stanza poem in which Bang reflects on the different ways in which the figure of Christian II has been interpreted in fiction and how he himself is about to present his story. The second stanza refers back to a representation of Christian as powerful and emotional, which I assume to be Ole Johan Samsøe's *Dyveke* (1796), and the third stanza refers to Andersen's weak and powerless rendition of Christian II in *Kongen drømmer*, to which the title of Bang's play also refers. In the fourth stanza, Bang presents his own rendition of Christian II:

> But here we see him in the middle of the struggle
> Against the people, against himself, against time,
> And victoriously the **human** loosens his tie;
> And, as he from his good angel
> Receives the lily stalk of faith,
> The sceptre is abruptly snatched out of the **king's** hand
> (Norby 1846: 6).[285]

As Bang himself states, this version emphasises the king's discord with the people and the time in which he lives.

Kongen vaagner takes place in Vejle, a city in Jutland, in 1523 and revolves around Christian II having to decide how to counter the simmering unrest from the Jutlandish nobility and clergy's dissatisfaction with his reign. Parallel to Christian II's story runs a love story between a young noblewoman at the court, Ebba Munk, and the officer Otto Gjøe. Their union is opposed by her father, the newly appointed provincial judge Mogens Munk, who has decided on another choice for her. The narrative of the king follows him seeking advice from different people on how to proceed with respect to the Jutlandish nobility and clergy. First, he consults Sibret[286] and the admiral Søren Norby. Sibret instructs the king to severely clamp down on the rebellion, while Søren Norby encourages leniency. The king is persuaded by Sibret, and as Søren Norby knows Sibret's advice to be flawed, he foresees the king's downfall on account of following it. Even so, he informs the audience that his heart still remains with the king.

[285] "Men her vi see ham midt i Striden | Med Folket, med sig selv, med Tiden, | Og seirrig løser **Mennesket** sit Baand; | Og, som han af sin gode Engel | Modtager Troens Liliestængel, | Udrives Sceptret brat af **Kongens** Haand"

[286] In Bang's play, Sigbrit's name is spelled Sibret.

Although Søren Norby loves the king and believes Sibret to provide damaging advice, he does hold the king himself accountable for following the advice, not his advisor. Likewise, we are informed that the Stockholm Bloodbath was conducted on the counsel of Sibret, and although Søren Norby despises Sibret, he does not hold her accountable for the Bloodbath, but blames the king for following through with it (Norby 1846: 67): "Although I am not | A friend of Sigbrit, I still cannot deny | That she must bear the blame for so much, | Which is purely the fault of the king. Yes! I know him: | Composed of rough elements, | He stepped into the world and climbed, | Before they were purified, a throne" (Norby 1846: 75).[287] The shortcomings of the king are not blamed on his surrounding advisors, but the king himself.

After the discussion with Sibret and Søren Norby, the king proceeds to consult three other advisors; Peder Hedenstrup, Oluf Rosenkrantz and Mogens Bilde. Peder Hedenstrup advises the king to seek help from the German emperor and electors, as he cannot be sure that his own people are to be trusted. Oluf Rosenkrantz argues back that German help cannot be trusted. His plan is to let the Jutlandish rebellion break out, as he believes it can be defeated by the aid of the peasants and burghers of Funen and Zealand, who are loyal to the king because of his advancement of their rights. Mogens Bilde advises the king to seek reconciliation with the Jutlandish nobles and clergymen and meet their grievances so that civil war may be avoided. The king becomes upset by Mogens Bilde's proposal and declares that he will not abase himself to the people, but intends to put his opponents in their place.

At the same time as these discussions take place, Mogens Munk has arrived, secretly in order to reconnoitre on behalf of the nobility and clergy. Oluf Rosenkrantz realises this and instructs that he is not to be allowed to leave. Mogens Munk is given a room to spend the night, which turns out to be next to that of his daughter. The same night, her suitor Otto Gjøe arrives with a ladder intending to visit Ebba Munk. Accidentally he ends up in Mogens Munk's room instead. Mogens Munk sees the ladder as his means to escape, and as Otto Gjøe

[287] "skjøndt jeg ikke | Er Sibrets Ven, jeg kan ei heller nægte, | At hun maa bære Skylden for saa Meget, | Som kun er Kongens. Ja! jeg kjender ham: | Af stride Elementer sammensat, | Han traadte ind i Verden og besteg, | Forinden de var' luttrede, en Throne"

will not do anything that could upset his lover, he complies. Because Mogens Munk is adverse to be in debt to Otto Gjøe, he gives his blessing of the marriage between him and Ebba Munk in exchange for the ladder.

Mogens Munk's escape and Otto Gjøes's arrival is discovered by Sibret, who reports it to the king. Initially, the king wishes to examine the case before deciding what to do, but Sigbret takes advantage of the king's upset state and manipulates him into deciding to punish Otto Gjøe severely and have him hanged. Ebba Munk pleads Otto Gjøe's case to the king, and the king realises Sibret's dishonesty. After having withdrawn his decision to have Otto Gjøe executed, the king turns his attention to Sibret. Christian II reconsiders his past reliance on Sibret's advice and realises that he cannot any longer condone her attitude of the end justifying the means, even though the end is to improve the lot of peasants and burghers.

Christian II is then visited by the Lutheran, Martin Reinhardt. Through their conversation on Lutheranism and forgiveness, the king finds solace and enlightenment and the awakening referred to in the title of the play occurs. The king realises that he has acted too harshly towards the nobility; that he "from | Too much and too rash desire | To enforce justice has […] done wrong" (Norby 1846: 160).[288] Martin Reinhardt, Søren Norby and Oluf Rosenkrantz finally convince the king that he must exercise leniency, that radical change is not viable and that change must be implemented cautiously and deliberately. When the king is thus awoken, a letter is found left by the escaped Mogens Munk. The letter is from the Jutlandic nobility and clergy and informs the king that they are withdrawing their allegiance to him. The king's awakening has been too late and he is about to lose his crown.

The relationship between king and people is central for the play, and it begins with underscoring the importance of love to the king and national feeling. The first scenes take place in a public house where the landlord Henning and the customers discuss royal power. Henning is sceptical about the Stockholm Bloodbath as he believes Sweden to be lost from Denmark because of it. Despite his disagreement with the king's choice of action, Henning still loves the king: "do not think that the love I bore for the father [King Hans] | Is withheld from his son"

[288] "af | For megen og for overilet Lyst | Til Ret at hævde, har […] uret gjort"

(Norby 1846: 12).[289] To Henning, his opinions on the king's politics or conduct is somewhat separate from his feelings of love for the king. They are not entirely separate, though, as Henning lets us know that he loved King Hans more than King Christian II on account of Hans being more nationally minded. Henning lauds Hans for having been a good king because he was national-minded and represented Danishness. He states about the late king that he was a simple man, for whom – as was also quoted in the introduction of the chapter – "A mug of beer | Brewed in Denmark was dearer to him | Than even the most priceless Spanish wine" (Norby 1846: 16)[290] and also that "He was simple-minded enough to adhere firmly | To Danish manners, to the Danish language" (Norby 1846: 16).[291] In summation, Henning claims: "Yes, he was Danish, so genuinely Danish as we …" (Norby 1846: 17)[292] to which the customer Knud intervenes: "May wish all Danish kings will be" (Norby 1846: 17).[293] It appears from Henning and Knud's description of King Hans that a good Danish king should appreciate Danish culture and Danish products although they may be simple compared to those of other nations. Appreciation of the national is thus articulated as more important for a king than grandeur.

In order to instil this value in his son, King Hans had Prince Christian raised in the home of a burgher. Henning and Knud disagrees, however, as to whether this was a sensible method for cultivating the future king:

> **Henning**.
> […] in a house of a burgher
> He [Hans] boarded the son out and let attend
> School with the other striplings.
> He believed that he, who one day was to rule,
> Would get the best conception of the distress and wants of the people
> This way and much differently
> Than from lazing about in idleness
> With the young noblemen.

[289] "Tro ei, den Kjærlighed, jeg bar for Faderen [kong Hans], | Unddragen er hans Søn"
[290] "et Kruus Øl, | I Danmark brygget, var ham kjærere, | End selv den kosteligste spanske Viin"
[291] "Han var eenfoldig nok til fast at holde | Paa danske Sæder, paa det danske Sprog"
[292] "Ja, han var dansk, saa ægte dansk, som vi . . ."
[293] "Maae ønske, alle Danmarks Konger blive"

Knud.
But, Henning! We
Often disagreed as to this; there is
Much more to becoming a competent king
Than knowing the wants of the people. How
They can be helped, how everybody,
The inferior as well as the mighty, should be governed:
That is not taught in a school for striplings;
It does not enter the head
With the Latin that a canon stuff in there.
What do you say?
Otto [another customer].
I believe you are right
Mads [yet another customer] (softly).
It would have been the same, no matter where he went
(Norby 1846: 17–18).[294]

This passage emphasises the importance of the bond between king and people by stressing that the king must be acquainted with the conditions of the people and that it is harmful to the cultivation of the prince if he spends his time only in the company of the nobility. It is, however, argued that the education of a prince must contain other elements than the education of the children of the people. While the prince must know about the lives of the people, which he can learn from association with them, he must also know how to alleviate their problems, which he cannot learn in a school for commoners. Thus, the bond between king and people is not presented as equal in the sense of the parties basically being alike, but in the sense of them holding different positions with different responsibilities which together sustain society. It is also worth noting the last line uttered by Mads, who is an attendant of one of the king's opponents. Mads's mumbling adds the perspective that the education of a crown prince is not

[294] "**Henning**. | […] i et Borgerhuus | Han [Hans] Sønnen gav i Kost og lod ham med | De andre Peblinger i Skolen gaae. | Han meente, Den, der eengang skulde herske, | Om Folkets Nød og Trang fik bedst Begreb | Paa denne Maade og langt anderledes, | End hvis i Lediggang han drev omkring | Med Adelsjunkerne. | **Knud**. | Men, Henning! tidt | Vi var' uenige heri; der hører | Langt Mere til at blive dygtig Konge, | End Det at kjende Folkets Trang. Hvordan | Den hjælpes kan, hvorledes Alle, | De Ringe, som de Mægtige, skal styres: | Det læres ikke i en Peblingskole; | Det kommer ikke ind i Hovedet | Med det Latin, en Kannik der indpropper. | Hvad siger du? | **Otto** [en anden gæst]. | Jeg mener, Du har Ret. | **Mads** [endnu en gæst] (sagte). | Hvor han var gaaet, var det lige godt"

necessarily enough to make a good king and that the nature of the person also determines whether he may become a good regent. The importance of personality is not developed further here, but as the play explores the consequences of Christian II's actions triggered by his emotionally excitable nature, it is a significant perspective.

From the discussion in the public house is conveyed the sentiment that the good king is a representative of Danishness and loved by his people. Popular appeal is imparted to be a quality which cannot necessarily be acquired, which implies that the nature of the king is determining for whether he might be a good regent. And with this regard, King Hans's simple personality is destined to make him a better king than Christian II with his passionate personality.

The last scenes of the play communicate the sentiment that revolutionary change is not desirable and that gradual change is much more preferable. By this point in the play, Christian II has awakened and he and his advisors reflect on his previous actions. Christian II realises that he might have acted too harshly towards the nobility, but he still questions what else he could have done. He seeks the advice of Oluf Rosenkrantz by comparing his situation to Oluf Rosenkrantz's cultivation of the land he inherited from his father:

> What did you do? – in a hurry you cut down
> The many trees, which took away the sun;
> And quickly shot and delightfully thrived
> What was before stifled by their close shadows.
> **Rosenkrantz.**
> But, your grace! Indeed I cut down
> So that the tender plants should not want
> Light and air; but it was done
> Deliberately, I did not use the axe indiscriminately.
> I did not remove what was useful; but the tree,
> Which crown spread too widely, I only
> Trimmed
> (Norby 1846: 160–161).[295]

[295] "Hvad gjorde I? – omhugged' i en Hast | De mange Træer, som tog Solen bort; | Og raskt fremskjød og herlig trivedes, | Hvad før blev qvalt af deres tætte Skygger. | **Rosenkrantz.** | Men, Eders Naade! vel jeg hugget har, | At Lys og Luft ei skulde savnes af | De spæde Planter; men med Overlæg | Det var, i Flæng ei, at jeg Øxen brugte. | Jeg rydded' ei det Nyttige; men Træet, | Hvis Krone bredte sig for vidt, jeg kun | Beklippede"

The morale is clear: Christian II's execution of the nobles in Stockholm was too rash and extensive. The right conduct would have been to act with more care and caution, to 'prune' rather than 'cut down'. A gradual development is preferable, not least because a change for the better performed by revolutionary means will not succeed if the society is not ready. This is why the laws Christian II attempts to push through fail; they are ahead of their time. Oluf Rosenkrantz explains this to Christian II through another gardening metaphor. He tells a story of when he acquired some exquisite Dutch plants, but when planted in his garden, they did not thrive. He asked his vendor why and retells the answer to Christian II:

