Inga Henriette Undheim

Lottery Dreams in Dano-Norwegian *Skilling* Ballads

Do lotteries sell dreams or reality? When the Genoese-style lottery, or *lotto*, was established in Scandinavia in the early 1770s, it was an event that, for many, for the first time enabled dreams to come true. Where previous lotteries had been reserved for a few, the lotto, with its low entry price and unlimited quantity of tickets, was available to everyone. Moreover, the prizes offered gave reason to dream: they were large sums that could change the lives of the winners completely.

The lotto quickly became immensely popular; even if few or no-one won, everyone wanted to take part. However, this success did not go unnoticed. In Denmark-Norway, a heated debate flared up among the kingdom's patriots and intellectuals.[1] The Dano-Norwegian lotto ("Tallotteriet") was described as a threat to the status quo; with the public's new prospect of being able to live life to the fullest without having to work, several commentators warned against societal collapse.[2] That said, there is reason to believe that the lottery's sweet song of sudden wealth sold just as well as the patriots' self-righteous moral lessons, as the dream of winning the lottery quickly became a common motif in the popular ballads of the time.[3] The first lottery ballads appear humorous; they seem to take part in the satirical and parodic lottery literature that accompanied the lotto debate in Denmark-Norway.[4] This does not imply that "lottery ballads" are a

1 For further review of this debate, see, *infra*, Johanne Slettvoll Kristiansen, "Innovation, Temptation, and Mathematical Education". See also Horstbøll, Langen, and Stjernfelt's chapter on the "dangerous lottery" in *Grov konfækt. Tre vilde år med trykkefrihed 1770–73* (Gyldendal, 2020), and Ulrik Langen "'The Worst Invention Ever': The Number Lottery and its Critics During the Press Freedom Period in Denmark-Norway, 1770–1773", *Cultural and Social History* 21, no. 1 (2023): 23–39, https://doi.org/10.1080/14780038.2023.2256212.

2 See, for example, Otto Diderich Lütken, "Beviis at Lotteriers Fremgang er Europæ Fald og Staternes Ødeleggelse", digital edition from *Trykkefrihedens Skrifter (1770–1773)*, 1.9.9, the Royal Danish Library (https://tekster.kb.dk/tfs). Version 2.0, October 2021, and Philoplebis, "Patriotiske Tanker I Anledning af Tal-Lotteriet", digital edition from *Trykkefrihedens Skrifter (1770–1773)*, 1.9.14, the Royal Danish Library (https://tekster.kb.dk/tfs). Version 2.0, October 2021.

3 I owe Siv Gøril Brandtzæg (NTNU), Anne Sigrid Refsum (UiB), Karin Strand, and Sverker Hyltén-Cavallius (Svenskt visarkiv), as well as the staff at the Royal Danish Library, a great deal of thanks for providing expert guidance through the cluttered universe and archives of the skilling ballads.

4 See, for example, the ballad "Tallotteriet" (1773/1820s), http://www5.kb.dk/images/billed/2010/okt/billeder/object274/da/, and "Lystig Underretning om Drømme-Tal I Tal-Lotteriet, som viiser Maaden man skal tage Tallene efter paa det man har drømt", digital edition from *Trykkefrihedens*

 https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111445540-014

uniquely Scandinavian phenomenon; on the contrary, ballads about lotteries seem to abound wherever lotteries occur – in the Low Countries, in Italy, in France, in England, and so on.[5] There are, however, no overviews or systematic studies of ballads with lottery motifs, as these ballads are part of a literary genre that has long been neglected, since most documents have been hidden, forgotten, or lost.[6] The examples found are therefore mostly serendipitous. In this context, England makes an exception, as large archives of anglophone broadside ballads in recent years have been digitised and made searchable. Searches in these archives indicate that ballads with lottery motifs really were widespread.[7] A similar digitising process is ongoing in the Scandinavian countries.[8]

