Crossing Borders in the Insular Middle Ages

MEDIEVAL TEXTS AND CULTURES OF NORTHERN EUROPE

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Crossing Borders in the Insular Middle Ages

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Empire of Emotion: The Formation of Emotive Literary Identities and Mentalities in the North

Sif Rikhardsdottir*

I have argued before that the incursion of the French courtly material into Scandinavia in the mid-thirteenth century represents a form of cultural imperialism, where the imperial tendencies are to be located in the perceived cultural supremacy of the French court and the deliberate importation of French material as means of implementing or partaking in the courtly ideology they represent.[1] One may ask whether such imperial aggression was not played out on a grander scale in the ninth and tenth centuries through Viking raids on Britain.

However, the Vikings did not represent an imperial power, either perceived or actual. While this disparate group may have shared genetic affinities and cultural and linguistic commonalities, they did not represent a centralized authority, in the sense of a staged invasion with the specific intent of territorial dominion, nor a cultural supremacy to be emulated. Their initial success was based on aggression and superiority in ship building and seamanship, and — unlike the later colonial British imperium — these cultural encounters resulted

* I would like to thank Erich Poppe, who read a draft of the essay, for his thoughtful suggestions and positive commentary. The ideas presented in this chapter are elaborated on more extensively in my recent monograph *Emotion in Old Norse Literature*.

[1] See Sif Rikhardsdottir, 'The Imperial Implications of Medieval Translations' and Sif Rikhardsdottir, *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse*.

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eventually in assimilation and integration rather than political dominion. This particular approach of integrative aggression is to a certain extent replicated in the subsequent expansion of the Norman regime from Normandy to Britain and down to Sicily and Jerusalem in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

One of the differences between the conquests and influences of the Normans in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries and the previous two centuries of Viking encounters is to be found in the cultural hegemony of French as a literary language and the predominance of French and Anglo-Norman courtly culture as the *mode du jour*. Moreover, one of the distinguishing factors of this cultural hegemony is the ensuing flurry of literary activity across Britain, Ireland, and Scandinavia, and, as a matter of fact, across the insular region of Sicily and the Kingdom of Sicily as well.[2] This essay addresses the way in which such cross-cultural literary exchange partakes in the formation of emotive literary identities and mentalities in the insular North. The essay will not elaborate on the complexity of the term 'emotion', nor its historic viability (or unviability), but assume here that emotions are fundamental physiological entities belonging to humankind, although their meaning and their mode of expression are always to a certain extent both historically and culturally contingent. The concept of empire as used here similarly owes very little to the political institution of a legal or militarized sovereignty or a centralized regime, but conceives cultural *imperium* instead as a dominance achieved through a perception of a linguistic, literary, or cultural supremacy beyond those imperial borders that leads to a reverse imperialism, that is, the wilful emulation or importation of said ideologies. My focus will be on the Norse communities in the late Middle Ages, particularly Iceland, as the periphery or margin of this insular geography of *terra firma*, borders, and waterways.

Emotive Literary Identities

The militarized imperial endeavour is obviously most apparent in the eleventh through the fifteenth centuries in the crusading efforts of conversion and territorial dominion. The geographic bearing of south/south-east of the crusading efforts replicates and simultaneously inverts the previous transmission of knowledge and political legitimacy inherent in the concept of *translatio studii et imperii*. The importation of the French courtly material in thirteenth-century Norway and Iceland similarly completes a cycle of cultural transmission

[2] For further information on literary production in Sicily in the Norman period, see for instance Mallette, *The Kingdom of Sicily*.

and expansion begun almost four centuries earlier with the Viking expansion outward from the Northern peripheries of the known world to the neighbouring insular regions, to northern France, and finally to the medieval centre of the world, Jerusalem.[3] Considering the Norman origin of English court culture in the high Middle Ages, the importation of the literary material and their intrinsic courtly ideology therefore represents a sociocultural circularity that is replicated in the circular transmission pattern of Welsh motifs and narrative material across the English Channel.[4]

Geraldine Heng, in fact, envisions romance as the genre through which such cultural imperium is established in the crusading territories. She positions romance as the 'literary medium that solicits or invents the cultural means by which the medieval nation might be most productively conceptualised, and projected, for a diverse society of peoples otherwise ranged along numerous internal divides'.[5] By 'nation' Heng is here referring to Christendom as the ultimate empire, seeking its own augmentation beyond its borders. Heng's notion of romance as a generic means for mediating and implementing the medieval Christian *imperium* is useful here as romance also poses as the means through which the courtly ideology is implemented, staged, and instigated. It acts as the vehicle through which particular behavioural conventions and ideological mentalities are represented and then emulated. Romance — as Heng perceives it — enacts the underlying anxieties of geographic expansionism, but it also embodies it. It stages those expanding borders, creating a space within which new mentalities can be unravelled and reconstructed. In Iceland, romance can thus be said to have provided a literary platform where the continental courtly ideology could be staged. More importantly, it provided a literary space where local cultural concerns could be projected, contested, and decoded.

Heng's conceptualization of romance, as a cultural fantasy that owes its origin to cultural trauma (i.e. an emotive response to the crusades), draws attention to the underlying emotive function of romance as a genre. The perpetuation of certain 'emotional regimes' — to use William Reddy's terminology — is

[3] While the focus here is on the westward and south-west routes of the Viking expeditions, the Viking diaspora is, of course, much more extensive, reaching across the north and north-west, the Baltic regions, and passing along the main waterways through Russian territories down to the Byzantine Empire as well as into the Low Countries and down to the Iberian peninsula. For information on the Viking diaspora, see for instance Jesch, *The Viking Diaspora*.

[4] For information on the transmission of Welsh material through Chrétien de Troyes back to Wales for instance, see Lloyd-Morgan, 'Migrating Narratives'.

[5] Heng, *Empire of Magic*, p. 6.

thus integral to its form and function as romance.[6] Such emotional regimes will thus — in the manner of all ideological and behavioural representations — have had to be reconfigured in the process of the romances' transmission across linguistic, cultural, or temporal borders.

In her pioneering book, Barbara Rosenwein suggests the term 'emotional communities' to describe 'groups in which people adhere to the same norms of emotional expression and value — or devalue — the same or related emotions'.[7] She notes that such emotional communities are not mutually exclusive, but may coexist and change over time. Thus, one can assume that the various linguistic and/or ethnic communities in medieval Britain and Ireland will have belonged to specific emotional communities and that these may have encompassed particular groups defined by linguistic differentiators, regional identifications, or a shared social status. Similarly, Icelandic and Norwegian readers will have shared some communal emotional value systems, while others will have differed based on the particularities of social hierarchy, geographic or environmental factors, and family or communal affiliations. None of these communities will have been fixed and stable — any more than such ideological systems ever are — but they will nevertheless have provided a frame of reference to give credence and significance to emotive behaviour and modulated people's reactions and emotive responses.