> First, the season was
> Not chosen correctly, and neither was the ground
> Prepared and suitable for its growth.
> That is my answer: Like my plants
> Are your laws; it shall be acknowledged
> In the most distant age; but they do not all suit
> The time, the people, as it is.
> **The king.**
> It is possible that you are right, but the needs of the kingdom…
> **Martin.**
> Once everything, by what means you have now sought,
> However in vain, to create happiness for Denmark,
> Will be accomplished, and the mountains, which now tower up
> Between nobility, burgher, peasant, will be levelled out.
> Then shall, what you have strived so courageously for,
> Family tree and heraldic device be of no importance,
> If the spirit and heart does not ensoul them –
> For, your grace! – is it certain
> That in a state, as in a garden,
> There must be diligently cleared out, transplanted often,
> New seed laid and the old fenced in, –
> No less certain it is that deliberation
> And cleverness is required here as there
> (Norby 1846: 163–164).[296]

[296] "Først Aarstiden ei | Var rigtig valgt, og Jorden ikke heller | Beredt og skikket nok til deres Vext. | Det er mit Svar: Som mine Planter, saa | Er Eders Love; det erkjendes skal | I fjernest Old; men ei de passe alle | Til Tiden, ei til Folket, som det er. | **Kongen.** | Vel mueligt, I har Ret; men Rigets Trang… | **Martin.** | Engang bli'er Alt, hvorved I nu har søgt, | Forgjæves dog, at skabe Danmarks Lykke, | Lidt efter lidt udført, og jævned' blive | De Fjelde, som nu steile, truende,

Oluf Rosenkrantz and Martin Reinhardt lecture Christian II that in a state you must act level-headedly. The ruler must ensure that new initiatives are suitable for the time and the people, and that changes are implemented cautiously and gradually. Christian II's choice of action at the Stockholm Bloodbath is of course in stark contrast to these admonitions, and Christian II's revolutionary cause of action in this way becomes a scare story for how not to implement changes in society. The play is thus quite explicitly expressing that revolutionary societal changes should be avoided in favour of gradual, cautious change.

The title of *Kongen vaagner* is, as mentioned, a reference to Andersen's *Kongen drømmer* from two years prior. The reference subtly implies that Andersen's version of Christian II has not 'awoken', as has Bang's. While Bang's Christian II 'wakes up' and realises the errors of his conduct, Andersen's has no such realisations, nor even reflects on the rightfulness of his actions. This illuminates a significant difference between the two plays. Andersen's play conveys the sentiment that Christian II was a good king and that royal autocracy is the right form of government for Denmark. Its loyalty to the king extends to negating his responsibilities for the Stockholm Bloodbath. Bang's play, on the other hand, deals directly with the responsibility for the Bloodbath and in extension of it with the king's flawed nature. By this, it touches upon one of the central problems with the monarchical form of government; the political ramifications that can be caused by an unfit ruler. The play maintains that the king's nature or his being misguided by his advisor is no excuse for his actions. The responsibility for the politics performed are solely the king's. That Christian II's nature and choice of advisors moreover sends the country into civil war underlines his unfitness as king – at least before his awakening. The play recognises that its Christian II is not an ideal king, and even extensive use of advisors have not amended that. The problem of the monarchical structure is hard to overlook in the play. At the same time, the play makes a very

| Sig hæve mellem Adel, Borger, Bonde. | Da skal, Hvad I har stræbt saa modigt for, | Stamtræ og Vaabenmærke Intet gjælde, | Naar Aand og Hjerte ei besiæler dem – | Thi, Eders Naade! – er det end saa vist, | At i en Stat, som i en Urtegaard, | Der flittig ryddes maa, omplantes tidt, | Nyt Frø nedlægges, og det Gamle hegnes, – | Ei mindre vist det er, at Overlæg | Og Sindrighed udfordres her, som der"

conspicuous pointe to the effect that radical change is not desirable and that societal change should be brought about carefully and gradually. It is apt to understand this point in the light of the contemporary society on the verge of political change. In this conceptual framework, Bang's play may be understood as an appeal to approach the transition from absolute monarchy with caution.

Nationalisation of kings

The analyses in this chapter have shown Christian II to be a character who lends himself to various interpretations. Christian II possesses multiple facets, which literature employed as a sounding board for nineteenth-century political questions. Christian II's emotionally controlled nature renders him an interesting anti-hero, but it also opens up for contemplations as to whether he is qualified for governing a country and consequently to contemplations about the country having a governmental structure, which has no mechanism for filtering out unfit candidates. Andersen's play idealises Christian II and dismisses considering any alternative organisation of society other than the absolute monarchy, but both Hauch's novel and Bang's play use Christian II to explore a regent whose nature is not completely appropriate for a king. *Vilhelm Zabern* considers what makes a person fit to be a regent and sets the stage for the reader to reflect on whether persons unfit for ruling should be in charge. *Kongen vaagner* reimagines Christian II's story as a cautionary tale, which appears to speak directly to the national-liberal currents of the 1830s and 1840s, and encourages cautiousness in respect to revolutionary change.

Christian II's emotional personality and his love story with Dyveke also renders him apt for exploring the king within an emotional context. All three works here deal with Christian II's feelings and love life, but they also extend the emotional register to considering the king's relation to his people from a perspective of emotions. In particular *Kongen drømmer* and *Vilhelm Zabern* engages with the love between a king and his people; Andersen's play represents Christian II as an ideal king because of his love for his people, and Hauch's novel shows the miserable state of a country when it is under a king who has no love for his subjects. In these literary

works, the national community is represented as an emotional community. The figure of the king is here installed with a role in addition to being a politician or leader, he is an emotional centre of the nation. Andersen's *Kongen drømmer* and Hauch's *Vilhelm Zabern* are not the only pieces of literature which represent the king less as a political actor and more in an emotional context and as a national centre. This happens frequently in the literature of the corpus.

Sander's *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis* is a fine example of literature connecting the king to the national. As we saw in chapter one, King Valdemar is advanced as the national, Danish choice for a ruler instead of the German Count Gerhard in Niels Ebbesen's arguments at the Dane Court. Likewise, Count Gerhard himself laments that his cradle had been placed on the wrong ground, as his nationality is the primary factor refraining him from becoming king of Denmark. Ingemann's historical cycle is likewise a prime example of the combination of monarchy and nationalism, as it writes national history with the king at the very centre. In *Prinds Otto af Danmark*, for instance, it is conveyed that even a good ruler is not the right ruler for Denmark if they are not Danish. About the German Count John III of Holstein-Plön – known as John the Mild – who was the pledgee of Nyborg, it is said: "The inhabitants of the town indeed agreed in praising the count's mildness and solicitude for the progress of the city; but it hurt their patriotic [*fædrelandske*] disposition to see German soldiers on the entrenchments and paying royal duties to the foreign pledgee" (Ingemann 1859: part 1: 92).[297] For the citizens of Ingemann's novel, nationality and sovereignty are so intertwined that even a good ruler cannot compensate for the lack of nationality. The same sentiment is expressed from the opposite perspective at King Christopher II's funeral, where the funeral procession bears witness to the bond between king and people having been strained:

> A quiet melancholy was visible in most faces; however, all utterances between the people revealed that the sadness more concerned the country and realm then the king that was now being buried. Tears

[297] "Stadens Indvaanere var vel enige i at berømme Grevens Mildhed og Omsorg for Byens Opkomst; men det krænkede deres fædrelandske Sind at see tydske Krigsfolk paa Skandserne og at yde kongelig Afgift til den fremmede Panteherre"

were not seen in a single eye, apart from those of Prince Otto and old Marshal Vendelboe (Ingemann 1859: part 1: 105).[298]

The initiation of the second part of the sentence with "however" expresses the sentiment that it is wrong that the people only mourn the state of the country, but not the death of their king. The observation of the lack of tears in the eyes of the people also tells us that a proper relationship between king and people, according to this narrative, should encompass emotion. The people should not only pay respect to their king upon his death, but actually feel distressed by it.

The love between king and people is so important in Ingemann's novel that it is actually part of what makes the king the ruler of the country. The king is only truly king if he holds the love of his people. This is for instance seen in Duke Valdemar's reservation to Count Gerhard's intention of instating Valdemar as king in Denmark by military means, to which Valdemar responds: "Yet, I will never win the control of the Danish people's heart if I am lifted onto the throne by your shafts of spears" (Ingemann 1859: part 2: 13)[299] and asks "do you regard the will and love of the people as nothing?" (Ingemann 1859: part 2: 13).[300] Valdemar knows that he cannot become king without the love of the Danes. Likewise, later, when Prince Otto has resigned his claims to the throne to Prince Valdemar, Svend Trøst notices an absence on the document of the settlement which he reads to Otto in the prison. On the document is depicted on one page three lions or cheetahs and a helmet with two horns, but on the other page, the place of the coat of arms of the kingdom is empty: "The hearts are missing – the kingdom is not yet his" (Ingemann 1859: part 2: 143).[301]

That the love between king and people contributes to a stable condition is also seen in Bruun's *Erik Glipping*. When the queen is worried about the resistance against King Eric, he reassures her by referring to the love from the people: "My breast | is shielded by the love of the people" (T.C. Bruun 1816: 69).[302] The people also

[298] "En stille Sørgmodighed var synlig i de fleste Ansigter; dog alle Ytringer blandt Folket viste, at Sorgen mere gjaldt Land og Rige, end den Konge, der nu jordedes. Taarer saae man ikke i et eneste Øie, undtagen i Prinds Ottos og gamle Marsk Vendelboes"

[299] "Jeg vinder dog aldrig Herredømmet over det danske Folks Hjerte, naar jeg skal løftes paa Thronen med eders Spydstager"

[300] "regner I da Folkets Villie og Kjærlighed for slet Intet?"

[301] "Hjerterne mangle – Riget er endnu ikke hans"

[302] "mit Bryst | ved Folkets Kierlighed er skiermet"

acknowledge the value of love to their king; as a poor peasant says when he invites the king into his home: "We cannot play host to our king, | but to love him like the first king of the kingdom, | that we can, that we do" (T.C. Bruun 1816: 92).[303]

Contrarily, hate between king and people is disastrous. By the end of Bang's *Valdemar og Absalon*, Valdemar the Great helps the mortally wounded Sweyn Grathe and laments to him: "Honoured and loved you could have lived for long among your people; now you lie here, hated and despised, you were entirely overthrown by your own blind arrogance, and arrogance is the most dangerous enemy of the humans her on Earth" (Bang 1826: 143).[304] Sweyn Grathe's downfall is reflected in the people's hate for him and his failure to make the people love him. Likewise, Boye's Eric Clipping is mortified when he learns about nobility's deception of him, fearing that it has made the people hate him, as their hate is the one thing he cannot bear:

> The king (deeply moved).
> And they [the people] hate me! – *Hate* me, because
> I was deceived!!
> Thorbern.
> Are you hated, my lord,
> Then it is by the mighty, who you gave
> Too much, not by the poor,
> Who got nothing. Distress and anger
> Is not hate, although the time often makes them
> The foster father of hate.
> The king (for himself)
> The strong soul
> Of a king should be able to carry much –
> Just not the hate of the people!
> (Boye 1851: 88).[305]

[303] "Beverte kan vi ei vor Konge; | men elske Ham liig Rigets første Drot, | det kan, det giør vi"

[304] "Hædret og elsket kunde Du have levet længe iblandt Dit Folk; nu ligger Du her hadet og foragtet, Dig fældede kun Din egen blinde Hovmod, og Hovmod er Menneskenes farligste Fiende her paa Jorden"

[305] "Kongen (dybt bevæget). | Og mig de [folket] hade! – H a d e mig, fordi | Jeg blev bedaaret!! | Thorbern. | Hades I, min Herre, | Da er det af den Mægtige, I gav | For meget, ikke af den Fattige, | Som Intet fik. Bedrøvelse og Vrede | Er ikke Had, skjøndt Tiden ofte gjør dem | Til Hadets Fosterfædre. | Kongen (ved sig selv) | Meget bør | En Konges stærke Sjæl formaae at bære – | Kun ikke Folkets Had!"

In the play, love between king and people is not only preferable, but the most important object for the king.

Sub-conclusion

The emphasis of the importance of love between king and people is common in the literature surveyed here, not least the Christian II renditions examined in this chapter. By dramatising the collisions between emotions and politics in the form of Christian II, the novel and dramas in different ways explore the emotional bond between king and people and experiment with the cultural position of the king. In these works of literature, Christian II is not only a political, patriotic character, but also the emotional centre of the nation. The way in which Christian II is conceptualised as the emotional centre of the nation and the implications of this conceptualisation differ between the works. Andersen's drama simply states the importance of the existence of an emotional bond between king and people, but does not reflect much upon the nature of it. Hauch's novel explores the significance of the emotional disposition of the regent for his competences for reigning. It emphasises the importance of feeling love for one's country, and by framing the passionate patriotism of the Swedes as a contrast to the Danes, the novel brings out a lack in the Danish culture under Christian II. It suggests that a certain emotional disposition is required for becoming a good regent, and that temper and emotions thereby comprise an important factor for the aptitude of the regent and subsequently for the well-being of the country subject to that regent. Hauch's *Vilhelm Zabern* explores the interconnection between politics, emotions and nationalism and shows them to be inextricably connected. In Bang's play, the people love King Hans because he is a representative of nationalism and loves the Danish culture. Christian II is less loved, among other things because he is less nationally minded. It is a textbook example of Rosenwein's contention that the national community is an emotional community. The drama explores this idea and shows how the national community is not only comprised by emotions between the individuals in the nation, but also by the existence of an emotional community revolving around love towards the national culture. Both Hauch's and Bang's works reflect on how the political and national community are

developed through emotional relationships and demonstrate the political and national dimensions of emotions. Reading these literary works with a focus on emotions reveals how they critically explore the emotional relation between regent and people.