The aim of this chapter is to examine how ballads provide unique access to contemporary cultural perceptions (and warnings) about lotteries and lottery dreams. The chapter is based on a selection of Dano-Norwegian *skilling* ballads from the period 1771 to 1851, when the Genoese-style lotto was operational in Denmark-Norway (Denmark from 1814). The chapter is partly thematically and partly chronologically organised. The earliest ballads describe and consolidate 1) the lottery dream as a motif, i. e. the foolish illusion of literally being able to dream yourself rich. This illusion is closely related to the next motif 2) "imagined winners", which occurs frequently in lottery literature and can be read as a variation on both classical and carnival motifs, including the well-known "king for a day"-motif.[9] Regarding ballads about 3) actual winners, they are neither as numerous nor as farcical as the previous ones. Nonetheless, they have a tendency to demonise, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, the effect of wealth on the *unfortunate* winners. In light of the contemporary lottery debate, a striking number of the lottery ballads seem, amidst all festivities, to convey a precautionary attitude towards the lottery, as something to stay away from. At the same time, there are also examples of the opposite. In the selection's latest ballad, a farewell song from 1851, 4) the *value* of lotteries and lottery dreams to common people is reflected, in a time when the prospects for improving one's living conditions were significantly

Skrifter (1770–1773), 2.23.9, the Royal Danish Library (https://tekster.kb.dk/tfs). Version 2.0, October 2021.

5 See, for example, "Londons Lotterie" (1612), https://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/20085/image.

6 See Siv Gøril Brandtzæg and Karin Strand, "The Scandinavian *Skilling* Ballad: A Transnational Cultural Heritage", in *Cheap Print and the People. European Perspectives on Popular Literature*, ed. David Atkinson and Steve Roud (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019), 140; 144–147.

7 A search for "lottery" yields eighteen hits in Broadside Ballads online from the Bodleian Libraries: http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/search/?query=lottery, and five hits in The English Broadside Ballad Archive: https://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/search_combined/?ss=lottery.

8 Brandtzæg and Strand, "The Scandinavian *Skilling* Ballad", 144–147.

9 See also, *infra*, Anne Beate Maurseth, "Jackpot", section 4.

worse than today. Before delving into an analysis of the ballads, however, a brief presentation of the skilling ballads as a genre, and the lottery ballads in particular, seems necessary. Is there even such a thing as a "lottery ballad"?

1 Lottery ballads

In this chapter, I propose "lottery ballads" (*lotterivise*) as a term for lyrical texts with the lottery as a central motif. The song lyrics denomination means that the text is written in rhythmically stylised stanzas, and that we can assume that it is intended to be sung.[10] In Scandinavia, lottery ballads can be traced back to the 1770s, when the lotto was established. The term "lottery ballad" is used in the titles of several of these ballads, such as "En lystig Lotterie-Viise" [A cheerful Lottery Ballad] (ca. 1773). This particular lottery ballad, like others from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was distributed as so-called skilling prints. While "skilling prints" is a collective term for small, mass-produced songbooks on cheap paper, peddled and sold for a shilling or two, the term "skilling ballad" refers to the content of the print – the song.[11] The skilling was a low-value Scandinavian coin, equivalent to one penny in England, reflecting the price of a print.[12]

Skilling ballads are often seen as a Scandinavian variant of the anglophone "broadside ballads", and were very popular from the middle of the sixteenth to the middle of the twentieth century, peaking in the nineteenth century.[13] In later years, however, these songs were long neglected until recent research, initi-

10 Siv Gøril Brandtzæg, "Dommedag og skøyteløp. Skillingstrykk som kulturarv og studieobjekt", in *Skillingsvisene i Norge 1550–1950. Studier i en forsømt kulturarv*, ed. Siv Gøril Brandtzæg and Karin Strand, (SAP, 2021), 13. https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/spartacus.no/production/attachments/Dommedag%20og%20sk%C3%B8ytel%C3%B8p.pdf. See also Märta Ramsten, *De osynliga melodierna. Musikvärldar i 1800-talets skillingtryck* (Svenskt visarkiv, 2019).

11 Siv Gøril Brandtzæg, "Skillingsvisene i Norge 1550–1950. Historien om et forsømt forskningsfelt", *Edda* 105, no. 2 (2018): 96, https://doi.org/10.18261/issn.1500-1989-2018-02-02; Anne Sigrid Refsum, "'Jeg, som en Vise kun er'. Fortellende stemmer i norske skillingsviser", *Edda* 110, no. 4 (2023): 231, https://doi.org/10.18261/edda.110.4.3. See also Iørn Piø, *Produktionen af danske skillingsviser mellem 1770 og 1821 og samtidens syn på genren* (Københavns Universitet, 1969); Margareta Jersild, *Skillingtryck* (Svenskt visarkiv, 1975), and Hanna Enefalk, *Skillingtryck!* (Opuscula Historica Upsaliensia 51, 2013).