While Rosenwein seeks the historicized emotions of medieval peoples, I would like to posit a slightly different concept: one that is not focused on the actual emotions experienced by peoples inhabiting those communities, but rather on the emotive coding apparent in the literary products produced by those medieval communities, which I refer to as 'emotive *literary* identities'. Admittedly, historians seeking the emotive life of medieval men and women will by necessity seek it through source materials, including texts, but the emphasis and the goal of the historian differ from that of the literary analyst. While my approach is based on Rosenwein's conception of emotional communities, it departs from it in its focus on literary products, that is, on narrative

[6] Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*. While Reddy's concept of 'emotional regimes' as used in his book applies to the dominant patterns of emotive behaviour in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century France — from the sentimentality of the eighteenth century to the subordination of emotion to reason in the latter century — it is nevertheless applicable to other periods inasmuch as it is intended to capture the reigning emotive spirit of a community at any given moment in time. Reddy's concept has been criticized by Barbara Rosenwein; see for instance Plamper, 'The History of Emotions'.

[7] Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, p. 2.

material and the potential evidence that those materials may provide of *literary* emotive coding. By focusing on the textual artefact, we can identify literary conventions for displaying emotion that may be generic, linguistically specific, and/or culturally contingent. Any such conventions are, of course, subject to and dependent on the relevant historical and social context. Yet, by virtue of their literariness, such emotive literary identities extend beyond their original emotional communities, reaching across the centuries to speak to readers from different historical periods and/or cultural realms. Such emotive identities may become obsolete over time, and their cultural frame of reference may change. Their signifying capacity may therefore be affected, impacting the reader's or audience's interpretation of emotive behaviour and the reconstruction of the text's emotive identity. By analysing the transmission of literary materials one can trace how those literary conventions of emotional performances are adapted to their new reading communities, indicating potentially differing generic or cultural conventions for the depiction of emotion and the deciphering of emotive gestures, acts, or words.

Literary texts can therefore be said to contain 'emotive scripts' that are dependent on, and subject to, generic parameters, the emotive vocabulary of any given language, and the meaning of emotive behaviour within the reading community within which the texts originated. The term 'emotion script' originates in psychology and was initially proposed by Sylvan Tomkin in the late 1970s as part of his 'script theory' that suggests that human comportment can be categorized by particular 'scripts' that provide a directive for appropriate emotional conduct.[8] It has since been adapted by various fields to encompass an emotive scripting of behaviour, whether related to human nature (psychology) or discourse (literature). In literature, emotional scripts thus define and prescribe the emotive behaviour of characters. Carolyne Larrington rightly points out that 'translation requires the adaptation of source "emotion scripts" in order to arouse the emotions of the target culture' indicating that such scripts are fundamental to the elucidation of meaning.[9] Modifications in the translation process can thus provide evidence of cultural differences in 'emotion simulation' that will in turn 'come to affect the development of emotion simulations and scripts in the target culture's signifying system', signalling the interactive function of emotive scripts within their sociocultural contexts.[10]

[8] Tomkin, 'Script Theory'.

[9] Larrington, 'Learning to Feel in the Old Norse Camelot', p. 75.

[10] Larrington, 'Learning to Feel in the Old Norse Camelot', p. 75.

I have adapted the term slightly here to foreground the performative or behavioural aspect of literary representation of emotion as the textual artefact deals (quite obviously) not with real emotions (the foundation for Tomkin's 'emotion scripts'), but with narrative representation of emotive behaviour. The term as used here, '*emotive* script', is thus intended to capture this slight shift in emphasis from real human emotions (the subject of psychology and cognitive studies) to discursive or textual representation of emotive behaviour. Emotive scripts thus bear testimony to certain literary conventions that may or may not be substantiated by similar behaviour patterns within the sociocultural context. Emotive scripts may be both descriptive — in the sense that they reflect communally held values and conventionalized emotive behaviours — or prescriptive: in the sense that they introduce or institute new behavioural patterns or mentalities into their respective reading communities. I discuss examples of both in the remainder of the essay.

Emotive Scripts and Poetic Voice

It is a truism that the medieval Icelandic saga avoids emotive or subjective positioning, preferring an objective narrative style that favours subtle situational or behavioural hints over explicit verbalization or gestural behaviour when it comes to emotions.[11] Yet there is ample evidence that beneath the apparently calm surface of many saga characters, there is an abundance of passion and emotive turbulence. The deceptively laconic reactions and the lack of verbalization of internal emotive states or feelings are not due to a lack of literary means of displaying emotion — as is evident by emotive portrayals in other genres — or a fundamental impassiveness. Rather, such passages suggest an *emotive script* that favours somatic indicators over verbal expressions and indicates a valuation of reticence modulated into action over emotive expressiveness.[12]

The infamous red spots and sweaty brow of Skarpheðinn in the Icelandic saga *Brennu-Njáls saga* (*Saga of the Burning of Njal*) are a prime example.

[11] For a discussion of emotion in the sagas, see Miller, 'Emotions and the Sagas'; Miller, *Humiliation*; Sif Rikhardsdottir, *Emotion in Old Norse Literature*; Sif Rikhardsdottir, 'Translating Emotion'; Larrington, 'The Psychology of Emotion and Study of the Medieval Period'; Wolf, 'Laughter in Old Norse-Icelandic Literature'; Andersson, 'Is There a History of Emotions in Eddic Heroic Poetry?'; Hill, 'Guðlaugr Snorrason'; Sävborg, *Sagan om kärleken*; and Auður G. Magnúsdóttir, 'Ill er ofbráð reiði'.

[12] See Sif Rikhardsdottir, 'Translating Emotion'. See also Miller, 'Emotions and the Sagas', who provides an outstanding delineation of the preferred emotive behavioural patterns of saga characters.

Skarpheðinn's mother, Bergþóra, taunts Skarpheðinn and his brothers by reminding them that at the Hlíðarendi farm, the mistress of the house, Hallgerðr, has called Skarpheðinn and his brothers 'taðskegglingar' (Dung-beardlings) and their father 'karl inn skegglausi' (Old Beardless) to entertain her household:

> Bergþóra mælti, er menn sátu yfir borðum: 'Gjafir eru yðr gefnar feðgum, ok verðið þér litlir drengir af, nema þér launið.' 'Hvernig eru gjafir þær?' segir Skarpheðinn. 'Þér synir mínir eiguð allir eina gjǫf saman: þér eruð kallaðir taðskegglingar, en bóndi minn karl inn skegglausi.' 'Ekki hǫfu vér kvenna skap,' segir Skarpheðinn, 'at vér reiðimsk við ǫllu.' 'Reiddisk Gunnarr þó fyrir yðra hǫnd,' segir hon, 'ok þykkir hann skapgóðr; ok ef þér rekið eigi þessa réttar, þá munuð þér engrar skammar reka.' 'Gaman þykkir kerlingunni at, móður várri,' segir Skarpheðinn ok glotti við, en *þó spratt honum sveiti í enni, ok kómu rauðir flekkar í kinnr honum, en því var ekki vant*.[13]
>
> [Bergthora spoke while the men were at table: 'Gifts have been given to you all, father and sons, and you will not receive much honour unless you repay them.'
>
> 'What gifts are these?' said Skarphedin.
>
> 'You, my sons, have all received the same gift: you have been called "Dung-beardlings", and my husband has been called "Old Beardless".'
>
> 'We do not have the temperament of women, that we become angry over everything,' said Skarphedin.
>
> 'Yet Gunnar was angered, on your behalf,' she said, 'and he is said to be mild-tempered. If you do not seek your right, you'll never avenge any shame.'
>
> 'The old lady our mother is entertained by this,' said Skarphedin and grinned, *but sweat formed on his brow and red spots on his cheeks, and this was unusual for him*.][14]

Skarpheðinn's effort to laugh off his mother's provocations are belied by the involuntary physiological response, which is in turn substantiated by the ensuing act of revenge. Moreover, the narratorial statement that Skarpheðinn's involuntary reaction (flushing and sweating) was unusual similarly indicates that impassiveness or emotive control may have been the standard or preferred behavioural pattern. In this case, Skarpheðinn is apparently having a harder

[13] *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, p. 114; my italics.