The issues explored in the literature about Christian II are also pertinent to the time of the literature's composition, and that might provide a suggestion for an explanation as to why the Christian II renditions are published almost exclusively in the 1830s and 1840s. The character of Christian II seems apt as a sounding board for political questions of this period in which it was realised that the absolute monarchy would soon come to its end, such as reconsideration of the monarchical form of government, the relationship between regent and people and the role of the regent. In considering the role of the regent, a great part of the literature surveyed here provides the king with a role as a national, emotional rallying point for the country and sometimes prioritises the king's association with love for and from his people over the more political aspects of his position. There thus seems to happen a nationalisation of the regent in the literature analysed here, in which the emotional aspects of the king appear to be of more importance than for instance his political work. This is in line with Hroch's phase A of nationalism; the literary nationalism that paved the way for the political nationalism, which Møller Jørgensen ascribes to the first decades of nineteenth-century Denmark. As the literary nationalism functioned as a precursor to political nationalism, it might be suggested that the same could have been the case with regard to the nationalisation of the figure of the king in medievalistic literature. As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, Glenthøj has identified a nationalisation of Frederik VI in nineteenth-century Danish culture. The literature surveyed here might be seen as part of the same process, as a part of the nationalising of the actual regent and thereby part of the processes preceding or preparing aspects of the position the king would come to hold in the Danish society after the abolition of the absolute monarchy.

The three pieces of literature analysed in this chapter – Andersen's *Kongen drømmer*, Hauch's *Vilhelm Zabern* and Bang's *Kongen vaagner* – all provide room for contemplations about form of government and the relation between king and people. While the Danish society gradually transitioned from patriotism to nationalism, the literature analysed here appears to prescribe their representation

of a king with a role in the nationalistic ideology, which in theory centres around the people, not the king. It is worth noticing that the nationalism in the works studied does not simply cement the existing society, but is used to introduce new political ideas with an air of historical continuity. The Middle Ages are not simply sought out for admiring past glories or retrieving national roots, but are used to contemplate new ideas pertinent to the Danish nineteenth-century society. The literary works examined here use the fictional Middle Ages to experiment with contemporary political issues. The three works analysed open up for considering the king in terms of an emotional, national community, in which he becomes more of a cultural and not only a political centre – in line with the function the king would come to hold after the transition to constitutional monarchy.

Conclusion

This dissertation has demonstrated fictional literature to be a valuable source for historical insight on the political considerations preceding the Danish abolition of absolute monarchy in 1848. The study of about ten novels, twenty plays and a couple of poems about the most frequently represented medieval regents has shown how literary depictions of medieval regents were used to discuss contemporary political concerns. The dissertation has shown how these literary works treat a number of themes pertinent to concurrent political considerations about absolutism and democratic ideas, particularly republicanism, the right to resist an unfit ruler, the distribution of political agency between king and people and the nationalisation of the figure of the king. Fictional writings about medieval regents have thus appeared to be a fruitful supplement to the historical research about democratisation processes in Denmark, and the study of them have provided new insights on the matter.

By examining the publication data of Danish historical fiction about regents from the period 1789-1848, the dissertation has identified a tendency: The majority of the fictional literature about medieval regents appears to have been published from the 1790s onwards with a considerable increase in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. As the data behind this finding is comprised by a search for titles in literary histories, *Bibliotheca Danica* and *Stikordsregister til den danske Skønlitteratur for Aarene 1841-1908*,

the data foundation is not comprehensive so it cannot be stated firmly that publications of fictional literature about Danish medieval regent are distributed temporally precisely as indicated by the diagram in the introduction, but it can describe a tendency. Based on this tendency, the dissertation has examined a number of literary works about the events in medieval Danish royal history which seem to have been treated most frequently in fictional literature; the reigns of the kings Sweyn Grathe, Canute V and Valdemar the Great; Eric Clipping and Eric Menved; the Interregnum and Valdemar Atterdag; and Christian II.

The dissertation has studied representations of Danish monarchy in the context of the European Age of Revolutions, and with the exception of M.C. Bruun's ode treated in chapter one, none of the literature examined asserts that the monarchy should be abolished. Rather, the literary works consider how the monarchy can accommodate new republican notions about popular political influence and civil rights. The authors studied here take different stances on the issue. Andersens *Kongen drømmer* is one of the more conservative pieces with its insistence that the absolute monarchy is the right form of government for Denmark and with no reflection as to how the people might be included in the political processes. Divided between conservatism and enthusiasm for republican ideas is Ingemann's historical literature. His literature shows a conflict between loyalty to the king and appreciation of republican values. Republican values such as popular freedom and civil rights are emphasised as essential, but at the same time, the historical cycle is troubled by the idea of compromising with the monarchy, even if the regent neglects or suppresses these values. The cycle tries to create a hybrid form which combines the monarchical form of government with republican ideas, but must also recognise that the hybrid is not without its defects, which reflects the overall split between conservatism and progressive ideas in the historical cycle. Most of the literature studied in the dissertation describes a monarchical-repblican hybrid form of government, as does Ingemann, but not all is as loyal towards the monarchy. More towards the radical end of the spectrum is literature as that by Bræmer and Briem. This is the literature which describe the right to resist an unfit regent as legitimate or even as a duty and thereby prioritises the rights and wellbeing of the people over the preservation of the individual regent. Although the literature studied

in the dissertation for the most part has in common that it describes as ideal a hybrid form of government combined by monarchy and republicanism, there are differences as to the specifics of the form and whether conservative or progressive notions are prioritised.

The four chapters of the dissertation have shown how fictional literature about these regents and periods facilitates considerations about contemporary political issues pertaining to absolutism and popular sovereignty by analysing four themes which recur often. Chapter one demonstrated the prevalence of republican thought in two literary pieces from 1797 and showed how republican ideas become fused with a monarchical form of government in Sander's play *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis*. Chapter two demonstrated *ius resistendi* to be a prevalent theme in the literature examined and mapped out the different stances towards the right to resist an unfit ruler found in the fictional literature. Chapter three showed how the distribution of political agency between king and people is addressed in the fictional literature analysed, and how the represented people is often endowed with significantly more political agency than was allotted to the Danish people in the first half of the nineteenth century. The fourth and final chapter showed how the figure of the king becomes nationalised in fictional literature and is transferred from the patriotic to the national context.

The literature's preoccupation with subjects associated to contemporary political issues may provide an explanation as to why the literary representations of medieval regents appear in the periods indicated by the diagram in the introduction; that they are approximately concurrent with rises in debate about forms of government in Denmark. It thus seems that medievalistic literature provided an outlet for political contemplation in a time in which public discussion about the monarchy and form of government was restricted and infringements severely punished. This shows that some of the Danish literature from the Romantic period to a significant extent was poltically oriented. That Romatic literature could be political is not a new notion, but there is a tendency to focus on the cultural national aspects of the Danish Romantic literature and overlook some of the political aspects (Nygaard 2011: 419). The Danish Romantic literature is immensely occupied with the search for a uniting national past and national spirit and it definitely makes sense to employ the term national Romanticism in many cases, but this dissertation has shown

that the fictional literature of the period is also highly interested in politics. Even significantly nationally oriented works have shown themselves to be critically exploring political issues and conflicting ideas about the national. The Danish Romantic literature is not only about national unification, but also engages with national division and contemporary political issues.

If literature is understood as a supplement to or replacement for public debate because of de facto censorship, potential differences between literature published before and after the Decree of the Liberty of the Press of 1799 was put in effect must be addressed, as this literature was published under significantly different conditions. On the face of it, there are no significant differences in the medievalism of the literature published in the two different periods; both before and after 1799, literature is used for contemplating concurrent political circumstances. There is, however, the difference that the 1790s literature primarily portrays Niels Ebbensen, which might indicate that there was more interest in Niels Ebbesen as a freedom fighter than in discussing the monarchical structure of government. All the Niels Ebbesen renditions from the 1790s are celebrations of freedom, not least the two editions of *Hædersminde over Jyden Niels Ebbesen* edited by Øst, and only some of them address form of government, as the ones studied here. Most of the literature about the other kings studied in this dissertation is published in the nineteenth century. This literature is often about problematic aspects of a king, which sometimes showcases problematic aspects of the monarchical form of government as well. There thus seems to be a slight tendency that the medievalistic literature of the 1790s celebrates freedom while that from the nineteenth century also depicts problems inherent to the absolute form of government.

The function of medievalism

A pertinent question when studying medievalism is why the authors turned to the Middle Ages as the setting for their political contemplations and what the medieval regents represented to them that regents from other historical periods might not. Part of the answer is surely found in the broad fascination with the Middle Ages which permeated the culture in Denmark and the rest of Europe in

the nineteenth century. The fascination with Scott's historical novels and the popularity of Ingemann's historical literature is also a likely contributory factor to the surge in medievalistic literature in Denmark in the nineteenth century. But, as the analyses in this dissertation have shown, an answer might also be found in the perception of the Danish Middle Ages as a period in which the original peasants' freedom came under pressure. This notion is described in a number of historical works and has particularly been established by Allens' *Haandbog i Fædrelandets Historie med stadigt Henblik paa Folkets og Statens indre Udvikling*, the predominant history of Denmark in this period (Paludan 1980: 5). Allen describes the idea that the people – defined as the burghers and peasants – in the ancient times possessed freedom consisting in participation in royal elections, law-making, administration of justice, tax practice and other important civil rights (Allen 1840: 239). But, from the transition to Christianity and onwards through the Middle Ages, the peasantry was gradually excluded from its former political rights by a growing nobility and the upper portion of the clergy (Allen 1840: 243–244). The Catholic clergy fell by the reformation, but the aristocracy still improved its position. According to Allen's interpretation of Danish history, the development changed in 1660 when the new Protestant clergy, who also suffered under the aristocratic dominion, united with the people and secured their position by supporting the power of the king through the institution of absolutism. Allens's next milestone in the history of the freedom of the Danish people is 1788 with the agrarian reforms, and the provisional culmination of this history is 1831 with the establishment of the Assemblies of the Estates of the Realm, which he interprets as the reestablishment of popular freedom (Paludan 1980: 5–8).

Allen's historical narrative is in line with what can be observed in the literature analysed here; that the ancient times appear as a golden age for popular freedom and that this freedom came under pressure during the Middle Ages. In the literature dealt with in this dissertation, there are multiple examples of the ancient times being represented as superior to the Middle Ages. Towards the end of the first version of Sander's *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis*, King Valdemar Atterdag arrives at Nørreriis searching for Niels Ebbesen exclaiming that: "I long to see a great man with the mark of antiquity" (Sander

1798: 251).[306] That the freedom fighter is associated with Antiquity rather than the Middle Ages in which he lives demonstrates the link between freedom and antiquity. Boye's *Erik den Syvende*, the play in which Eric Clipping is held unaware of the poor conditions of the people by the nobility and 'awakens' to make amends, also represents Antiquity as superior to the Middle Ages with respect to political power. It appears, for instance, in this line of Thorbern's:

> Eric's mind is not hardened; only drowsy
> And it is made listless by these mean grass snakes,
> Which hiss their yes to each of his words
> And sing hymns about each of his acts,
> Whether it is worthy of the king or not.
> The frank truth without false trills
> Has possibly not yet sung to him
> Its warriors' ballad about the power of the past,
> About Frotho and Canute; and likened that
> With the powerlessness of these times
> (Boye 1851: 75).[307]

The conditions at court in the Middle Ages is corrupted compared to the ancient times, and the reigns of Frotho and Canute are held as ideals to strive for in the Middle Ages.[308] The well-functioning reigns of former times are achievable again if the king 'wakes up' and withstands the workings of the corrupt nobility. In Oehlenschläger's *Eric Clipping*, ancient times are also represented as freer and superior to the Middle Ages. Marshal Stig considers the pagan ancestors to have been free and believes that Christianity has not made the Danes more human. Previously, the Danes were worthy of praise and honour, but now they are shrunken and the princes "fight over the remnants as hungry ravens | On the field around a carcass" (Oehlenschläger 1853: 410).[309] The king objects to Stig's musings that he does not wish

[306] "Jeg længes efter at see en stor Mand med Oldtidens Præg"

[307] "Forhærdet er ei Eriks Sind; kun døsigt | Og sløvt har disse lede Snoge gjort det, | Der hvisle deres Ja til hvert hans Ord, | Og synge Hymner om enhver hans Gjerning, | Den være Kongen værdig, eller ikke. | Den djærve Sandhed uden falske Triller | Har muligt endnu aldrig sunget ham | Sin Kæmpevise for om Fortids Kraft, | Om Frode og om Knud; og lignet hiin | Med disse Tiders Vanmagt"

[308] Frotho must here refer to an ancient king, but as there are a number of ancient kings by that name, it is unclear exactly which one is referred to here. Canute might be Canute the Great (1018-1035).