12 Brandtzæg and Strand, "The Scandinavian *Skilling* Ballad", 143.

13 Brandtzæg, "Skillingsvisene i Norge", 98; "Dommedag og skøyteløp", 19. See also Enefalk, *Skillingtryck!*, 16–25; Eva Danielson, "Att försörja sig på skillingtryck", in *Tryckta visor. Perspektiv på skillingtryck som källmaterial*, ed. Märta Ramsten, Karin Strand, and Gunnar Ternhag, 19; Kirsten Sass Bak, *Ballader, skæmt og skillingstryk. Fortællinger om dansk sanghistorie frem til 1900* (Videncenter for sang, 2022).

ated by Siv Gøril Brandtzæg and Karin Strand, embarked on a large-scale rescue operation in the form of research, digitisation, and dissemination of extensive archives of skilling prints.[14] This chapter would not have been possible (or conceivable) without this seminal groundwork. In addition to examining the skilling ballads' renderings of the cultural imagination of the lottery, this study also aims to contribute to the ongoing research on skilling ballads.

Like the broadside ballad, the skilling ballad as a genre is distinctly hybrid; on the one hand, the ballads were distributed as prints, while at the same time their content and form are characterised by oral transmission and tradition. The thematic scope of the ballads was broad; they could describe and discuss *everything* – old and new, high and low, sentimental and farcical, but are nevertheless characterised by their contemporary orientation. A widespread genre feature of the skilling ballad is thus that they address current trends and tendencies.[15] It is therefore no surprise to find ballads about lotteries in Denmark-Norway in the 1770s, when the lotto was on everyone's lips. Nor is the genre-typical contemporary orientation of the skilling ballad coincidental. As the term reveals, the skilling ballads were commercial products – written to be printed and sold.[16] It did not matter who had written the song, or whether it was original and skilfully crafted.[17] What mattered was that people wanted to buy it. The term thus also associates the ballads with something cheap, popular, and low – which may explain why this genre until recently has been neglected in scholarly research.[18]

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14 Brandtzæg, "Skillingsvisene i Norge", 106–107; Brandtzæg and Strand, "The Scandinavian *Skilling* Ballad", 144–147. The digitisation of archives is now being carried out by several institutions, including The National Library of Norway, The Royal Danish Library, The National Library of Sweden, Uppsala University, and Svenskt visarkiv.

15 Brandtzæg, "Skillingsvisene i Norge 1550–1950", 99; Brandtzæg, "Dommedag og skøyteløp", 14; Karin Strand, "Tidsspegling, tendens och tradering", in *Tryckta visor. Perspektiv på skillingstryck som källmaterial*, ed. Märta Ramsten, Karin Strand, and Gunnar Ternhag (Svenskt visarkiv, 2015), 11; Karin Strand, *Brott, tiggeri och bränvinets fördärv. Studier i socialt orienterade visor i skillingstryck* (Gidlunds förlag, 2016), 12–13; Karin Strand, *En botfärdig synderskas svanesång. Barnamord i skillingstryck mellan visa och verklighet* (Gidlunds förlag, 2019), 22–25.

16 Brandtzæg, "Dommedag og skøyteløp", 12. See also Piø, *Produktionen af danske skillingsviser mellem 1770 og 1821 og samtidens syn på genren*, 48–68.

17 Margareta Jersild, "'Sjunges som…' – inte bara en melodiangivelse", in *Tryckta visor. Perspektiv på skillingstryck som källmaterial*, ed. Märta Ramsten, Karin Strand, and Gunnar Ternhag (Svenskt visarkiv, 2015), 101.

18 Although there has been a recent upsurge in research on skilling ballads, older research also exists. See, for instance, Ulf Peder Olrog, *Studier i folkets visor. Material och metoder* (Svenskt visarkiv, 1951/2011); Iørn Piø, *Skillingsviser. En antologi* (Gyldendal, 1974); Jersild, *Skillingstryck*, and Iørn Piø, *Visemageren, 1800-talets skillingsvisekonge Julius Strandberg* (Strandbergs förlag, 1994).