[14] *Njal's saga*, trans. by Cook, pp. 74–75; my italics. Minor amendments have been made to Robert Cook's translation. This passage is also discussed in Miller, 'Emotions and the Sagas', pp. 100–101; Auður G. Magnúsdóttir, 'Ill er ofbráð reiði', p. 55; and Low, 'The Mirthless Content of Skarpheðinn's Grin', p. 105.

time than usual suppressing his emotions, revealing thereby the intensity of his emotive reaction. In fact, William Ian Miller notes that Bergþóra's comment that Gunnarr became angry on his behalf is intended to drive home the point by provoking his sense of endangered manhood.[15]

The text adds, significantly, that his brother Grímr 'var hljóðr ok beit á vǫrrinni. Helga brá ekki við' (was silent and bit his lip. Helgi did not react), whereas their mother, on the other hand, 'geisaði mjǫk' (stormed about), indicating a gendered emotive script.[16] This gendered (or feminized) emotive script dictates a physical or performative display of anger and verbal incitement that is in stark contrast to the carefully suppressed (although threatening to surface) emotive reactions of her sons. Skarpheðinn's own comment that women are prone to angry outbursts supports the notion that male emotive behaviour was to be repressed, and that demonstrative emotive behaviour was considered to be a feminine domain. The ensuing retaliatory killing of Sigmundr and Skjǫldr by the brothers the following day indicates that the enflaming emotive behaviour of the mother (a generic stipulation for female *hvöt*, or whetting, that plays on both verbal and gestural display of emotion to incite men to action) has succeeded in the presumed intent of inciting her sons to avenge the family's honour.

Admittedly, behavioural codes are obviously always gendered, and so this comes as no surprise, but what is of interest here is the way in which those gendered scripts are coded, and the implications those codes have for the conceptualizations of femininity and masculinity. Moreover, such gender codes affect the way in which authors, translators, and scribes deal with emotive scripts where the coding defies or contradicts predominant gendered behavioural scripts. The deviation from a script by a male or female character is frequently a sign of an aberrant gendered behaviour or otherwise functions as a comic relief, as is apparent in the case of the scene of Bjǫrn of Mǫrk's comic assistance to Kári Sǫlmundarson in the previously mentioned saga:

> Kári mælti við Bjǫrn: 'Nú skulu vit ríða austr um fjall ok ofan í Skaptártungu ok fara leyniliga um þingmannasveit Flosa, því at ek ætla at koma mér utan austr í Álptafirði.' Bjǫrn mælti: 'Þetta er hættufǫr mikil, ok munu fáir hafa hug til nema þú ok ek.' Húsfreyja mælti: 'Ef þú fylgir Kára illa, þá skalt þú þat vita, at þú skalt aldri koma í

[15] Miller, 'Emotions and the Sagas', pp. 100–101.

[16] *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, p. 114; the translation is mine. The word choice here 'geisaði mjǫk' — translated as 'raging' by Cook (*Njal's saga*, p. 75) — indicates a very gestural exhibition of the underlying emotion where the emotions are displayed through physical agitation, a presumed verbal ranting, and goading behaviour.

> mína rekkju sinn síðan; skulu frændr mínir gera fjárskipti með okkr.' Bjǫrn svarar: 'Þat er líkara húsfreyja,' segir hann, 'at fyrir ǫðru þurfir þú ráð at gera en þat beri til skilnaðar okkars, því at ek mun mér bera vitni um þat, hverr garpr eða afreksmaðr ek em í vápnaskipti.'[17]
>
> [Kari spoke to Bjorn, 'Now we shall ride east across the mountains and down into Skaftartunga and travel on the sly through the district of Flosi's thingmen, for I'm planning to take passage abroad from Alftafjord.'
>
> Bjorn said, 'That's a risky undertaking, and not many men besides you and me would have the courage for it.'
>
> His wife spoke, 'If you let Kari down, you might as well know that you'll never come into my bed again. My kinsmen will divide the property between us.'
>
> Bjorn answered, 'It's more likely, dear wife,' he said, 'that you'll have to make other plans than our divorce, because I will bear witness to what a champion and man of prowess I am in battle.'][18]
>
> The discrepancy between Bjǫrn's haughty words, emulating the heroic masculine script, and his cowardly reputation and behaviour provides comic relief through the negation of his masculine behavioural attributes and the audience's complicity in the staging of his manhood.[19]

Even though both male and female behavioural patterns in the sagas reveal a much broader scope of differentiators or scripts than these examples show, the scene of Skarpheðinn's and Bergþóra's interactions nevertheless displays an emotive coding that is prototypical and is the underlying script for many of the most impactful scenes and personalities in the sagas. It should moreover be emphasized that Bergþóra's ranting at her sons is a form of whetting, a behavioural code stipulating male and female actions in an honour-based society, and as such is not merely an emotional reaction but a socially prescribed emotive script that has clear narrative parameters with recognizable behavioural patterns and emotive stipulations.[20] The scale of emotive reactions is thus larger

[17] *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, p. 429. The passage is too long to quote, but the scene of Kári and Bjǫrn's companionship and battles can be found on pages 428–37.

[18] *Njal's saga*, trans. by Cook, p. 288; the relevant passage is on pages 286–94.

[19] The underlying emotive narrative framework of the scene is more complex and plays on both the empathetic involvement of the audience and the valuation of heroism, both through Kári's stoicism and jovial banter with Bjǫrn and Bjǫrn's successful efforts to rise above his own limitations as a potential hero.

[20] Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir notes that 'critics have mostly come to the consensus that lament and whetting are typical female speech acts that were most likely legitimately available to

and more varied than these episodes would indicate, and while the examples above indicate a specific behavioural trait of female social obligation (whetting), other forms of female emotive behaviour are certainly present.

While saga authors and audiences may thus have appreciated (or preferred) an emotive script that favoured male reticence and female goading patterns, other genres provide ample evidence that they were nevertheless accustomed to different emotive scripts for female behaviour. In the Eddic poem *Guðrúnarkviða in fyrsta* (*The First Lay of Gudrun*) — which draws on the legendary material of the Niflung cycle memorialized in *Völsunga saga* and the German *Nibelungenlied* — the scene of Guðrún's reaction to the death of her husband, Sigurðr, reveals an alternative behavioural coding for female emotive performance.[21] The narrative voice — a personal and subjective voice that positions the audience in an empathetic stance with respect to Guðrún's loss — notes in the very first verse that Guðrún's behaviour, as she sits over her dead husband's body, does not comply with social expectations of female lamenting behaviour:

> gerðit hon hjúfra
> né hǫndum slá,
> né kveina um
> sem konur aðrar.[22]

(some) women during the medieval period' ('"Gerðit Hon ... sem konor aðrar"', p. 128). Carol Clover furthermore notes that 'whetting and lamenting are equivalent and interchangeable elements' and that the lament may thus have been used by women who were unable to take up arms themselves as a means of engaging in the societal system of honour and revenge by challenging their male relatives ('Hildigunnr's Lament', p. 23).