[309] "slaaes om Stumperne, som sultne Ravne | Paa Marken om et Aadsel"

for the thrall times to return, but Stig protests that the peasant is now more a thrall than before (Oehlenschläger 1853: 410). Oehlenschläger's Marshal Stig's statement about the ancient ancestors as free is quite descriptive for the literature examined here. The Middle Ages are often depicted as a time in which popular freedom was under pressure and the people fought for its rights to elect the regent and have the country run according to a system of justice.

The lack of freedom for the people in the Middle Ages is to a wide degree also described in the form of antagonising of the nobility. The aristocracy is often portrayed as a threat against the alliance between the king and the people. The Middle Ages are represented as a time in which the relationship between king and people came under pressure and the people had to fight for their societal rights. The Middle Ages thus provided some apt parallels to the Age of Revolution and its issues about form of government, civil rights and the role of the regent and people in society.

The medievalistic regents

It appears from the list of literature in the appendix that it was not simply the medieval regents who were of interest to the Danish writers between the late eighteenth century and the mid-nineteenth century. Four clusters of royal Danish history in particular appealed to them; stories about Sweyn Grathe, Canute V and Valdemar the Great; Eric Clipping and Eric Menved; the Interregnum and Valdemar Atterdag; and Christian II. That of course prompts the question of why exactly these kings or events in royal history appealed to the imagination of these writers. The dissertation has shown a number of themes associated with events occurring during the reigns of these kings and the Interregnum to have attracted the attention of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century authors. Resistance against unfit rulers is frequently addressed in the literature examined here, where in particular the stories of the regicides of Eric Clipping and Sweyn Grathe and the murder of Count Gerhard are employed to consider the legitimacy of different kinds of resistance. In line with this theme, kings deprived of their royal power is also an often explored subject. It is of course inherent in the narratives about regicide, but is also

touched upon more broadly in relation to the Interregnum and with respect to Christian II's dethronement and imprisonment.

Christian II in particular, but also the other kings, are also used to contemplate the nature of the relationship between the regent and the people. Christian II's legacy as a king of the people, or of the citizens or peasants, makes his figure particularly apt for considering the particulars of the relation between king and people. But, as much as the literature depicts well-functioning relationships between ruler and subject, it depicts challenged relations as well. All the kings and the Interregnum dealt with here have in common that their reign, and the period of the Interregnum, comprise a time in which the relationship between the ruler and the subjects is strained: Eric Clipping and Sweyn Grathe are unfit kings whose rules pose a threat to the political stability; the Interregnum is caused by bad kingship and a people being subject to the wrong ruler; and although Christian II works to improve the conditions for the common people, his methods cause the division of the country. The events in Danish royal history, which in particularly have been recreated by the late eighteenth century and nineteenth century Danish writers, thus have in common that they are problematic passages in Danish history. They are instances which demonstrate the essentiality of the bond between regent and people. This is expressed in negative terms through regicide, popular rebellion and the nobility as an opposing force. And it is expressed in positive terms through emphasis on love between regent and people, kings who 'awaken' to assume their royal duties and divisions of political power between regent and people.

Fictional literature as a historical source

Fictional literature provides a platform for examining political issues from different angles. It affords a different way of relating to a political dilemma than do for instance political theory or contributions to public debate. Fictional literature cannot be used as a direct source to history, but its fictionalisation can be studied to gain insight into considerations about contemporary conditions, as it has been done here, where it has been studied how literature was used for examining the foundations of royal power. As the examples of literature treated in this dissertation have shown, literature may unfold and dissect

ideas proposed by theory or public conversation, but it holds the privilege of not having to provide a conclusion or a clear statement.

While literature definitely can serve conclusions, I think it is quite uncontroversial to claim that political literature is most interesting when it does not simply advance a particular political standpoint, but engages in political dilemmas and exposes the nuances of conflicting interests. As literary historian Jakob Ladegaard has pointed out: "Good political literature is more than a mouthpiece for an author's opinions. Its merits lie not in unambiguous messages, but in giving form to the inner connections and hidden conflicts in the events and discourses of the time – and in leading them in new directions" (Ladegaard 2013: 10–11).[310] Literature has at its disposal a number of means to unfold such conflicts, it may employ different points of view, focalisation, dialogue, et cetera, which may effectively outline different stances to an issue. A particular forte is literature's capacity to create an emotional engagement between fictional characters and the reader or audience. Literature and drama encourage the receiver to identify with the characters, and through this act of empathy, literature may facilitate understanding for the characters, their position, decisions and opinions. Literature thus possesses an array of means by which to further insight into an issue and thereby complement other genres such as theoretical writings or public discussion.

Literature holds a privileged position as a historical source as it may facilitate political contemplations in all its facets and from different angels without having to take a stance. The medieval setting of medievalistic literature further provides it with a distance to contemporary times which probably lets it address more charged subjects such as for instance *ius resistendi* than could be treated publicly under the restrictions of the freedom of the press. Literature therefore provides not sinply a supplement to historical writing, but also opens for new perspectives. For instance, the interest for *ius resistendi* that was analysed in chapter two demonstrates an interest in resisting the monarch, which is not reflected in most historical research about the period. In this way, literary research can provide

[310] "God politisk litteratur er mere end et talerør for en forfatters meninger. Dets fortjeneste ligger ikke i entydige budskaber, men i at give form til de indre sammenhænge og skjulte konflikter i tidens begivenheder og diskurser – og føre dem i nye retninger"

questions for historical research, as whether there might have been more interest in resistance than assumed so far. The dissertation has thus discovered some discussion about royal power, which can be used for revisiting the historical research about the period with new questions.

The dissertation also opens for a number of other perspectives for future research. It would be interesting to examine whether the literary discusssions covered in this dissertation had an influence on the political debates and development in the period. The Danish medievalistisc literature published between 1789 and 1848 clearly engages with contemporary political issues, but it would be interesting to uncover how much effect literature had the other way and whether traces can be found of its influence on contemporary political debate. Of course, it would also be apt to study the medievalistic literature about regents published after 1848 in order to study how it reacts to the abolition of the absolute monarchy. As the literature from the last decades of absolutism engages thouroughly with the Danish form of government, it is reasonable to assume that the literature written after absolutism might engage with it as well, and maybe in a different manner. There might be some interesting research waiting to be performed on this material.

This dissertation has focused on the political discussion in the text of fictional literature, but many of the texts analysed have been dramas and therefore has many other aspects to it than only their text. Another future perspective for research would be to revisit the literature treated in this dissertation and consider not only the content of the texts, but also their genre as well. Particularly with respect to theatre, forms of representations could be studied further, and could the staging, circumstances around performance, conditions regarding censorship et cetera.

Another perspective opened for in this dissertation, which could be explored further, is the concept of the people. This dissertation has primarily focused on the relationship between the estates, particularly between people and king, but more research could be made with regard to the representation of the people itself. How sincere is the occupation with the conditions of the peasants, how is the people constructed politically and how does the representation of 'real' people differ from the representation of the idea of the people? Such questions

could be put to the material comprising the foundation of this dissertation.

The dissertation has studied considerations about royal power in Danish literature from the European Age of Revolutions by examining depictions of medieval regents. Of course, contributions to the debate about the absolute monarchy might be found in all kinds of literature, not only in that depicting regents. The choice to focus on representations of a few selected medieval kings in this dissertation was made in order to fit the scope of this dissertation. But, I am convinced that the research begun here could be broadened significantly by examining the remaining medievalistic literature about regents and other kinds of literature published during the period. The study of representations of medieval kings has simply been somewhere to begin examining considerations about form of government in Danish literature published during the European Age of Revolutions in a broader view. It is my hope that this research will be continued and that the political implications of Danish pre-Romantic and Romantic literature with respect to considerations about royal power will be further uncovered by future research.

The dissertation has studied the role of medievalistic literature with respect to the debate on the Danish form of government leading up to the abolition of the absolute monarchy in 1848. It has shown how medievalistic literature has facilitated contemplations on political issues pertinent to this debate such as republicanism, *ius resistendi*, distribution of political agency and nationalisation of the role of the regent. The literature studied here is rather homogeneous with regard to its conception of the ideal form of government for the Danish society. Most of the literature portrays as ideal a form of government that combines monarchy and republicanism. The fictional literature thus describes governmental forms similar to constitutional monarchy several years before it was realised with the constitution of 1849. Literature may thus be conceived of as a precursor to the institution of constitutional monarchy as it facilitated contemplations of the ideas and discussions lying behind the constitution. Fictional literature has thus shown itself to be an essential historical source for understanding the Danish transition from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy in all its facets.

Bibliography

Albeck, Gustav, Oluf Friis and Peter P. Rohde. 1967. *Dansk litteratur historie. Bind 2. Fra Oehlenschläger til Kierkegaard*. Politikens forlag.

Albrectsen, Esben. 2014. "Erik 6. Menved". *Den Store Danske*. November 5, 2014 https://denstoredanske.lex.dk/Erik_6._Menved (accessed 5 February 2021).

Allen, Carl Ferdinand. 1840. *Haandbog i Fædrelandets Historie med stadigt Henblik paa Folkets og Statens indre Udvikling*. Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel.

Amdisen, Asser. 2012. "Johann Friedrich Struensee, 1737-1772". *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. https://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/johann-friedrich-struensee/ (accessed 24 March 2019).

Andersen, Anette Storli. 2015. "Theatre, Patriotism, and Politics in Denmark-Norway, 1772-1814". In: Ellen Krefting, Aina Nøding and Mona Ringvej (eds.). *Eighteenth-Century Periodicals as Agents of Change. Perspectives on Northern Enlightenment*. Leiden and Boston: Brill.

Andersen, Hans Christian. 1844. *Kongen drømmer. Originalt romantisk Drama i een Act*. Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel.

Anderson, Benedict. 2016. *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London and New York: Verso.

Aschengreen, Erik. 1980. "Mit egentlige kald. Idéindhold og iscenesættelse hos Bournonville". In: Erik Aschengreen, Marianne Hallar and Jørgen Heiner (eds.). *Perspektiv på Bournonville*. Copenhagen: Nyt Nordisk Forlag Arnold Busck.

Aschengreen, Erik. 1992. "Dance is Joy: August Bournonville and the Romantic Ballet". *Nordic Theatre Studies*, 49–59.

Auken, Sune, Knud Michelsen, Marie-Louise Svane, Isak Winkel Holm and Klaus P. Mortensen. 2008. *Dansk litteraturs historie. Bind 2. 1800-1870*. Denmark: Gyldendal.

Auring, Steffen, Søren Baggesen, Finn Hauberg Mortensen, Søren Petersen, Marie-Louise Svane, Erik Svendsen, Poul Aaby Sørensen, Jørgen Vogelius and Martin Zerlang. 1984. *Dansk*

litteraturhistorie. Bind 5: Borgerlig enhedskultur 1807-48. Copenhagen: Gyldendal.

Baden, Jacob. 1798. "IV. Vigtige danske Skrifter". *Kiøbenhavns Universitets-Journal*, 6, 171–178.

Bagge, Sverre. 2013. "Oehlenschlaeger and Ibsen: National Reival in Drama and History in Denmark and Norway c. 1800-1860". In: Patrick J. Geary and Gábor Klaniczay (eds.). *Manufacturing Middle Ages. Entangled History of Medievalism in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Leiden, Boston: Brill, 71–88.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1984. *Rabelais and his World*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Bang, Balthasar. 1826. *Caprifolier. Første Deel*. Copenhagen: Forfatterens Forlag hos Bernh. Schlesinger.

Billeskov Jansen, F.J. and Gustav Albeck. 1976. *Dansk litteratur historie. Bind 2: Fra Ludvig Holberg til Carsten Hauch*. Copenhagen: Politikens Forlag.

Birklund Andersen, Ole. 1996. *Den faktiske sandheds poesi. Studier i historieromanen i første halvdel af det 19. århundrede*. England: Aarhus Universitetsforlag.

Bisgaard, Lars. 2017. "The Historians' Portrait of Christian II". In Hanne Kolind Poulsen and Lars Bisgaard: *Pictures and Power. The Visual Politics of Christian II*. Odder: Narayana Press.

Blandhol, Sverre. 2014. "Kritikkens forutsetning: Kampen om trykkefriheten 1797-1801". In: Eivind Tjønneland (ed.). *Kritikk før 1814. 1700-tallets politiske og litterære offentlighet*. Sweden: Dreyers forlag.

Blödorn, Andreas. 2004. *Zwischen den Sprachen. Modelle transkultureller Litteratur bei Christian Levin Sander und Adam Oehlenschläger*. Göttingen: Vandelhoeck & Ruprecht.