In many ways, broadside and skilling ballads represent what scholarly research has traditionally devalued: mass production and marketability, topicality, and unoriginality. The titles of the skilling ballads often reflect market and news value, whether it was a question of disseminating news in so-called "news ballads" (*nyhetsviser*), or just formulaic phrases promising a "quite new", "completely new", or even a "brand new" ballad about this or that, in this case, the lottery. Subtitles, such as "printed in this year", could further contribute to preserving the impression of freshness and novelty. This convention explains why many of the skilling ballads cannot be easily or precisely dated. Moreover, ballads in the eighteenth- and nineteenth centuries were often anonymously written. The most popular ballads were even passed on and reprinted, often with slight variations, peddled as "*quite* new" songs. The lottery ballads present several examples of this.

Skilling ballads represent a large and, in many ways, overwhelming material. The thousands of ballads archived are most likely just a fraction of the ballads that were once in circulation.[19] Why, one might ask, are so many ballads lost? Well, firstly these ballads were consumables; they were easy and cheap to produce and sell, and they sold well.[20] Most of the ballads were thus gradually discarded in favour of the constant influx of newer ones. In skilling ballad scholarship, the ballads are often described as "evanescent" or "ephemeral".[21] It was first and foremost commercial skilling ballads, and especially "news ballads" that met this fate.[22] These ballads have been described as the social media of their time, as they conveyed concrete news, which could be commented on, shared, and passed on as song lyrics.[23] The lottery ballads, however, were not news ballads, as none of them convey specific historical events, but simply reflect a current fad. Nonetheless, some of the lottery ballads may be understood within the same framework as the news ballads. In this context, this chapter will argue that Dano-Norwegian lottery ballads from the 1770s may be read in light of, or even as a contribution to, the contemporary lottery debate. Similarly, in the 1850s, there are lottery ballads commenting on the abolition of the lotto. The commentary- and contemporary

19 Refsum, "'Jeg, som en Vise kun er'", 231.

20 See, for instance, Ludvig Holberg, *Barselstuen* (1724), Act 2, Sc. 6, https://holbergsskrifter.no/holberg-public/view?docId=skuespill/Barselstuen/Barselstuen.page&brand=default&chunk.id=act2sc6&toc.id=act2; cf. *Hexerie eller Blind Allarm* (1731), Act 2, Sc. 1, https://holbergsskrifter.no/holberg-public/view?docId=skuespill/Hexerie/Hexerie.page&brand=default&chunk.id=act2sc1&toc.id=act2&toc.depth=1.

21 Refsum, "'Jeg, som en Vise kun er'", 232.

22 Siv Gøril Brandtzæg, "'Lad dem tone dybt og længe' Skillingsviser som sanglyrikk", in *Sanglyrikk. Teori, Metode, Sjangrer*, ed. Ole Karlsen and Bjarne Markussen (SAP, 2023), 246; Piø, *Produktionen af danske skillingsviser mellem 1770 og 1821 og samtidens syn på genren*, 48 f.

23 Brandtzæg, "'Lad dem tone dybt og længe'", 246; Refsum, "'Jeg, som en Vise kun er'", 232.

functions of the ballads are emphasised through the use and marketing of time-specific terms such as "Tallotteriet". This gave the songs a strong sense of topicality, which also made them ephemeral, later resulting in their oblivion.

However, it is not only the genre of skilling ballads that accounts for the omission of lottery ballads in scholarly research. The motif itself has probably also contributed to this neglect. Manfred Zollinger explains why so-called "chance games", such as lotteries, were long overlooked by scholars. According to Zollinger, it has to do with this phenomenon's low status, and the tendency of rejection.[24] Lottery ballads might therefore have been subject to a "double negative", due to both form and content. That said, the motif holds a significant popular appeal. One indicator of this is how several of the lottery songs seem to be characterised by the kind of "stickiness" that Anne Sigrid Refsum has identified as a characteristic of *good* skilling ballads.[25] According to Refsum, the qualities of good skilling ballads imply that they remain, despite the ephemeral nature of the medium; *good* skilling ballads are thus shared and reprinted in new variants, giving them greater chances of being preserved in collections and archives. As this and other chapters will demonstrate, (variations on) the same motifs occur in lottery ballads across both centuries and national borders.