[21] *Guðrúnarkviða in fyrsta* is generally categorized with a group of Eddic poems referred to as Eddic elegies. Critics are divided on both their age and their relation to their more heroic counterparts. While the elegiac poems are generally presumed to be younger and under the influence of the romance tradition, Daniel Sävborg has recently argued (against the common consent) that the lament tradition, upon which the so-called Eddic elegies are based, has old Germanic roots. He points out that parallels can be found in Old Saxon, Old English, and Old Germanic poetry, indicating a pan-Germanic lament convention rather than a later generic deviation from the proto-typical heroic poems (Sävborg, 'Elegy in Eddic Poetry'). For the opposite view, see for instance Theodore Andersson's response to Sävborg's earlier work ('Is There a History of Emotions in Eddic Heroic Poetry?'); Vésteinn Ólason, 'Heusler and the Dating of Eddic Poetry'; and Lönnroth, 'Heroine in Grief'. Whether or not the Eddic elegies are a later development or hark back to a proto-Germanic lament tradition, they nevertheless coexisted with the saga material and thus were presumably familiar to their reading communities, although Gísli Sigurðsson has suggested that the target audience groups of the elegies may indeed have differed ('On the Classification of Eddic Heroic Poetry in View of the Oral Theory').

[22] *Eddukvæði*, ed. by Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason, p. 329, v. 1.

[she did not lament
nor beat her hands
nor wail
as other women.] (my translation)

The narratorial comment indicates that her reticence is considered unusual behaviour and that the expected female behavioural pattern is one of public or performed ritual of mourning.[23]

The scene is reminiscent of Egill Skallagrímsson's reaction to his son's death in *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar*, where the clothes quite literally burst from the strain of his sorrow, which stages the somatic strain of containing the expanding or rising emotion of grief and anger.[24] Significantly, in the description of Egill, there is no access to his internal state. The tone is objective and matter-of-fact with no emotive investment, and the audience must surmise that the bursting of his clothes is indeed due to emotive strain rather than, for instance, from having been wet. In the case of *Guðrúnarkviða in fyrsta*, the focalization is, on the other hand, internal, evoking an interior and subjective state. We do not hear Guðrún's voice until those interior emotions have been released through the gestures of mourning (collapse, the loose hair, the crimson cheek, and crying). The emotive release prompts her voice through which the sorrow can be articulated. In Egill's case the emotive release occurs *by means* of the poetic articulation, whereas here the somatic performance appears to be a necessary prelude to the poetic articulation. This difference reveals perhaps a more subtle gendered divide in emotive comportment beyond the mere emotive expressions, that is, a script in which emotive interiority is feminized and so any masculine emotive interiority must be deduced. Alternatively, it could indicate a generic emotive script that favours poetic voice as the means of accessing emotive interiority. Egill's later verbalization of his sorrow — so carefully contained and suppressed throughout the narrative — in the poem *Sonatorrek*, would substantiate such generic differentiators.[25]

[23] For gendered mourning behaviour in Old Norse literature and mythology, see, for instance, Mills, 'Grief, Gender, and the Genre' and Lindow, 'The Tears of the Gods'. See also Hill, '*Guðrúnarkviða in fyrsta*' and Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir, 'Gerðit Hon ... sem konor aðrar' for alternative readings of the poem.

[24] Sif Rikhardsdottir, 'Translating Emotion'.

[25] Sävborg calls attention to similarities between *Guðrúnarkviða in fyrsta* and *Sonatorrek* as elegiac forms, pointing out that 'in Egill Skallagrímsson's *Sonatorrek*, the difficulty of expressing grief is the poem's starting point' and that by expressing his grief, he, like Guðrún in the poem, 'regains [his] strength' ('Elegy in Eddic Poetry', p. 92). Hill, however, considers Guðrún's

Sociocultural Emotive Coding

If we consider romance as a genre, it is evident that there is a reciprocal relation between emotive literary scripts and sociocultural emotive coding of romance. For instance, Chrétien de Troyes's romances may be said to have been both descriptive and prescriptive in their emotive scripts. Drawing on an ideology heralded in the troubadour lyrical tradition of ennobling love and situating it firmly within the sociopolitical conditions of feudal allegiances and the courtly environment, the romance offered a literary model of courtly behaviour that encompassed an emotive script for both male and female subjects.[26] When introduced in Norway in the mid-thirteenth century — whatever the royal agenda of King Hákon Hákonarson may have been — those emotive scripts would have contributed to establishing the romance as a generic form that differed fundamentally from the pre-existing generic conventions of the existing literature.[27]

Admittedly, the Nordic communities were already steeped in the continental literary traditions and certainly partook in the transcontinental interest in historiography in the twelfth century. Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae* was translated around 1200 in Iceland, predating the incursion of the French material into Norway by at least two decades.[28] The existence of carved images of scenes from what is presumably the story of Yvain on a large medieval wooden church door in Valþjófsstaðir in the east of Iceland indicates that the material related to the story of Yvain's *aventures* may have passed earlier to Iceland and through alternative representative forms than previously assumed.[29] The carvings represent scenes from the story of Yvain as depicted in the Welsh *Owein* and in Chrétien's romance *Le Chevalier au Lion*. The door

release to be enacted by means of weeping, rather than the expression of grief ('*Guðrúnarkviða in fyrsta*').

[26] For an excellent discussion of the social function of love and love as a behavioural paradigm for the aristocracy, see Jaeger, *Ennobling Love*.

[27] For general information on the transmission and reception of the courtly romance in Norway (and Iceland), see Kalinke, *King Arthur North-by-Northwest*; Glauser, 'Romance (Translated *Riddarasögur*)'; Kalinke, *The Arthur of the North*; Sif Rikhardsdottir, *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse*; Glauser and Kramarz-Bein, *Rittersagas*; Johanterwage and Würth, *Übersetzen im skandinavischen Mittelalter*; Johansson and Mundal, *Riddarasögur*; and Seidel, *Textvarianz und Textstabilität*. For an overview of the field, see Sif Rikhardsdottir and Eriksen, 'État présent'.

[28] Gropper, '*Breta sögur* and *Merlínússpá*'. See also Kalinke, 'Arthur, King of Iceland'.

[29] The door is preserved in the National Museum of Iceland.

is believed to have been carved around 1200 in Iceland, and if so, this establishes the existence of the *matière de Bretagne* in Iceland — at the very least a visual depiction of scenes from the tale — again at least two decades before the introduction of the courtly romance at the court of King Hákon Hákonarson in Norway.[30]

While these previous transmissions of literary material thus indicate an active border-crossing literary activity, they differ nevertheless from the later import of French material in the sense that they represent individualized and non-regulated transmissions of narrative material that were incorporated into and fused with indigenous literary pursuits. The later import of the French material at the court not only represented a deliberate introduction of the romance as a courtly form, but the corpus of translations may also have assumed an authoritative status as a *corpus* in Iceland, possibly due to King Hákon's patronage, thus heralding the generic form of romance as an authoritative mode of literary representation. The fact that alternative genres, such as the *chansons de geste*, were translated under the rubric and in the narrative form of romance supports this notion.