Bonderup, Gerda. 2012. "Enevælden 1660-1849". *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. http://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/enevaelden/ (accessed 16 May 2018).

Bournonville, August. 1843. *Erik Menveds Barndom*. Copenhagen: J.H. Schubothes Boghandling.

Bournonville, August. 1848. *Mit Theaterliv 1*. Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel.

Bournonville, August. 1920. *Valdemar*. Copenhagen: Gyldendal.

Boye, Caspar Johannes. 1850. *Udvalgte og samlede poetiske Skrifter af C.J. Boye. Andet Bind*. Copenhagen: Universitetsboghandler Andr. Fred. Høst.

Boye, Caspar Johannes. 1851. *Udvalgte og samlede poetiske Skrifter af C.J. Boye. Tredie Bind*. Copenhagen: Universitetsboghandler Andr. Fred. Høst.

Bræmer, Ferdinand. 1831. *Valdemar Atterdag. En historisk Roman.* Copenhagen: B.J. Bendixen.

Bræmer, Otto Ferdinand. 1828. *Slaget paa Grathehede. En original historisk Roman*. Copenhagen: Forfatterens Forlag i S.L. Møllers Bogtrykkeri.

Bredal, Bjørn. 2011. *Manden der ville vise verden. Malthe Conrad Bruun & Malte-Brun*. Denmark: Gyldendal.

Bregnsbo, Michael. 2012. "Christian 7., 1749-1808". *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. http://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/christian-7-1749-1808/ (accessed 16 May 2018).

Brennan, Timothy. 1990. "The National Longing for Form". In: Homi K. Bhabha (ed.). *Nation and Narration*. London: Routledge, 44–70.

Briem, Johan Gunløg Gunløgsen. 1840. *Ridder Niels Ebbesen. Optrin fra Thronfølgetvisten i Danmark 1340*. Randers: Fr. Smith.

Bruun, Malthe Conrad. 1797. "Niels Ebbesen. Tyrandræberen. En Ode". *Minerva*, 72-74.

Bruun, Thomas Christopher. 1816. *Erik Glipping. Sørgespil i fem Acter*. Copenhagen: Forfatterens Forlag hos C. Græbe.

Busck, Steen. 2012. "Udenrigshandel før 1848". *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. http://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/udenrigshandel-foer-1848/ (accessed 16 May 2018).

Bøgh, Anders. 2009a. "Borgerkrigsperioden 1131-1157". *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. https://danmarkshistorien.dk/perioder/hoej middelalderen-ca-1050-1340/borgerkrigsperioden-1131-57/ (accessed 5 January 2021).

Bøgh, Anders. 2009b. "Højmiddelalderen, ca. 1050-1340". *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. http://danmarkshistorien.dk/perioder/hoej middelalderen-ca-1050-1340/ (accessed 27 August 2019).

Bøgh, Anders. 2009c. "Senmiddelalderen, 1340-1536". *Danmarkshistorien.dk*.

http://danmarkshistorien.dk/perioder/senmiddelalderen-1340-1536/ (accessed 27 August 2019).

Bøgh, Anders. 2012a. "Håndfæstning". *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. https://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/haandfaestning/ (accessed 26 October 2018).

Bøgh, Anders. 2012b. "Danehof". *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. https://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/danehof/ (accessed 17 April 2019).

Bøgh, Anders. 2016. "Erik 5. Klipping, 1249-1286". *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. https://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/erik-5-klipping-1249-1286/ (accessed 5 January 2021).

Bøgh, Anders and Doron Haahr. 2012. "Kalmarunionen, 1397-1523". *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. https://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/kalmarunionen-1397-1523/ (accessed 9 December 2021).

Böss, Michael. 2014. "Nationalhistorie efter modernismen. Folkebegrebet i lyset af Europas store fortællinger". *K&K - Kultur & Klasse*, 159–174.

Carstensen, Martin Ø. 2012. "Stænderforsamlingerne 1834-1848". *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. http://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/staenderforsamlingerne-1834-1848/ (accessed 16 May 2018).

Chandler, Alice. 1971. *A Dream of Order. The Medieval Ideal in Nineteenth-Century English Literature*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Connolly, Patrick J. n.d. "John Locke (1632-1704)". *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. https://iep.utm.edu/locke/#H4 (accessed 30 April 2021).

Conrad, Flemming. 1996. *Smagen og det nationale. Studier i dansk litteraturhistorieskrivning 1800-1861*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanums Forlag.

Dahl, Christian. 2010. *Tragedie og bystat. Om fællesskab og konflikt i Athens dramatiske kultur*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanums Forlag.

Damsholt, Tine. 2000. *Fædrelandskærlighed og borgerdyd*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanums Forlag.

Damsholt, Tine. 2002. “Om begrebet ‘folk’”. In: Bjarne Stoklund (ed.). *Kulturens nationalisering. Et etnologisk perspektiv på det nationale*. Gylling: Museum Tusculanums Forlag, 17–47.

Damsholt, Torben. 1972. “De gode kejsere og den oplyste enevælde”. In: Johny Leisner, Lorenz Rerup and Vagn Skovgaard-Petersen (eds.). *Festskrift til Povl Bagge. På halvfjerdsårsdagen 30. November 1972*. Copenhagen: Den Danske Historiske Forening, 1–32.

D’Arcens, Louise. 2016. *The Cambridge Companion to Medievalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dumreicher, Carl. 1965. *Niels Ebbesen i dansk digtning*. Randers, Denmark.

Dybdahl, Peder. 1826. *Marsk Stig eller Feldmarskalk Stig Andersen Hvides Levnetsbeskrivelse. En sandfærdig Historie*. Thisted: J.C. Lund.

Dzeko, Nedim, Lasse Andersen and Troels Engelbrecht. 2011. “Niels Ebbesen, ca. 1300-1340”. *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. https://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/niels-ebbesen-ca-1300-1340/ (accessed 23 April 2019).

Eco, Umberto. 1998. *Faith in Fakes. Travels in Hyperreality*. United Kingdom: Vintage.

Erslew, Thomas Hansen. 1853. *Almindeligt Forfatter-Lexicon for Kongeriget Danmark med tilhørende Bilande fra 1814 til 1840. Tredje Bind S-Ø*. Copenhagen: Forlagsforeningens Forlag.

Fafner, Jørgen. 1994. *Dansk vershistorie 1. Fra kunstpoesi til lyrisk frigørelse*. Dansk Verskunst, II, 1. Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzels Forlag.

Feilla, Cecilia. 2016. *The Sentimental Theater of the French Revolution*. London and New York: Routledge.

Fjord Jensen, Johan, Morten Møller, Toni Nielsen and Jørgen Stigel. 1983. *Dansk litteraturhistorie 4. Patriotismens tid 1746-1807*. København: Gyldendal.

Frevert, Ute and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt. 2005. *Neue Politikgeschichte. Perspektiven einer historischen Politikforschung*. Frankfurt am Main; New York: Campus.

Friend, Celeste. n.d. “Social Contract Theory”. *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. https://iep.utm.edu/soc-cont/ (accessed 30 April 2021).

Fædrelandet. 1843, January 26.

Galster, Kjeld. 1931. "Dyveke og Hans Faaborg i 'Vilhelm Zabern'". *Soraner-Bladet* 16: 41–44.

Gentry, Francis G. and Ulrich Müller. 1991. "The Reception of the Middle Ages in Germany. An Overview". *Studies in Medievalism* III, 399–415.

Glenthøj, Rasmus. 2012. *Skilsmissen. Dansk og norsk identitet før og efter 1814*. Denmark: Syddansk Universitetsforlag.

Glenthøj, Rasmus. 2013. "Enevælde under afvikling. Schlegel og tidens skiftende opfattelse af kongemagt og konstitution". In: Ola Mestad (ed.). *Frihetens forskole. Professor Schlegel og eidsvollmennenes læretid i København*. Denmark: Pax Forlag, 68–91.

"Gnome". n.d. *Britannica*. https://www.britannica.com/art/gnome (accessed 15 June 2021).

Grand, Karina Lykke, Lise Pennington and Anne Mette Thomsen. 2013. "Introduktion til dansk guldalder/Introduction to the Danish Golden Age". In: Karina Lykke Grand, Lise Pennington and Anne Mette Thomsen (eds.). *Guld. Skatte fra den danske guldalder / Gold. Treasures from the Danish Golden Age*. Aarhus: Systime, 68–93.

Groot, Jerome de. 2010. *The Historical Novel*. London and New York: Routledge.

Grosen Jørgensen, Lea. 2019a. "Reconstructing the Past and the Poet: Grundtvig and the Anglo-Saxon Phoenix". *Grundtvig-Selskabet 2018*, 17–35.

Grosen Jørgensen, Lea. 2020. "Skjalde og skjaldskab. En komparativ analyse af den norrøne skjald hos Adam Oehlenschläger og N.F.S. Grundtvig". Aarhus: Aarhus University.

Grosen Jørgensen, Lea. 2019b. "Vikingens udødelig sang: En sammenligning af norrøne digte og helteportrætter i *Vikings* (2013-) og Oehlenschlägers 'Regnar Lodbrok' (1849)". *Passage*, 81, 55–70.

"Guldalderen. 1800-1850". n.d. *The National Gallery of Denmark*. https://www.smk.dk/article/guldalderen/ (accessed 30 April 2021).

Hamnett, Brian. 2011. *The Historical Novel in Nineteenth-Century Europe. Representations of Reality in Hstory and Fiction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hansen, Liv Luna Hjeronymus, Helle Nissen Gregersen and Nanna Marie Jensen. 2011. "Trykkefrihed, 1750-1849". *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. https://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/trykkefrihed-1750-1849/ (accessed 23 April 2021).

Hauch, Carsten. 1944. *Vilhelm Zabern. En Autobiografi fra Christian den Andens Tid*. Copenhagen: Det Danske Forlag.

Hermann, Pernille. 2019. "Middelalderisme og erindring - Oehlenschläger og den nordiske mytologi". *Slagmark. Tidsskrift for Idéhistorie*, 79, 47–62.

Hertz, Henrik. 1848. *Valdemar Atterdag*. Copenhagen: Universitetsboghandler C.A. Reitzel.

Hjort Møller, Andreas. 2019a. "Bards, Ballads, and Barbarians in Jena: Germanic Medievalism in the Early Works of Friedrich Schlegel". *Romantik: Journal for the Study of Romanticisms* 8, 13–34.

Hjort Møller, Andreas. 2019b. "Gravhøjen åbnes: Fra rokoko-middelalderisme i Johann Elias Schlegels *Canut* til vikinge-romantik i Johannes Ewalds *Rolf Krage*". *Passage*, 81, 121–135.

Hollard Nielsen, Johan Moses Georg. 1847-1848. *Ridder Niels Ebbesen, Danmarks Befrier. En historisk romantisk Skildring fra Middelalderen*. Copenhagen: Jordans Forlag.

Holm, Edvard. 1888. *Den offentlige Mening og Statsmagten i den dansk-norske Stat i Slutningen af det 18de Aarhundrede (1784-1799)*. Copenhagen: J.H. Schultz.

Holst, Wilhelm. 1834. *Christian den Anden. Drama i 5 Acter*. Copenhagen: Universitetsboghandler C.A. Reitzels Forlag.

Horstbøll, Henrik. 1987. "Enevælde, opinion og opposition: En diskussion af historisk kritik og politisk krise i Danmark i slutningen af 1700-tallet". *Historie* 17, 35–53.

Horstbøll, Henrik. 1988. *Natural Jurisprudence, Discourses of Improvement and the Absolutist State. Arbejdspapirer*. Aarhus: Center for Kulturforskning.

Horstbøll, Henrik. 1989. "Samfundsreform og nation 1750-1890". In: Henrik Horstbøll, John T. Lauridsen and Niels Kayser Nielsen (eds.). *Danmarks historie 2. Fra 1750 til 1945*. Copenhagen: Gjellerup & Gad, 9–73.

Horstbøll, Henrik. 2003. "Mellem despoti og demokrati. Den schweiziske forbindelse: Roger, Mallet og Reverdil om den danske

enevælde". *Fund og forskning i Det Kongelige Biblioteks samlinger*, 42, 153–176.

Horstbøll, Henrik and Uffe Østergård. 1989. *Reform og revolution. Den franske revolution og den danske vej. Arbejdspapirer*. Aarhus: Center for Kulturforskning.

Hroch, Miroslav. 1985. *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe. A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composititon of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Iddeng, Jon W. 2005. "Litteratur som historisk kilde". *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 84, 430–452.

Ingemann, Bernhard Severin. 1857. *Erik Menveds Barndom*. Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzels Bo og Arvinger.

Ingemann, Bernhard Severin. 1859. *Prinds Otto af Danmark og hans Samtid*. Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzels Forlag.

Ingemann, Bernhard Severin. 1913. *Ingemanns historiske Digte. National-Udgave. Valdemar den Store og hans Mænd. Dronning Margrete*. Copenhagen: Hus og Hjems Forlag.