2 The ballads featured in this chapter

This chapter discusses ten Dano-Norwegian lottery ballads.[26] The sources for this selection are 1) Palsbo's collection of songs, which contains the largest collection of skilling prints in the Nordic region, and 2) the civil servant Bolle Willum Luxdorph's collection of so-called "press freedom writings" from 1771 to 1774, containing Denmark's largest collection of printed matter from this unique period in Dano-Norwegian history.[27] Palsbo's collection in The Royal Danish Library has not yet been digitised, but in the collection's subject index, five ballads are listed under the subject "lottery".[28] A browse through the collection even yielded a few additional hits. The Luxdorph collection was digitised in connection with Henrik Horstbøll, Ulrik Langen, and Frederik Stjernfelt's study of the Dano-Norwegian

24 Manfred Zollinger, "Dealing in Chances – An Introduction", in *Random Riches. Gambling Past & Present*, ed. Manfred Zollinger (Routledge, 2016), 1–2.

25 Refsum, "'Jeg, som en Vise kun er'", 232–233.

26 The ballads are originally written in Danish. All translations of the ballads provided in this chapter are mine.

27 See also, *infra*, Kristiansen, "Innovation, Temptation, and Mathematical Education".

28 https://soeg.kb.dk/discovery/delivery/45KBDK_KGL:KGL/122161539020005763.

period of press freedom, resulting in the publication *Grov konfækt* (2020).[29] In this book, the authors devote an entire chapter to the so-called lottery debate. They do not, however, mention the two lottery ballads in the Luxdorph collection. Instead, they include an 1820s reproduction of the ballad "Tallotteriet" [The Lotto] (originally dated 1773).[30] This ballad is also included in the present selection.

The material in the Palsbo- and Luxdorph collections is primarily regarded as Danish. As for Norway, several collections and archives of skilling prints have recently been digitised. This still-ongoing process has significantly increased the availability of Norwegian skilling ballads. However, searches in the digitised Norwegian collections and archives do not yield any hits on the subject "lottery". The only finding in Norwegian collections and archives is a single melody entry.[31] The practice of presenting a known melody on the title page of a skilling print was widespread and is referred to as a *contrafactum* in skilling ballad scholarship.[32] As will soon be demonstrated, the melody in the Norwegian ballad refers to a well-known Danish lottery ballad. One may only speculate why lotteries do not otherwise appear in Norwegian ballads. The fact is, however, that the first lotto draw in Norway did not take place until 1986. It is likely that participation in the eighteenth-century lotto was less widespread among the Norwegian commoners than among the Danish. Finding a ballad with the melody of a contemporary lottery ballad in the Norwegian archives nevertheless reveals that these ballads could become popular and renowned even in Norway. According to Brandtzæg, it was indeed these "greatest hits" that made up the melody repertoire in the contrafactual tradition.[33] Similarly, Refsum points out that multiple different prints and melodies of one ballad signal that it was popular and widely used, i. e. "sticky".[34]

The table below (Tab. 1) provides an overview of the ten ballads explored in what follows. The table is organised chronologically; the chronology reflects both the age of the ballad (where possible) and the order in which they will be analysed. In some cases, several years of publication are given, due to the existence of several versions or reprints of the same ballad.

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29 https://tekster.kb.dk/text?editorial=no&f%5Bsubcollection_ssi%5D%5B%5D=tfs&match=one&search_field=Alt.

30 Henrik Horstbøll et al., *Grov konfækt* (Gyldendal, 2020), 176–177.

31 The melody was registered by Anne Sigrid Refsum, who, in her doctoral thesis, mapped 1,087 skilling ballads from various Norwegian collections and archives and thereby drew attention to this one melody reference. See Refsum, "'Jeg, som en Vise kun er'".

32 Brandtzæg, "'Lad dem tone dybt og længe'", 262. See also Jersild, *Skillingtryck*, 70 f; Jersild, "'Sjunges som…' – inte bara en melodiangivelse", 101; and Ramsten, *De osynliga melodierna*.

33 Brandtzæg, "Dommedag og skøyteløp", 25; Brandtzæg, "'Lad dem tone dybt og længe'", 262–263.

34 Refsum, "'Jeg, som en Vise kun er'", 232–233.

Table 1: Overview of the ten ballads.