While the generic coding of the saga material stipulated male emotive behaviour as non-verbal and non-gestural, the emotive script of romance reversed the gendered codes of behaviour, heralding effusive emotionality as the pinnacle of courtly and noble masculine behaviour. To a certain extent, it can be said that romance brought an alternative emotive script to Scandinavia: one in which the emotive sensibility previously associated with female gendered performance has been transposed and resignified to signal masculine nobility. The emotive behaviour depicted in the courtly romance is intimately interlinked with the sociopolitical conditions of feudal society and courtly politics. In fact, it may be said that the emotive script of romance is fundamental to its generic functioning inasmuch as *amour courtois* (*fin'amor* in Occitan, or courtly love) is the hallmark of the courtly romance as a genre in the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries.

As a courtly ideology and literary motif, 'love', the fundamental tenet of romance, owes perhaps more to its aristocratic or feudal sociopolitical context than to emotion as we understand it today. Yvain's madness in Chrétien de Troyes's *Le Chevalier au Lion* is a case in point. His madness can be said to be the direct result of his lady's withdrawal of her love.[31] Yet the immeasurable

[30] For a description of the door, see Eldjárn, *Hundrað ár í Þjóðminjasafni* and Björn M. Ólsen, 'Valþjófsstaðahurðin'.

[31] For an outstanding discussion of madness and its function in medieval French literature, see Huot, *Madness in Medieval French Literature*.

love that rendered him her eternal 'prisoner' at the beginning of the romance did not detract him from overstaying the time period she had previously allotted for his adventures with Gawain.[32] Love in fact poses as a declaration of allegiance originating in sociopolitical positioning and derives its value from its socially integrative function and desire for social mobility rather than an inherently internal feeling.[33] The courtly love topos is, as a matter of fact, dependent on a delicate balance between feudal allegiance, sociopolitical positioning, and aristocratic conceptualizations of noble behaviour and gendered relations. Yvain's madness in a sense signals figuratively the actual expulsion from his previously held position as lord and the public consequences of the breach of courtly etiquette and communal (or feudal) coding. Indeed, the remainder of the romance can be said to depict the re-establishment of the social balance between feudal allegiance, marital relations, and knightly obligations, resulting eventually in the reconciliation between Yvain and his lady. Sandra Hindman's insightful analysis of the illumination depicting the reconciliation acts in BnF, MS fr. 1433 (dated around 1300) as a proxy-matrimonial scene supports the notion that the final reconciliation had a deeper social and literary significance than the actual matrimonial scene.[34]

The romance of *Erec et Enide* similarly posits the conflict between the emotive reality of marital bliss and the social obligations of lordship, which in fact requires reigning in personal emotions and replacing them with culturally coded emotive performances that function as social mechanism.[35] Personal (or obsessive) love as expressed by Erec's disregard of social or knightly obligations of moderation and governance at the early stages of his marriage to Enide threatens to destabilize the social balance. The Joy of the Court scene at the end of the romance, where the oppressive love of the lady has metamorphosed into a symbolic ordeal of death for itinerant knights and a literal torment for both her and her lover, epitomizes the inherent dangers of excessive or imbalanced emotion that Erec and Enide have to overcome.[36] The scene closes the signify-

[32] Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Chevalier au Lion (Yvain)*, ed. and trans. by Hult, l. 1929.

[33] For an elaboration on love as a social force in *Yvain*, see Cheyette and Chickering, 'Love, Anger, and Peace'.

[34] Hindman, *Sealed in Parchment*, pp. 50–52.

[35] I would like to express my deep gratitude to Michel Zink, whose inspiring lecture on 'Sense and Sensuality in *Erec et Enide*' has shaped my thoughts on the romance, and so my argument here owes much to his discussion of marital love in the romance.

[36] Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec et Enide*, ed. and trans. by Fritz, ll. 5451–6191.

ing circle of proper emotive behaviour and celebrates 'joie' as an act of balance between the private sphere and public sphere of lordly obligations.

When the political subtext of feudal relations is removed in the transferal across sociocultural borders, this signifying framework vanishes and what remains is the emotive behavioural patterning staged as a literary phenomenon. The apparent discomfort with or disinterest in the underlying emotive script of courtly love in the Icelandic redactions of the translated romances is evident in the seemingly deliberate omission of scenes where such emotive scripts are most evident and/or a shift in the behavioural coding of characters, perhaps to adjust the gendered coding to what was presumably a more normative cultural coding of such behaviour. Yet the romances nevertheless introduced a topos of emotive behaviour that was integrated into the cultural system, establishing an emotive literary identity radically diverse from the previously staged male and female identity.

The Romance of Tristran in the North

The transmission of Thomas de Bretagne's *Tristran*, as possibly one of the earliest romances translated at the court of King Hákon, provides an example of the subtle shifts in the underlying emotive script of the romance in transit. The Old Norse *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*, presumably translated from a copy (or copies) of Thomas's *Tristran* by Brother Robert in 1226, at first glance apparently seeks to maintain the emotive script underlying Tristran's passionate love, although it is significantly curtailed.[37] The Norse translator (or later scribes) nevertheless assumes a critical stance by adjusting its signifying potential.

Admittedly the only extant copies of *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar* are very late, the earliest complete manuscript, AM 543 4to in the Arnamagnæan Institute in Copenhagen, being a paper manuscript from the late seventeenth century, with only a few fragments from the fifteenth century extant, complicating any direct comparison and obfuscating the role played by later scribes in the process of any potential refashioning.[38] Peter Jorgensen notes that the preserved

[37] Although the dating has been questioned (Sverrir Tómasson, 'Hvenær var Tristrams sögu snúið?'), the general consensus is that the saga was most likely translated during King Hákon's reign. For a comparison of the French romance and its Norse translation, see Finlay, '"Intolerable Love"'; Johanterwage, 'Minnetrank und Brautuntershub in der *Tristrams saga ok Ísǫndar*'; Kjær, '*Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*'; and Álfrún Gunnlaugsdóttir, *Tristán en el Norte*.

[38] Two other paper copies exist: Reykjavík, NULI, ÍB 51 fol., also from the late seven-

text in the earlier fragments nevertheless 'strongly supports the assumption that the paper manuscripts, although late, do contain a rather conservative version of the original saga'.[39] The very close, often word-by-word, translation suggests that the translator likely followed the source rather closely and that any deviations were likely to be intentional, whether they formed part of the original translation or later scribal amendments. The term 'translator' as used here thus presumes a certain degree of flexibility, allowing for later scribal amendments and recognizing that the extant text does not necessarily (and most likely does not) reflect an accurate version of the initial translation. This does not, however, deflect from the argument.

Despite the relatively close affinity of Thomas's *Tristan* to the extant fragments, the translator (or scribe) clearly shifts the focus from the philosophical and psychological constituents of love to the negative social consequences of unrestrained passion. Framing his narrative in the added preface as a story about an 'unbearable' love (*óbærilig ást*), the focus remains on the adverse and destructive aspects of love. The stage is set at the outset, in Tristram's birth, which is defined by 'hryggleik [...] harmi ok sorgum' (sorrowfulness [...] anguish and grief).[40] The comparable passage has not been preserved in French and so there is no way of knowing how Tristram's birth may have been staged in Thomas's version. Considering the portions where direct comparison is possible it is, however, apparent that while certain sections have been translated faithfully, several long passages — where the characters or the narrator philosophize about love — have been adjusted, summarized, or eliminated entirely.