Jensen, Nanna Marie. 2011. "Trykkefrihedsdebatten 1834-1835". *Danmarkshistorien.dk* https://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/trykkefrihedsdebatten-1834-35/ (accessed 31 March 2021).

Jensen, Nanna Marie. 2012. "Censur i Danmark fra 1750-1849". *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. http://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/censur-i-danmark-fra-1750-til-1849/ (accessed 16 May 2018).

Jensen, Niels. 2018. "Det Kongelige Teaters Repetoire 1748-1975. Enkelte titler. Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis". *Dansk forfatterleksikon*. http://danskforfatterleksikon.dk/1850t/tnr1789.htm (accessed 17 April 2019).

Jensen, Niels. 2019. "August Bournonville (1805-1879)". *Dansk forfatterleksikon*. http://danskforfatterleksikon.dk/1850bib/BAntonAugustBournonville.htm#t1845_1 (accessed 9 December 2021).

Jensen, Niels. 2020a. "Ole Bang, f. 1788". *Dansk forfatterleksikon*. https://danskforfatterleksikon.dk/1850bib/BOleBangf1788.htm (accessed 13 January 2021).

Jensen, Niels. 2020b. "Erik den Syvende, Konge af Danmark. Sørgespil i 5 Akter af C.J. Boye". *Dansk forfatterleksikon*.

https://danskforfatterleksikon.dk/1850t/tnr615.htm (accessed 21 May 2021).

Jensen, Niels. 2020c. "Erik Menveds Barndom". *Dansk forfatterleksikon*. http://www.danskforfatterleksikon.dk/1850t/tnr619.htm (accessed 1 May 2021).

Jensen, Niels. 2020d. "Kongen drømmer. Romantisk drama i 1 Akt af H.C. Andersen, Musiken af H. Rung". *Dansk forfatterleksikon*. http://danskforfatterleksikon.dk/1850t/tnr1355.htm (accessed 4 March 2021).

Juelstorp, Søren. 1992. "Publikum og den politiske litteratur i Danmark i 1830'erne". *Historiske meddelelser om København*, 109–131.

Jürgensen, Knud Arne. 1997a. *The Bournonville Tradition. The First Fifty Years, 1829-1879. Volume I: A Documentary Study*. London: Dance Books.

Jürgensen, Knud Arne. 1997b. *The Bournonville Tradition. The First Fifty Years, 1829-1879. Volume II: An Annotated Bibliography of the Choreography and the Music, the Chronology, the Performing History, and the Sources*. London: Dance Books.

Jürgensen, Knud Arne and Ann Hutchinson Guest. 1990. *The Bournonville Heritage. A Choreographic Record 1829-1875*. London: Dance Books.

Jørgensen, Claus Møller. 2014. "Politik og kulturhistorie 1800-1850". In: Mikael Kristian Hansen (ed.). *Emilius Bærentzen: En portrætkunstner i guldalderens Danmark*. Copenhagen: Teatermuseet i Hofteatret, 83–103.

Jørgensen, Claus Møller. 2016. "Året 1848 og overgangen fra enevælde til folkestyre". *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. https://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/1848/ (accessed 3 September 2021).

Jørgensen, Claus Møller. 2018. "National tænkning i kongeriget Danmark 1802-1964". Powerpoint presentation presented at the seminar "Nationalisme og national identitet i 1800-tallets Danmark" [Nationalism and national identity in nineteenth century Denmark], Aarhus University, March 15.

Jørgensen, Claus Møller. 2020. "Revolution, grundlov, forfatningskamp og massepolitik". *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. https://danmarkshistorien.dk/ooc/lektion-5-fra-enevaeldig-helstat-til-nationalstat-1814-1914/3-revolution-grundlov-forfatningskamp-og-massepolitik/ (accessed 3 September 2021).

Jørgensen, Harald. 1944. *Trykkefrihedsspørgsmaalet i Danmark 1799-1848. Et Bidrag til en Karakteristik af den danske Enevælde i Frederik VI's og Christian VIII's Tid*. Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard.

Kantorowicz, Ernst H. 1997. *The King's Two Bodies. A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*. Princeton, New Jersey; Chichester, West Sussex: Princeton University Press.

Kayser Nielsen, Niels. 2010. *Historiens forvandlinger. Historiebrug fra monumenter til oplevelsesøkonomi*. Denmark: Aarhus Universitetsforlag.

Kjærulff, Berit. 2019. "Frihed og Kong Valdemar! Politisk middelalderisme i Levin Christian Sanders *Niels Ebbesen af Nörreriis* (1797) og Malthe Conrad Bruuns "Niels Ebbesen. Tyrandræberen" (1797)". *Slagmark. Tidsskrift for Idéhistorie*, 79, 149–165.

Kjøbenhavnsposten. 1843, January 13.

Krag, Claus. 2009. "Einar Eindridesson Tambarskjelve". *Norsk Biografisk Leksikon*. https://nbl.snl.no/Einar_Eindridesson_Tambarskjelve (accessed 6 May 2021).

Ladegaard, Jakob. 2013. *Bogen og folket. Den romantiske litteraturs politik*. Denmark: Aarhus Universitetsforlag.

Larsen, Svend Erik. 2010. "Middelalderen som kulturel erindring". In: Ole Høiris and Per Ingesman (eds.). *Middelalderens verden. Verdensbilledet, tænkningen, rummet og religionen*. Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag.

Lindenberger, Herbert. 1975. *Historical Drama. The Relation of Literature and Reality*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Locke, John. 1967. *Two Treatises of Government. A Critical Edition with an Introduction and Apparatur Criticus*. Peter Laslett (ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lønvig, Jakob Zoffmann. 2012. "Det stockholmske blodbad 1520". *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. https://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/det-stockholmske-blodbad-1520/ (accessed 5 January 2021).

Lukacs, Georg. 1963. *The Historical Novel*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Lund, Niels. 2019a. "Knud 5. Magnussen, død 1157". *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. https://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-

kilder/vis/materiale/knud-5-magnussen-1157/ (accessed 5 January 2021).

Lund, Niels. 2019b. "Svend Grathe, død 1157". *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. https://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/svend-grathe-1157/ (accessed 5 January 2021).

Luther, Martin. 1964. "Om lydighed mod statsmagten". In: Torben Christensen (ed.). *Luthers skrifter i udvalg bind IV. Evangelium og samfundsliv*. Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gads forlag. 158–210.

"Magna Carta: Parallel Text". n.d. *Magna Carta and Modern Australia*. https://magnacarta.moadoph.gov.au/parallel-text/ (accessed 15 June 2021).

Marsk Stig. Tragoedie i fem Acter. 1834. Copenhagen: Paa Forfatterens Forlag.

Martinsen, Lone Kølle. 2010. "History as a Mass Experience. Re-Examining the Historical Fictions of Bernhard Severin Ingemann in a Political Context 1824-1836". Florence: European University Institute.

Martinsen, Lone Kølle. 2012a. "Bondefrihed og andre verdensbilleder. Idehistoriske studier af B.S. Ingemanns danmarkshistorie 1824-1836". *Temp - Tidsskrift for Historie* 2012, 75–103.

Martinsen, Lone Kølle. 2012b. "This Time as Romantic Fiction: Monarchism and Peasant Freedom in the Historical Literature of B.S. Ingemann". *Romantik: Journal for the Study of Romanticisms*, 1, 103–125.

Martinsen, Lone Kølle. 2015. "Combining Intellectual History and the History of the Book. A Case Study on the Concept of *Folk* in Popular Literature in the Nineteenth Century". *Contributions to the History of Conceps*, 10, 91–110.

Martinsen, Lone Kølle. 2018. "Emotionelle (læse)fælleskaber: Den historiske roman som følelsesmanual i kollektive nationale identifikationsprocesser i Europa efter 1814". In: Carsten Humlebæk, Henrik Høgh Müller and Kristian L. Nielsen (eds.). *Nation og stat, identitet og fortælling*. Nyt fra Samfundsvidenskaberne, 163–191.

Martinsen, Lone Kølle. 2019. "På slagmarken med Prins Otto. Kønsballade hos B.S. Ingemann i 1835". *Slagmark. Tidsskrift for Idéhistorie*, 79, 97–116.

Matthews, David. 2015. *Medievalism. A Critical History*. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer.

McAndrew, Patricia. 1979. “The Ballet Poems of August Bournonville: The Complete Scenarios, Part Three”. *Dance Chronicle* 3, 435–475.

Michelsen, Knud. 2012. “Det Norske Selskab og Johan Herman Wessel”. *Dansk litteraturs historie*. https://dansklitteraturshistorie.lex.dk/Det_Norske_Selskab_og_Johan_Herman_Wessel (accessed 6 May 2021).

“Middelalder (1000-1536)”. n.d. Natmus.dk. https://natmus.dk/historisk-viden/danmark/middelalder-1000-1536/ (accessed 27 August 2019).

Mogensen, Christina Lysbjerg. 2012. “Christian 2., 1481-1559, regent 1513-1523”. *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. http://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/christian-2-1481-1559/ (accessed 22 November 2017).

Montesquieu, Charles de Secondat. 1989. *The Spirit of the Laws*. Avon, Great Britain: Cambridge University Press.

Møller, Lis. 2015. “Refashioning the ‘Marsk Stig’ Ballads: B.S. Ingemann’s The Childhood of King Erik Menved and Carsten Hauch’s Marsk Stig”. *European Romantic Review*, 26, 417–433.

Møller, Lis. 2017a. “Ballads into Novels: Walter Scott’s Ivanhoe and B.S. Ingemann’s The Childhood of King Erik Menved”. Sandra Heinen and Katharina Rennhak (eds.). *Narratives of Romanticism. Selected Papers from the Wuppertal Conference of the German Society for English Romanticm*, 103–113.

Møller, Lis. 2017b. “National Literatures and Transnational Scholarship: Wilhelm Carl Grimm’s Altdänische Heldenlieder and Its Reception in Denmark”. In: Joachim Grage and Thomas Mohnike (eds.). *Geographies of Knowledge and Imagination in 19th Century Philological Research on Northern Europe*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 84–103.

Møller, Lis. 2017c. “‘They Dance All under the Greenwood Tree’: British and Danish Romantic-Period Adaptations of Two Danish ‘Elf Ballads’”. In: Cian Duffy (ed.). *Romantic Norths*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

Møller, Lis. 2017d. “Travelling Ballads: The Dissemination of Danish Medieval Ballads in Germany and Britain, 1760s to 1830s”. In: Dan Ringgaard and Mads Rosendahl Thomsen (eds.). *Danish Literature as World Literature*. New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Møller, Lis. 2019. “For konge og fædreland: Valdemar Sejr hos B.S. Ingemann og Agnes Slott-Møller”. *Passage*, 81, 87–101.

Nevers, Jeppe. 2011. "The Transformation of Danish Monarchism in the Age of Enlightenment". In: Michael Bregnsbo, Pasi Ihalainen, Patrik Winton and Karin Sennefelt (eds.). *Scandinavia in the Age of Revolution: Nordic Political Cultures, 1740-1820*. Farnham: Routledge, 157–167.

Norby, S. (pseudonym for Ole Bang/Oluf Lundt Bang). 1846. *Kongen vaagner. Et historiskt Drama i fire Acter*. Copenhagen: Bianco Lunos Bogtrykkeri.

Nygaard, Bertel. 2011. "Anti-Politics: Modern Politics and Its Critics in Denmark, 1830-1848". *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 36, 419–442.

Nygaard, Bertel. 2013. "Teater som massedannelse". *Temp*, 7, 26–49.

Oehlenschläger, Adam. 1853. "Erik Glipping". In: *Oehlenschlägers Tragødier i eet Bind*. Copenhagen: Bianco Lunos Bogtrykkeri, 407–436.

Pajung, Stefan. 2011. "Slaget på Grathe Hede 1157". *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. https://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/slaget-paa-grathe-hede-1157/ (accessed 5 January 2021).

Pajung, Stefan. 2012. "Knud Lavard, ca. 1096-1131". *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. https://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/knud-lavard-ca-1096-1131/ (accessed 5 January 2021).

Pajung, Stefan. 2018. "Blodgildet i Roskilde 1157". *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. https://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/blodgildet-i-roskilde-1157/ (accessed 5 January 2021).

Paludan, Helge. 1980. "'Vor danske Montesquieu'. Historiografiske iagttagelser vedrørende dansk middelalderforsknings opfattelse af fæstevæsenets herkomst". *Historie*, 13: 1–32.

Pedersen, Vibeke A., Knud Michelsen, Bjarne Sandstrøm, Lars Boje Mortensen, Karen Skovgaard-Petersen, Peter Zeeberg and Jan Zimmermann. 2007. *Dansk litteraturs historie. Bind 1. 1100-1800*. Klaus P. Mortensen and May Shack (eds.). København: Gyldendal.

Petersen, Carl S. and Vilhelm Andersen. 1929. *Illustreret dansk Litteraturhistorie. Vol. II*. Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag.

Pottage, Alain. 2013. "Ius Resistendi: Resistance as Reflexivity". In: Martin W. Bauer, Rom Harré and Carl Jensen (eds.). *Resistance*

and the Practice of Rationality. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 262–281.