Title of ballad	Melody	Origin/Source	Nationality
"En lystig Lotterie-Viise. Synget af een, som havde drømt om Støvle, Kruus, Paryk og Skoe, Og tog derpaa: No. 5, 7, 9, 2" [A cheerful Lottery Ballad. Sung by one who had dreamt of Boots, Mug, Wig and Shoes, and then picked: No. 5, 7, 9, 2]	"Liflig Sang! Pokalers Klang!" [Lively Song! Sound of Cups!]	Anon. 1773 In: *En lystig Lotterie-Viise* Published by Morten Hallager Luxdorphs samling af trykkefrihedens skrifter 1770 – 1773: Række 2 bind 23 [The Luxdorph Collection]	Dano-Norwegian
"Tal-Lotteriet" [The Lotto]	Unknown	Anon. 1773; 1818 – 1829[35] Coffin print, published by S.A. Rissen Det Kgl. Biblioteks billedsamling. Billedsamlingen. Kistebilleder. Cl. 529. Box [The Royal Danish Library Collection of Pictures. Coffin prints. Cl. 529. Box]	Dano-Norwegian
"Den nyeste Lotterie-Vise om Lykkehjulet i Kjøbenhavn, Wandsbeck og Altona" [The newest Lottery Ballad about the Wheel of Fortune in Copenhagen, Wandsbeck, and Altona]	"En Time før Middag Madammen opstaaer" [An hour before noon, the Madam arises/appears]	J. Jensen, undated In: *Den nyeste Lotterie-Vise* Unknown publisher Palsbo's collection of songs, z180 – 365	Dano-Norwegian
"Lystig Underretning om Drømme-Tal i Tal-Lotteriet" [[A] Cheerful Notification of Dream Numbers in the Lotto]	Unknown	Anon. 1774; 1811 – 1825 In: *Lystig Underretning om Drømme-Tal i Tal-Lotteriet* Published by Thorstein E. Rangel, Copenhagen Luxdorphs samling af trykkefrihedens skrifter 1770 – 1773: Række 2 bind 23 [The Luxdorph Collection], and Palsbo's collection of songs, z185 – 050	Dano-Norwegian

35 http://www5.kb.dk/images/billed/2010/okt/billeder/object274/da/.

Table 1 *(Continued)*

Title of ballad	Melody	Origin/Source	Nationality
"En lystig Vise om en Utidig Trætte imellem en Mand og hans Kone" [A cheerful Ballad about an Untimely Quarrel between a Man and his Wife]	Unknown	Anon. undated; "Printed in this year" In: *Den til Krig veludmunderede Jyde* Unknown publisher Palsbo's collection of songs, z285 – 620	Dano-Norwegian
"Fatter Knud og hans Kone, der kom til at slaaes om den ventende Gevinst i Lotteriet" [Father Knud and his Wife, who came to fight about the pending Prize in the Lottery]	"Stilhed hereffter etc." [Silence hereafter etc.]	Anon. undated Palsbo's collection of songs, z170 – 385	Dano-Norwegian
"Tvende nye Viser, den første om den stolte Skoeflikker og hans hoffærdige Madamme, der drømte sig en Lykke i Tallotteriet, hvorved de ej allene tabte deres Velfærd, men udsattes tillige for hele Byens Skoggerlatter" [Two new Ballads, the first about the proud Shoe-Mender and his courtly Madame, who dreamt themselves Lucky in the Lotto, whereby they not only lost their Welfare, but were also subjected to Public scorn]	"Jeg er af Naturen saa ferm som en Mand etc." [I am by Nature as skilful as a Man etc.]	J. Bredsdrup (Bredrup? Brendsdrup?), 1802 In: *Tvende nye Viser* Printed by Matthias Geest, Copenhagen Palsbo's collection of songs, z185 – 370	Dano-Norwegian
"En splinterny Vise om Britha, eller Madame Grosen i Kamp med sin Kokkepige" [A brand new Ballad about Britha, or Madame Grosen in Battle with her Kitchen Maid]	"Man hører mangen En at sove sig til Lykken ved Lotterie" [One hears many a Man sleeping his way into Luck by Lotteries]	Anon. 1854 In: *En splinterny Vise* Printed by Borgs Officin, Trondheim Norsk Visearkiv [The Norwegian Song Archive]	Norwegian
"God Nat, Line Jensen, eller hvordan den ædeltænkende Ole Peters	"En Smaafugl gynged paa Lindekvist"	Anon. 1861 – 1882[36] In: *God Nat, Line Jensen*	Danish