The extended interior monologue of Tristran as he deliberates on his fate and Ysolt's marital life with King Mark is, for instance, missing in its entirety. Instead the text merely states:

teenth century, and Reykjavík, NULI, JS 8 fol., from the first half of the eighteenth century. The fifteenth-century fragments are AM 567, XXII, 460 in the Arnamagnæan Institute in Copenhagen and the Reeves fragment in the Library of Congress, Washington DC. An additional (later) fragment as well as two résumés have also been preserved. For further information about the manuscripts, see *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*, ed. and trans. by Jorgensen, pp. 25–26; Kalinke and Mitchell, *Bibliography of Old Norse-Icelandic Romance*, p. 116; and Schach, 'Some Observations on *Tristrams saga*', pp. 104–15.

[39] *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*, ed. and trans. by Jorgensen, p. 26.

[40] *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*, ed. and trans. by Jorgensen, p. 48; the translation here is mine. The edition will hereafter be cited with the relevant page number following the quotation, followed by Jorgensen's facing-page English translation. The edition used here is based on the oldest complete manuscript of the Norse text, AM 543 4to.

> Ok er nú Tristram í mikilli íhugan um sína ráðagerð, ok getr hann enga skynsemi gert sér aðra en þá, at hann vill freista, ef hann mætti nokkut yndi fá móti þeiri ást, er hann hefir sá lengi haft með angri ok óró, harmi ok hugsóttum. Því vill hann freista, ef ný ást ok yndi mætti gefa honum at gleyma Ísönd, þvíat hann hyggr hún muni hann hafa fyrirlátið. Eða sér til gagns og gamans vildi hann konu eiga. At ekki ásakaði Ísodd hann, því vill hann fá hana sakir nafns, frægðar ok meðferða. Ok biðr hann því Ísoddar hertugasystur, festir hana ok fær at frænda ráði ok vilja. Ok váru allir landsmenn því fegnir. (168)
>
> [Now Tristram thought deeply about this course of action, but couldn't reach any other decision but to try to find some happiness as opposed to the love that for so long had brought him sorrow and restlessness, sadness and concern. He wanted to find out if new love and happiness could make him forget Ísönd, for he assumed that she must have forsaken him. Or perhaps he just wanted to get married for fun and pleasure, but, so as not to be reproached by Ísodd, he wished to marry her because of her bearing, her fame, and her fine family name. And so, with the advice and support of her relatives, he asked for the hand of Ísodd, the sister of the duke, and married her. This made all the inhabitants of the kingdom very happy.] (169)

The emphasis is on the feelings of sorrow (*angr*), sadness (*harmr*), and disquiet (*óró*), epitomized in the choice of the word 'hugsótt' (malady of the mind) to describe his state.[41] The comparable passage in French, as preserved in Oxford, Bodl., MS Fr. D. 16, focuses instead on an internal debate over the bonds of love, where Tristram ponders the 'delit d'amur' (pleasures of love) he envisions Ysolt to be having with the king:

> Jo main ma vie en grant dolur,
> E vos vostre en delit d'amur.
> Jo ne faz fors vos desirer,
> E vos nel pez consirer
> Que deduit e joie n'aiez
> E que tuiz voz buens ne facez.
> Pur vostre cors su jo em paine,
> Li reis sa joië en vos maine;

[41] Kalinke notes the Norse translators' tendency to use alliteration to highlight dramatic moments in their source texts (*King Arthur North-by-Northwest*, p. 158). The alliterating pair 'angri ok óró' and 'harmi ok hugsóttum' thus draws attention to the implicit message of harm, disquiet, and unhappiness the love has brought the couple by means of their intensified aural impact. There is a similar linguistic play apparent in the French text in the rhyming scheme, where *dolur*/*d'amur* (ll. 64–65) foregrounds the play on the underlying dichotomy of love and sorrow and *desirer*/*consirer* (ll. 66–67) draws attention to the underlying physical desire that infuses his pensiveness (Thomas, *Tristran*, ed. and trans. by Gregory).

Sun deduit mainë e sun buen,
Ço que mien fu orë est suen.

[The life I lead is one of great sorrow,
but yours is given to the pleasures of love.
All I do is to long for you
whilst you cannot help
but have your joy and delight
and the pleasures of love to the full.
My body aches for yours,
while the king takes his pleasure with you:
he has his pleasure and delight
what once was mine is now his.][42]

Sorrow (*dolur*) is intermingled with pleasure (*delit*), and the emphasis is on the joy or delight of physical love, both remembered and imagined. The prolonged interior monologue in the French text, which extends for 182 lines (ll. 54–235), is summoned in a word in the Norse version by the narrator's comment: 'er nú Tristram í mikilli íhugan' (168) ('now Tristram thought deeply') (169).[43] In the Norse text there is, on the other hand, a distinct emphasis on negative emotions (sorrow, hate, grief) and the potentially negative consequences of love's passion with an apparent disdain for the physicality of lovemaking, expressed more eloquently in Thomas's version.[44] Alison Finlay suggests that the 'emphasis on the pain and sorrow brought upon the lovers by their love may reflect a clerical bias' and notes additionally that it 'chimes well with the emphasis on pain inflicted by love found in *Íslendingasögur* such as *Kormáks saga*' hinting at a potential social modifier with respect to emotive comportment.[45]

The long passage describing the initial musing of Tristran and Ysolt on their newly discovered love, featured in the Carlisle fragment (the Holm Cultram Cartulary) — the only extant manuscript fragment to contain the scene in French — is similarly entirely absent the Old Norse version. The Norse text has

[42] Thomas, *Tristran*, ed. and trans. by Gregory, ll. 64–73.

[43] The interior monologue in the French text is followed by an extended narratorial commentary until the scene ends with the passage describing the betrothal and matrimony of Tristan and Yseut of the White Hands (ll. 422–37), which can also be found in the Norse version.

[44] The dismissive narratorial comment in the Norse text that perhaps Tristram just wanted to get married for 'gagns og gamans' (168) ('fun and pleasure') (169) appears to be an addition by the translator (or later scribes), indicating perhaps a pejorative interpretation of his actions in marrying the hapless Ísodd.

[45] Finlay, 'Intolerable Love', pp. 215–16.

long since been used to reconstruct the missing sections of the French version. The Carlisle fragment, discovered in the early 1990s, reveals, however, that in the early scenes of Tristran's and Ysolt's love the translator or scribe has been quite selective in his representation.[46] The word play on *amer* (bitter), *la mer* (the sea) and *l'amur*/*amer* (love/loving) in the Carlisle fragment as the fated lovers discover and express their feelings is missing in its entirety in the Norse version:

> Tristran ad noté chescun dit,
> Mes ele l'ad issi forsvëé
> Par 'l'amer' que ele ad tant changee
> Que ne set si cele dolur
> Ad de la mer ou de l'amur,
> Que s'ele dit 'amer' de 'la mer'
> Ou pur 'l'amur' diet 'amer'.
>
> [Tristan followed closely everything she said,
> but she led him so much astray
> by continually playing on the word 'love'
> that he does not know if she is suffering
> because of the sea or because of love,
> or if, when she says 'loving', she means 'the sea',
> or whether instead of 'love' she is saying 'bitterness'.][47]

Instead the Norse text merely states:

> Ok eru þau nú bæði svikin af þeim drykk, er þau drukku [...] ok kom þeim þá báðum í harmfullt líf ok meinlæti ok langa hugsótt með líkams girnd ok tilfýsiligum hætti. Var þegar hugr Tristrams til Ísöndar ok hennar hugr allr á honum með svá ákafri ást, at enga bót máttu þau þar í móti gera. (120)

[46] It is of course quite possible that the copy used by the translator contained a different version of events than the Carlisle fragment, but the otherwise close affinity with the extant fragments of Thomas's text suggests that whether or not the source may have differed here, the modifications are nevertheless consistent with abridgements or alterations made in the remainder of the text. The Carlisle fragment, which dates from the late thirteenth century, contains about 154 lines of hitherto unknown text from Thomas's poem and was edited by Benskin, Hunt, and Short in 'Un nouveau fragment du *Tristan* de Thomas'.