Rahbek, Knud Lyne. 1797. "Forerindring ved Forelæsninger over Sørgespillet Niels Ebbesen". In: *Minerva*. Copenhagen: Directeur Johan Frederik Schultz, 200–214.

Rancière, Jacques. 2011. *The Politics of Literature*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Rasmussen, Jens. 2010. "Jødefejden og de beslægtede uroligheder, 1819-20: 'Indledning til den store Ssene'?" *Kirkehistoriske Samlinger*, 131–165.

Rasmussen, Sten (ed.). 2006. *Herman Bang. Vekslende themaer IV*. Aarhus: C.A. Reitzels Forlag.

Rerup, Lorenz. 1991. "Fra litterær til politisk nationalisme. Udvikling og udbredelse fra 1808-1845". In: Ole Feldbæk (ed.). *Dansk identitetshistorie. 2 Et yndigt land 1789-1848*. Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzels Forlag, 325–390.

Rian, Øystein. 2014. *Sensuren i Danmark-Norge: Vilkårene for offentlige ytringer 1536-1814*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Rosenwein, Barbara H. 2002. "Worrying about Emotions in History". *The American Historical Review*, 107, 821–845.

Rosiek, Jan. 2015. *Danmark, Gurre, stranden. Steder i dansk litteratur*. Denmark: U Press.

Rosiek, Jan. 2017. "A Guide to Gurre, Temporary Landscape". In: Thomas A. Dubois and Dan Ringgaard (eds.). *A Comparative History of Nordic Literary Cultures: Place*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 56–69.

Rønning, F. 1900. "Sander, Christian Levin". In: C.F. Bricka (ed.). *Dansk biografisk Lexikon tillige omfattende Norge for Tidsrummet 1537-1814. Vol. XIV. Bind Resen-Saxtrup*. Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandels Forlag (F. Hegel & Søn).

Samsøe, Ole Johan. 1805. *O.J. Samsøes efterladte digteriske Skrifter udgivne ved K.L. Rahbek. Andet Bind*. Copenhagen: J.F. Schultz.

Sander, Levin Christian. 1798. *Niels Ebbesen af Nörreriis*. Skandinavisk Museum.

Sander, Levin Christian. 1799. *Danmarks Befrielse, eller Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis*. Copenhagen: K.H. Seidelin.

Schlegel, J.F.W. 1798. *Naturrettens eller den almindelige Retslæres Grundsætninger. Anden Deel*. Copenhagen: J.F. Schultz.

Seip, Jens Arup. 1958. “Teorien om det opinionsstyrte enevelde”. *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 38, 397–463.

Skinner, Quentin. 2002. *Visions of Politics I: Regarding Method*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Skinner, Quentin. 2008. “Freedom as the Absence of Arbitrary Power”. In: Cécile Laborde and John Maynor (eds.). *Republicanism and Political Theory*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 83–101.

Smith, Anthony D. 1999. *Myths and Memories of the Nation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Snorrason, Egill Snorri Hrafn. 2020. “Ole Bang”. *Den Store Danske*. https://denstoredanske.lex.dk/Ole_Bang (accessed 13 January 2021).

Soldin, Salomon. 1802. *Marsk Stig eller Sammenrottelsen mod Erik Glipping, Konge af Danmark. Et romantisk Skilderie fra det trettende Aarhundrede*. Copenhagen: A. & S. Soldins Forlag.

Tanderup, Line Kirstine. 2014. “Thyra Danebod, død ca. 950”. *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. https://danmarkshistorien.dk/vis/materiale/thyra-danebod-doed-ca-950/ (accessed 22 June 2021).

Tarbensen, Kenn. 2006a. “Den første demokrat. Cand. theol. og dr.phil. J.J. Dampe”. In: Morten Petersen (ed.). *Oprørere. Skæbnefortællinger om Danmarkshistoriens Tolv Største Rebeller*. Viborg: Aschehoug, 191–216.

Tarbensen, Kenn. 2006b. “Den Urokkelige Eg I Skoven. Officeren Og Politikeren A.F. Tscherning”. In: Morten Petersen (ed.). *Oprørere. Skæbnefortællinger Om Danmarkshistoriens tolv største rebeller*. Viborg: Aschehoug, 219–242.

Tobias, Tobi. 1997. “I Dream a World: The Ballets of August Bournonville”. *Meddelelser fra Thorvaldsens Museum*, 143–153.

Topsøe-Jensen, Helge. 1975. “Økonomen H.C Andersen. Kommentar til en replik i ‘Kongen drømmer’”. *Anderseniana*, 204.

“Two Treatises of Government”. 2020. *Britannica*. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Two-Treatises-of-Government (accessed 30 April 2021).

Ulsig, Erik. 2012. “Valdemar Den Store, 1131-1182”. *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. https://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/valdemar-den-store-1131-1182/ (accessed 5 January 2021).

Uzgalis, William. 2020. “John Locke”. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/locke/#SociContTheo (accessed 30 April 2021).

Vammen, Hans. 1984. “Grundlaget for det moderne Danmark? Hovedlinjer i dansk politisk idehistorie”. *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 84, 23–36.

Vammen, Hans. 1998. “Den københavnske ‘revolution’ 1848. Martsdagenes nationalliberale magtovertagelse”. *Historie & Samfundsfag*, 37, 11–17.

Viken, Øystein Lydik Idsø. 2011. “Underdanig opposisjon. Offentleg skriftleg motstand i Noreg 1807-1814”. *Historisk Tidsskrift*. 90, 337–364.

Vogelius, Jørgen. 2012. “Om patriotisme og nationalisme i Ingemanns historiske romaner”. In: Anne Elisabeth Sejten (ed.). *Æstetiske topologier. Grænser, brug og mobilitet i litteratur og kunst*. Denmark: Spring, 268–287.

Vogt, Helle. 2019. “Jyske Lov 1241”. *Danmarkshistorien.dk*. https://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/jyske-lov-1241/ (accessed 4 January 2021).

Ørbæk Jensen, Anne. n.d. “Peter Heise: Drot og Marsk. En opera i skillelinien”. *Det moderne gennembrud 1870-1890*. http://wayback-01.kb.dk/wayback/20100916143234/http://www 2.kb.dk/elib/mss/dmg/musik/heise/index.htm (accessed 28 August 2019).

Øst, N.C. (ed.). 1797. *Hædersminde over Jyden Niels Ebbesen fra Nørreriis*. Copenhagen: N. Christensen.

Øst, N.C. (ed.). 1798. *Hædersminde over Jyden Niels Ebbesen*. Copenhagen: K.H. Seidelin.

Appendix

Author	Title	Year	Genre
Ewald, Johannes	*Rolf Krage*	1770	Drama
Ewald, Johannes	*Frode*	1772	Drama
Brun, Joh. Nordahl	*Einer Tambeskielver*	1772	Drama
Ewald, Johannes	*Helge eller den nordiske Ødip*	1773	Drama
Suhm, Pet. Frid.	*Frode*	1774	Novel
Suhm, Pet. Frid.	*Gyrithe eller Danmarks Befrielse Prisen for Kierlighed*	1774	Novel
Medelthon, Henr. Bryssel	*Haddings Syn*	1775	Drama
Ewald, Johannes	"Kong Kristian stod ved højen Mast"	1779	Lyric poem
Boye, Birgitte	*Melicerte*	1780	Drama
Lyche, Sigvard	"Harald den Trede, en Skjaldesagn"	1784	Lyric poem
Lyche, Sigvard	*Kong Ingild eller Frode den Fjerdes Hevn.*	1784	Drama
Boye, Birgitte	*Gorm den Gamle*	1784	Drama
Pram, C.	"Stærkodder. Et digt i femten Sange"	1785	Lyric poem
Suhm, Pet. Frid.	*Alfsol*	1788	Novel
Pram, Chr. Henriksen	*Frode og Fingal*	1790	Drama
Samsøe, Ole Johan	*Dyveke*	1796	Drama
Sander, Levin Christian	*Danmarks Befrielse eller Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis*	1797	Drama
Baggesen, J.	*Erik Eiegod. En Oper*	1798	Opera
Oehlenschläger, Adam	*Erik og Roller*	1802	Novel
Oehlenschläger, Adam	"Hakon Jarls død"	1802	Lyric poem

Soldin, Salomin	*Marsk Stig eller Sammenrottelsen mod Erik Glipping, Konge af Danmark, Et romantiske Skilderie fra det trettende Aarhundrede. Udarbejdet efter O[le] J[oh.] Samsøes Plan*	1802	Drama
Oehlenschläger, Adam	*Hakon Jarl*	1807	Drama
Kruse, Lauritz	*Gyrithe, eller Danmarks Frelse. Historisk Æmne til Skuespillet af samme Navn, som er bestemt at opføres den 30. Januari 1807 i Anledning af Kongens Fødselssdag*	1807	Drama
Bang, Balthasar	*Knud Lavard eller Hertug Knud af Slesvig. Et Sørgespil i 5 Acter*	1807	Drama
Møller, Carl Joh.	*Kong Svend, Danmarks Hævner*	1808	Drama
Sander, Levin Christian	*Knud, Danmarks Hertug*	1808	Drama
Grundtvig, N.F.S.	*Gorm hin Gamle*	1809	Drama
Oehlenschläger, Adam	*Palnatoke*	1809	Drama
Grundtvig, N.F.S.	*Harald Blaatand og Palnatoke*	1809	Drama
Tøxen, Manasse	*Erik III*	1811	Drama
Rahbek, Knud Lyne	*Kong Frederik den Anden i Ditmarsken*	1811	Drama
Oehlenschläger, Adam	*Stærkodder*	1812	Drama
	Frithiof, Hildur og Halfdans Søner. Trenne nordiska Sagor utur O[le] J[oh.] Samsøes as Rahbek utgifna Skrifter. Öfwersättning från 3. danska upplahan	1814	Novel
Oehlenschläger, Adam	*Helge*	1814	Drama
Oehlenschläger, Adam	*Yrsa*	1814	Drama

Proft, Henr. Cph. Gottl.	*Rurik og Helge*	1815	Drama
Grundtvig, N.F.S.	Saga om Haldans Sønner og Harald Hyldetan (Af Søgubrot)	1816	
Bruun, Thom. Cph.	*Erik Glipping*	1816	Drama
Ingemann, B.S.	"Kong Valdemars Jagt"	1816	Lyric poem
Oehlenschläger, Adam	*Hroars Saga*	1817	Drama
Grundtvig, N.F.S.	"Thyre Dannebods Vise"	1817	Lyric poem
Lindhard, Mogens	*Leire Konningen Fridleif, Frode hin Fredegodes Søn. En nordisk Fortælling*	1818	Novel
Krossing, Nikolai	*Hroars Kjærlighed*	1820	Drama
Oehlenschläger, Adam	*Erik og Abel*	1820	Drama
Søtoft, Nik.	*Christian den Fjerdes Dom*	1821	Drama
Andersen, H.C.	*Alfsol*	1822	Drama
Andersen, H.C.	*Gjenfærdet ved Palnatokes Grav*	1822	Short story
Ingemann, B.S.	"Valdemar den Store og hans Mænd"	1824	Lyric poem
Boye, Caspar Johannes	*Juta, Dronning af Danmark*	1824	Drama
Boye, Caspar Johannes	*Svend Grathe*	1825	Drama
Grundtvig, N.F.S.	"Kong Harald og Ansgard. Rim-Blade af Danmarks Kirke-Bog til Jubel-Aaret"	1826	Lyric poem
Bang, Balthasar	*Valdemar og Absalon. Et historisk Drama i 5 Akter*	1826	Drama
Ingemann, B.S.	*Valdemar Sejer*	1826	Novel
Dybdahl, Ped.	*Marsk Stig eller Feldmarskalk Stig Andersen Hvides Levnetsbeskrivelse. En sandfærdig Historie*	1826	Novel

Hansen, Elisabeth	*Thyras Datter Hulda, eller Londons Beleiring af de Danske i det 11. Aarhundrede*	1827	Novel
Boye, Caspar Johannes	*Erik den Syvende, Konge af Danmark*	1827	Drama
Oehlenschläger, Adam	*Hrolf Krake*	1828	Drama
Bræmer, Otto Ferdin.	*Slaget paa Grathehede*	1828	Novel
Ingemann, B.S.	*Erik Menveds Barndom*	1828	Novel
Heiberg, J.L.	*Elverhøj*	1828	Drama
Wildt, Johannes	*Dødningefingeren eller: Den falske Kong Oluf. En paa et Sagn og historiske Sandheder grundet romantisk Fortælling fra Dronning Margarethas Tider*	1829	Novel
Bræmer, Otto Ferdin.	*Erik Eiegod eller: Væringen i Miklagaard*	1830	Novel
Bræmer, Otto Ferd.	*Valdemar Atterdag*	1831	Novel
Rohmann, Jørgen Lindegaard	"Den danske konge Rolf Krages Krønike, udsat paa Riim"	1832	Lyric poem
Bruun, Thom. Cph.	"Svend Tveskiæg"	1833	Lyric poem
Ingemann, B.S.	*Kong Erik og de Fredløse*	1833	Novel
Lange, Johs. Chr.	"Frode Fredegod"	1834	Lyric poem
Wildt, Johannes	*Jutta, Prindsesse af Danmark*	1834	Novel
Oehlenschläger, Adam	*Dronning Margareta*	1834	Drama
Hauch, Carsten	*Vilhelm Zabern. En Autobiografi fra Christian den Andens Tid*	1834	Novel
Holst, Wilh. Conr.	*Christian den Anden*	1834	Drama
Wildt, Johannes	*Thyra Dannebods Fosterdatter eller: Hedningen og den Christne*	1835	Novel
Bournonville, August	*Valdemar*	1835	Ballet
Winther, Christian	"Vaabendragerens Eed"	1835	Lyric poem