[47] 'The Carlisle Fragment of Thomas's *Tristran*', ed. and trans. by Short, ll. 46–52, hereafter cited with line numbers following the quotation. The preserved lines from this passage run to about one hundred lines. See also Alison Finlay, who provides a detailed comparison of the Norse text and the Carlisle fragment, including this scene ('"Intolerable Love"', particularly pp. 212–15).

> [Now both were deceived by the drink they had drunk [...] condemning them to a life of sorrow and trouble and anxiety caused by carnal desire and constant longing. Immediately Tristram's heart was drawn to Ísönd and hers to him with such an ardent love that there was nothing they could do about it.] (121)

It is significant here that any reference to the joy of love and the physical pleasure derived from the enactment of those desires is missing. Instead love's desire is here framed as a 'betrayal' with an emphasis on the negative consequences and aspects of their unrestrained (and unrestrainable) passions. The French text, on the other hand, emphasizes the *joie* of their newly discovered love and the pleasure they take from satisfying their desires.

The text moreover ascribes a notable agency to Ísönd, both emotionally and in terms of the logistics of their affair and its concealment. It is Ísönd who first casts a loving eye towards Tristram, before there has been any demonstrative interest on his part: 'ok leit hún þá á hit fríða andlit hans með ástsamligum augum' (112) ('she gazed upon his handsome countenance with loving eyes') (113), although the statement is shortly afterwards followed by her declaration of hate upon discovering that Tristram had killed Morhold, her maternal uncle. It is moreover Ísönd who initiates the ploy with Bringvet:

> En frú Ísönd var hin hyggnasta konu. Ok er á leið kveldit, *þá tók hún í hönd Tristram*, ok gengu þau bæði saman í svefnhús kóngs ok kölluðu til sín Bringvet fylgismey sína á einmæli, ok tók þá Ísönd mjök at gráta ok bað hana fögrum orðum, at hún skyldi hjálpa sér við þá nátt ok vera í dróttningar stað í kóngsgarði ok í hans rekkju, sem hún væri sjálf dróttning. (120, my italics)

> [But Lady Ísönd was a most clever woman, and as the evening wore on *she took Tristram by the hand*, and they went together to the king's bedchamber and summoned Bringvet, her attendant, for a private talk. Ísönd began to sob and asked her most movingly, if she might help her that night by taking her place in the king's palace and in his bed, as if she were the queen.] (121, my italics)

In the Carlisle fragment it is Tristan who leads her: 'Dan Tristran la tien[t par la main]' (l. 121) ('with lord Tristan leading her [by the hand]'). The editors of the Carlisle fragment note that 'le traducteur norrois semble avoir confondu sujet et objet' (the Norse translator seems to have mistaken the subject for the object), whereas Alison Finlay suggests that the change may be 'a reflection of the tendency of saga writers to treat their heroines as powerful personalities'.[48]

[48] Benskin, Hunt, and Short, 'Un nouveau fragment du *Tristan* de Thomas', p. 311 (see note to line 121); and Finlay, '"Intolerable Love"', p. 208, respectively. Johanterwage arrives indepen-

In light of the changes made in the depiction of other female protagonists — for instance in the representation of Marmoria in *Partalopa saga* — such an intentional shift in agency is not at all beyond the realm of possibility.[49]

Finlay additionally points out that while in the Norse text King Markis also drinks of the potion — establishing a tragic and unavoidable love triangle — the Carlisle fragment shows the king merely drinking wine (not the potion) before returning to bed with Isolt, after having unknowingly consummated his marriage to Isolt with Brangain: 'Aprés le vin o[vec li jut]' (149) ('After the wine had been served, [Mark slept with her]').[50] Finlay further compares both the Norse and the French version to Gottfried von Straßburg's version, where the suggestion that the king had shared in the potion is mentioned only to be dismissed by the poet, suggesting that there may have been alternative versions of the scene in circulation.[51] The element of betrayal is further underlined in the German version as the text states specifically that sharing the wine with the newlywed bride is a custom that celebrates her newly lost virginity, ironically foregrounding that the virginity the king has taken is not that of Îsôt, with whom he is sharing the wine, but of Brangæne.[52]

These minor adjustments in the value systems underlying the emotive script indicate an assimilation of the emotive script of the source to the emotive mentalities of the reading communities, while the framing of the story simultaneously reveals the formation of a new literary space within which different emotive scripts can be articulated. Tristram's construction of the Hall of Statues where his desires can be enacted (if not actualized) replicates on a narrative level the romance's formal framework as a figurative space for the articulation of literary desires and social anxieties. Tristram's lovesickness is made material in the construction of the hall and the inanimate replica of his beloved. In fact, Heidi Støa surmises that the Hall of Statues episode might provide an instance where internal psychology (and hence by definition emotionality) is externalized, indicating an effort at adapting such interiority to an emotive script that

dently at the same conclusion as Finlay here ('Minnetrank und Brautuntershub in der *Tristrams saga ok Ísǫndar*', p. 205).

[49] Sif Rikhardsdottir, *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse*, pp. 113–51.

[50] Finlay, '"Intolerable Love"', pp. 209–12, and Benskin, Hunt, and Short, 'Un nouveau fragment du *Tristan* de Thomas', l. 149. See also Johanterwage, who makes a similar point ('Minnetrank und Brautuntershub in der *Tristrams saga ok Ísǫndar*', pp. 195–97).

[51] Finlay, '"Intolerable Love"', pp. 209–12.

[52] Gottfried von Straßburg, *Tristan*, ed. by Schröder, ll. 12642–54.

favours externalization of emotions.[53] The projection of emotive interiority is indeed in concordance with the saga convention of representative masculinity where emotionality is converted into action or is evinced through physiological symptoms rather than being vocalized.

The transmission of the story of Tristan is particularly interesting as it showcases multiple border crossings; the cross-linguistic translation from Old French/Anglo-Norman into Old Norse and then subsequently the intralingual generic and emotive code-switching in the Old Norse adaptation *Saga af Tristram ok Ísodd* — an odd retelling of the story that may act as a parody of the earlier translation — and finally in the cross-generic adaptation of the material in the fourteenth- or fifteenth-century ballad *Tristram's kvæði* (*The Ballad of Tristram*).[54] While the generic status of *Saga af Tristram ok Ísodd* is still being debated by critics — that is, whether the adaptation is intended to be a parodic, a humorous, or a serious imitation of its source — the tone of the adaption undermines the emotive subtext of both the French source text and its Norse translation.[55] Geraldine Barnes points out that in the later saga the 'notion of fateful passion is reduced to a single narratorial observation after Tristram's death that "mátti hann þó fyrir engan mun við sköpunum vinna" (288) (yet he was by no means able to withstand the fates) (289), an assertion somewhat contrary to the immediately preceding attribution of the love affair to God's purpose: "sjálfr guð hafði þeim skipat saman af sinni samvizku" (288) (God himself in his wisdom had destined them for each other)'.[56]

Interestingly, the ballad reverses the emotive script, turning back to the courtly original in its emphasis on the tragic and doomed love affair, memorialized in the refrain: 'Þeim var ekki skapat nema skilja' (They had no other fate than to be parted).[57]

[53] Støa, 'The Lover and the Statue'.

[54] For further information on the relationship between the Norse Tristan materials, including Danish folk materials, see Barnes, 'The Tristan Legend' and works cited there. The later *Saga af Tristram ok Ísodd* has indeed received more attention than its presumed source; see for instance Schach, 'Some Observations on the Influence of *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar* on Old Icelandic Literature'; Kramarz-Bein, 'Die jüngere altisländische *Tristrams saga ok Ísoddar* und ihre literarische Tradition'; Francini, 'The *Saga af Tristram ok Ísodd*'.

[55] For the argument that the story presents a parody of the earlier translation, see for instance Schach, '*Tristrams Saga ok Ýsoddar* as Burlesque'. For the opposite view, see, for instance, Thomas, 'The Briar and the Vine' and van Dijk, 'Amused by Death'. Kalinke is aligned with Schach, although she considers the story to be more humorous than parodic (*King Arthur North-by-Northwest*, pp. 199–202).

[56] Barnes, 'The Tristan Legend', p. 72.

[57] *Tristrams kvæði*, ed. and trans. by Cook.

The ballad focuses on the single episode of Tristram's death, the black Ísodd's (Yseut of the White Hands) jealousy, and the bright Ísodd's (Yseut) failed voyage to save him, ending with the lovely imagery of the interlinking branches of the trees growing above their respective graves. The repetition of the refrain underlines the tragic fate of the lovers. The focus on the final scenes from the romance indicates that the story of Tristan is likely to have been known to the audiences and singers of the ballad as it begins in medias res on the poisonous wound sustained by Tristram in battle and the message sent to his beloved Ísodd. This shift in the emotive script may indicate a temporal adjustment in the emotive literary identities of the reading communities or, alternatively, a generic code-switching in the shift from the prose romance form to the ballad form.

Insular Literary Identities

Medieval Britain and Ireland represent a very different context from Iceland. While Iceland was relatively monolingual, with Latin coexisting with Norse as the language of the Church (although not necessarily as the language of the law), and those elements of the population who had originated in the British Isles never reaching the dominant sphere of textual culture (or if it did, there is at the very least no extant evidence of such writings), the situation was reversed in Britain, where the insular borders enclosed a horde of different languages, cultural pasts, and peoples that defied its geographic demarcations.[58] The complexity of the multilingual literary tradition within the borders of the currently defined British Isles — not to mention the continually expanding and contracting borders of the kingdom both on the continent and within its insular boundaries — created very different circumstances for the formation of emotive literary identities that defy such generic stability and coherence.

The presence of the courtly material within the geographic borders of Britain means that there is no transnational movement of literary material bringing with it new emotive scripts. Those emotive scripts already existed within the insular borders, although these may very well have been limited to certain social groups or linguistic communities. There is, nevertheless, evidence of a movement that is not territorial in its essence, but linguistic, and that moreover indicates a sociocultural code-switching. The reformulation of the courtly Anglo-Norman *lai* of *Lanval*, presumably composed by Marie de

[58] Very little has been written on the evidence of Celtic languages in Iceland. For further information, see for instance Craigie, 'Gaelic Words and Names' and Hermann Pálsson, *Keltar á Íslandi*.

France, as the Middle English *Sir Launfal* reveals a similar process of adaptation as the Icelandic *Saga af Tristram ok Ísodd*.[59] The textual exemplar indicates not a process of linguistic adaptation as much as a process of regeneration of the materials' emotive literary identity, which may indeed indicate a sociocultural code-switching (i.e. a change in the composition of the audience group) or, alternatively, a calculated rebranding of its emotive script to convey a modified intent and different emotive identity.[60] The temporal distance between Marie de France's late twelfth-century *Lanval* and Thomas Chestre's late fourteenth-century *Sir Launfal* certainly plays a role here as in the case of the latter adaptations of the Tristran material in Iceland, indicating potentially a shift in the 'emotional regime' of the time or the emotive literary identities of the reading communities for which these texts were being produced.

The underlying burlesque tone of *Sir Launfal* is reminiscent of the parodic tone of the *Saga af Tristram ok Ísodd*, indicating the generic redefinition through emotive code-switching. Whereas *Lanval* solicits an empathetic involvement of the audience in the commiseration with the troubles of the protagonist, *Sir Launfal* generates instead an empathetic void or distance necessary to enjoy the subtle irony. The emotive script is thus redrawn. Such shifts in emotive scripts dictate representative changes alerting the audience to adjust or accommodate their literary expectations to understand where they are to be positioned with respect to the underlying signification of the acts, words, and gestures with which they are being presented. The emotive script is thus fundamentally interlinked with both generic and ideological framework of the narrative and determines the audience's positioning with respect to narratorial comprehension and enjoyment.

By curtailing and adapting the emotive scripts to suit the sociocultural or literary conventions of their receiving audiences, the translated romances shifted the fundamental tenet of the emotive subtext of their sources. The emotive script of the courtly romance was refashioned to encompass alternative emotive scripts, aimed, for instance, at hagiographical compassion in *Mírmanns saga* or featuring burlesque gender politics in *Viktors saga ok Blávus*.[61] Some of the native Icelandic romances from the fourteenth century, such as *Sigurðar saga þögla*, show in fact more affinities with the *fornaldarsögur* (legendary sagas) than the romance as a generic form.[62] Moreover, the subgenre of the maiden

[59] Marie de France, *Les Lais de Marie de France*, ed. by Rychner, pp. 72–92, and Chestre, *Sir Launfal*, ed. by Bliss.

[60] See Sif Rikhardsdottir, *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse*, pp. 39–45.

[61] *Mírmanns saga* ed. by Slay and *Viktors saga ok Blávus*, ed. by Jónas Kristjánsson.

[62] *Sigurðar saga þǫgla*, ed. by Loth.

king romances, which focus on female sovereignty and agency, indicates the flexibility of the genre to encompass and contend with social issues, particularly those relating to gendered behavioural norms and the presumed threat posed to social stability by any deviations from those norms. The romance as a genre thus provided a platform in late medieval Iceland for hybridization where motifs, themes, and styles could be combined, unravelled, and resignified. Once adapted to Icelandic sociocultural conditions, the romance became more of a literary space for magic, geographic expansionism, gender relations, and female agency than about love and marriage, as in Chrétien's *Erec et Enide*, Christian nobility and ideals, as in *Le Conte du Graal*, or courtly love and lordly fidelity, as in *Le Chevalier au Lion*. This complex interplay of transnational textual movement and regional identity formation reveals the role of cultural exchange and cultural resistance in the formation of literary identities and mentalities and the function emotive scripts have in actualizing such cultural identities.

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