Ingemann, B.S.	*Prinds Otto af Danmark og hans Samtid*	1835	Novel
Ingemann, B.S.	"Dronning Margrete"	1836	Lyric poem
Faber, Pd. Ditlev	*Alfsol, Dronning i Danmark. En Fortælling af Jens Mikkelsen Fifs efterladte Papirer. Udg- af J[ac.] C[laudius] Elmquist*	1839	Novel
Oehlenschläger, Adam	*Knud den Store*	1839	Drama
Petersen, E. (ed.)	*Ebbesen, Niels, af Nørreriis eller: Danmarks Befrielse*	1839	Novel
Kaalind, Hans Wilh.	"Kong Haldan den Stærke"	1840	Lyric poem
Briem, Joh. Gunløg Gunløgsen	*Ridder Niels Ebbesen*	1840	Drama
Heiberg, J.L.	*Syvsoverdag*	1840	Drama
Oehlenschläger, Adam	*Ørvarodds Saga: Et Oldnordisk Eventyr*	1841	Drama
Hauch, Carsten	"Magnus og Knud Lavard"	1841	Lyric poem
Hauch, Carsten	*Svend Grathe eller Kongemødet i Roskilde*	1841	Drama
Bournonville, August	*Erik Menveds Barndom*	1843	Ballet
Halvorsen, Nicoline	*Knud den Store og hans hof 1-3*	1844	Novel
Oehlenschläger, Adam	*Erik Glipping*	1844	Drama
Andersen, H.C.	*Kongen drømmer*	1844	Drama
Norby, Sören	*Kongen vaagner*	1846	Drama
Søtoft, Nik.	*Knud den Hellige*	1847	Drama
Hollard Nielsen	*Niels Ebbesen I-III*	1847-1848	Novel
Nielsen, Hollard	*Erik Eiegod*	1848	Novel
Hertz	*Valdemar Atterdag*	1848	Drama
	Caroline Mathilde og Struensee I-II	1848	Novel

Summary

This dissertation, entitled *Tales of Bygone Kings. Discussions of Monarchy, Form of Government and Popular Sovereignty in Danish Medievalistic Literature c. 1789-1848*, studies how Danish fictional literature published between c. 1789 and 1848 used representations of medieval regents to consider political issues pertaining to the absolute monarchy and popular, political agency. The dissertation takes as its starting point an overview of the distribution of publications of this type of literature from the last part of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century. I this is identified a tendency that on the whole, fictional literature about Danish, medieval regents are first published in the 1790s, that the frequency of publication drops in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, and that there is a significant increase in the number of publications from the 1820's and until 1848. The dissertation studies why the publications of fictional literature about medieval regents are distributed in this way and argues that there is a relation between high frequency in publications and periods in which questions about royal power and form of government is more widespread in the Danish public. Following this, the dissertation examines how the literary depictions of medieval regents were used to consider political questions pertinent to royal power in the period

Because of the significant amount of objects of analysis, the dissertation is limited to examine representations of the events in

Danish, royal, medieval history, which are most often represented in the literature. The dissertation therefore studies fictional literature about Sweyn Grathe, Canute V and Valdemar the Great; Eric Clipping and Eric Menved; the Interregnum 1332-1340 and Valdemar Atterdag; and Christian II, divided between c. ten novels, twenty plays, some poems and ballets. The corpus for analysis consists of some well-known works, but is mostly comprised of literature that has not or has rarely been studied by researchers.

The dissertation consists of four chapters that examine different political themes, which are prevalent in the studied literature. The first chapter focuses on the first wave of medievalistic literature published over a few years in the 1790s. The chapter analyses the significant influence of republican thought in literature, which is also found in the literature of the nineteenth century, but particularly finds expression in the literature of the late eighteenth century. The chapter consists of analyses of two literary works about the end of the Interregnum; Levin Christian Sander's play *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis* [Niels Ebbesen of Nörreriis] (1797) and Malthe Conrad Bruun's ode "Niels Ebbesen, Tyrandræberen" [Niels Ebbesen, the Tyrant Killer] (1797), which both incorporates republican ideas into a fictional, Danish context, but to significantly different effects.

The second chapter deals with *ius resistendi*, the right to resist an unfit ruler. This was not a theme that was discussed in the public debate of the period, but the theme is quite prevalent in the literature studied in the dissertation. The chapter demonstrates that it is a widespread theme by providing an overview over where and how the theme finds expression in literature and mapping out the different stances towards ius resistendi expressed through different literary works.

The third chapter of the dissertation examines the distribution of political agency between regent and people in the literary works. It shows how the fictional people are provided with a degree of political agency which is significantly greater than that of the contemporary, real Danish people and how the king in some instances – but not all – is reduced to a more politically passive figure. Like chapter two, this chapter consists of selections from a number of literary works which functions to map out the different ways in which the distribution of political agency is dealt with in the literature.

The fourth chapter has a dual but connected aim. It analyses how some of the literature dealt with nationalises the figure of the king so that the king is not only portrayed as a political head of state, but is given a part in the national, popular community. In addition to that, the chapter examines why the large majority of the fictional literature about Christian II is limited to being published in the 1830s and 1849s. The chapter analyses the nationalisation of Christian II in three literary works about the king: Hans Christian Andersen's play *Kongen drømmer* [The King Dreams] (1844), Carsten Hauch's novel *Vilhelm Zabern. En Autobiografi fra Christian den Andens Tid* [Vilhelm Zabern. An Autobiography from the Time of Christian the Second] (1834) and Ole Bang's *Kongen vaagner* [The King Awakens] (1846). The chapter argues that Christian II's status as a king of the people or king of the burghers makes him an apt figure for discussing inclusion of the people in the government of the country, and that the emotionally controlled nature of the king makes him fit for exploring whether one is necessarily suited for reigning only because one is born to do it. Both are political issues which are highly pertinent to Denmark in the 1830s and 1840s, by when the absolute monarchy had had its day and it was widely acknowledged that the country would soon transfer to constitutional monarchy.

The dissertation comprises a contribution to the understanding of how the Danish literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries facilitated considerations about contemporary political issued, which in the case of the nineteenth century could not be discussed explicitly in public because of the restrictions of the freedom of the press which gave strict limits for public discussion of royal power and the government. The dissertation thereby contributes to expanding the understanding of the public debate and the considerations which preceded the abolition of the absolute monarchy in 1848 and thereby demonstrates how fictional literature provides a fruitful supplement to the description of the political development during the late absolutism offered by historical research.

Dansk resumé

Denne afhandling med titlen *Historier om henfarne konger. Diskussioner om monarki, styreform og folkesuverænitet i dansk middelalderistisk litteratur ca. 1789-1848* undersøger, hvordan dansk fiktionslitteratur udgivet mellem ca. 1789 og 1848 anvendte repræsentationer af middelalderregenter til at overveje politiske spørgsmål om enevælde og folkelig politisk agens. Afhandlingen tager udgangspunkt i en oversigt over fordelingen af udgivelser af denne type litteratur i sidste del af 1700-tallet og første halvdel af 1800-tallet. Heri identificeres en tendens til, at der stort set først udgives fiktionslitteratur om danske middelalderregenter i 1790'erne, at udgivelsesfrekvensen herefter er betydeligt lavere i de første to årtier af 1800-tallet, og at der fra 1820'erne og frem til 1848 sker en signifikant stigning i antallet af udgivelser. Afhandlingen undersøger, hvorfor udgivelserne af fiktionslitteratur om middelalderregenter fordeler sig netop sådan og argumenterer for, at der er en sammenhæng mellem høj udgivelsesfrekvens og perioder, hvor spørgsmål om kongemagt og styreform fylder mere i den danske offentlighed. Afhandlingen undersøger i forlængelse heraf, hvordan de litterære skildringer af middelalderregenter anvendes til at overveje politiske spørgsmål vedrørende kongemagten i perioden.

På grund af den betydelige mængde analysemateriale har afhandlingen begrænset sig til at undersøge repræsentationer af de begivenheder i Danmarks kongelige middelalderhistorie, som

repræsenteres oftest i litteraturen. Afhandlingen undersøger derfor fiktionslitteratur om Svend Grathe, Knud Magnussen og Valdemar den Store; Erik Klipping og Erik Menved; den kongeløse tid 1332-1340 og Valdemar Atterdag; og Christian II, fordelt på ca. ti romaner, tyve skuespil, nogle digte og balletter. Analysekorpusset består af nogle velkende værker, men mest af litteratur, der ikke eller sjældent har været behandlet af forskningen.

Afhandlingen består af fire kapitler, der undersøger forskellige politiske temaer, som er fremtrædende i den undersøgte litteratur. Det første kapitel fokuserer på den første bølge af middelalderistisk udgivet over få år i 1790'erne. Kapitlet analyserer den betydelige indflydelse af republikansk tankegang i litteraturen, som også findes i litteraturen i 1800-tallet, men især kommer til udtryk i litteraturen fra det sene 1700-tal. Kapitlet består af analyser af to litterære værker om slutningen af den kongeløse tid, Levin Christian Sanders skuespil *Niels Ebbesen af Nørreriis* (1797) og Malthe Conrad Bruuns ode "Niels Ebbesen. Tyrandræberen" (1797), der begge inkorporerer republikanske ideer i en fiktiv dansk kontekst, men til betydelig forskellige effekt.

Andet kapitel behandler *ius resistendi*, retten til at gøre oprør mod en uegnet hersker. Dette var ikke et emne, der blev diskuteret i den offentlige debat i perioden, men temaet er ganske fremtrædende i litteraturen undersøgt i afhandlingen. Kapitlet demonstrerer, at det er et udbredt tema ved at give et overblik over, hvor og hvordan temaet kommer til udtryk i litteraturen, og kortlægge de forskellige holdninger til ius resistendi, som udtrykkes gennem forskellige litterære værker.

Afhandlingens tredje kapitel undersøger fordelingen af politisk agens mellem regent og folk i de litterære værker. Det viser, hvordan det fiktive folk udstyres med en grad af politisk agens, som er betydelig højere end samtidens virkelige, danske folk, og hvordan kongen i nogle tilfælde – men ikke alle – er reduceret til en mere politisk passiv figur. Ligesom kapitel to består dette kapitel af nedslag i længere række litterære værker, der fungerer til at kortlægge de forskellige måder, fordelingen af politisk agens behandles på i litteraturen.

Det fjerde kapitel har et dobbelt, men forbundet mål. Det analyserer, hvordan der i en række af de behandlede værker foretages en nationalisering af kongefiguren, så kongen ikke blot fremstilles

som politisk statsoverhoved, men tildeles en rolle i det nationale, folkelige fælleskab. Derudover undersøger kapitlet også, hvorfor langt størstedelen af den fiktive litteratur om Christian II begrænser sig til at være udgivet i 1830'erne og 1840'erne. Kapitlet analyserer nationaliseringen af Christian II i tre litterære værker om kongen: Hans Christian Andersens skuespil *Kongen drømmer* (1844), Carsten Hauchs roman *Vilhelm Zabern. En Autobiografi fra Christian den Andens Tid* (1834) og Ole Bangs skuespil *Kongen vaagner* (1846). Kapitlet argumenterer for, at Christian II's status som folkekonge eller borgerkonge gør ham til en oplagt figur til at diskutere folkelig inddragelse i landets regering, samt at kongens følelsesstyrede natur gør ham egnet til at udforske, hvorvidt man nødvendigvis er egnet til at regere, blot fordi man er født til det. Begge er politiske problemstillinger, som er højst relevante i 1830'erne og 1840'ernes Danmark, hvor enevælden havde udspillet sin rolle, og det var bredt anerkendt, at landet snart ville overgå til konstitutionelt monarki.

Afhandlingen udgør et bidrag til forståelsen af, hvordan 1700- og 1800-tallets danske litteratur faciliterede overvejelser om samtidens politiske problemstillinger, som i 1800-tallets tilfælde ikke kunne diskuteres eksplicit offentligt på grund af den indskrænkede trykkefrihed, der satte skarpe grænser for offentlig diskussion af kongemagten og regeringen. Afhandlingens bidrager derved til at udvide forståelsen af den offentlige debat og de overvejelser, der gik forud for afskaffelsen af enevælden i 1848 og demonstrerer derved, hvordan fiktionslitteraturen udgør et frugtbart supplement til historieforskningens beskrivelse af den politiske udvikling under den sene enevælde.