36 The frontispiece states that the ballad was published by Jul. Strandberg and could be purchased in his bookshop at Holmensgade No. 18. In *Visemageren. 1800s skillingsvisekonge Julius Strandberg* (1994, 23 – 24), Iørn Piø informs that Strandberg's bookshop in Holmensgade 18 was

Table 1 *(Continued)*

Title of ballad	Melody	Origin/Source	Nationality
Kjæreste fik Afsked paa graat Papir, da hun ikke havde flere Penge at give ham af dem hun vandt i Lotteriet" [Good night, Line Jensen, or how the noble-minded Ole Peter's Girlfriend was dismissed when she had no more Money to spare from the prize she won in the Lottery]	[A Small Bird swayed on the Linden Tree]	Jul. Strandbergs Forlag Palsbo's collection of songs, z200 – 210	
"Afskedsqvad til Tallotteriet. En splinterny, men meget sørgelig Arie, om det deilige Tallotteriets Ophævelse" [Farewell song to the Lotto. A brand new, but very sad Aria, about the abolition of the delightful Lotto]	"Julia osv." [Julia etc.]	Anon. 1851 In: *Afskedsqvad til Tallotteriet* Boghandler H.P. Møllers Forlag, Copenhagen Palsbo's collection of songs, z195 – 510	Danish

3 Lottery dreams

Lottery ballads are not considered news ballads. Nevertheless, several of the earliest ballads reflect the novelty of the lotto. With titles such as "The Lotto" and "The newest Lottery Ballad, about the Wheel of Fortune in Copenhagen, Wandsbeck, and Altona", the audience and potential skilling holders were enticed with ballads about the Dano-Norwegian lotto that Georg Ditlev Frederik Koës established in 1771, with weekly draws in the cities of Copenhagen, Wandsbek, and Altona. The titles of these two ballads suggest that they are informative. However, this is not entirely the case; while the ballad of "The Lotto" recounts an amusing folktale about a simple-minded couple with a little too much faith in their own chances of winning, the ballad about the wheel of fortune provides a journey through a week of lottery draws in the Dano-Norwegian realm. In both ballads, the outcome is the same: no prize. However, the ballads also have in common that the high expectations of winning are not commensurate with the actual

active from 1861 to 1882. The print in question must therefore be from this period, even though the ballad may be older.

chances; in this context, the ballads both highlight the lottery dreams' roots in folklore – a pattern that is reinforced both by the skilling ballad's contact with the popular narrative tradition, and the lotteries' explicit use of folklore in their marketing.

Already in its title, the lottery ballad about the wheel of fortune takes up a widespread motif from folklore; "the wheel of fortune" not only refers to the wheels from which the winning numbers were drawn, but also alludes to the popular notion of Lady Fortuna and her wheel of fortune. This motif, which was frequently used in the eighteenth century to symbolise lotteries and lotto games, derives from a medieval pictorial universe.[37] In a study of medieval Norwegian ballads, Olav Solberg explains how Fortuna is depicted blindfolded, turning a wheel where some rise, while others fall.[38] In the lottery ballad about the fortune wheel, "the old Matron" (stanza 1) appears with "the Wheel that Fate has given" (stanza 5) both at the beginning and the end of the song. The image of Fortuna with her wheel of fortune thus frames the main motif of the ballad: the lottery draws in the three cities.

The lottery ballad about the wheel of fortune consists of five rhythmically stylised stanzas. The first and last stanzas convey general reflections on happiness, lotteries, and life, while the three central stanzas portray three draws over the course of a week – first a Tuesday in Copenhagen (stanza 2), then a Friday with mail from Wandsbek (stanza 3), and finally "Altona's draw" as Sunday turns into Monday (stanza 4). In the fourth stanza, the singer-subject impatiently waits for the winning numbers. Since "The tern slipped" in the first draw (stanza 2), and "[t]he pockets are [still] empty" after the second draw (stanza 3), the singer-subject apostrophises the goddess of fate in the third stanza: "O reach us thy Hand of Grace" (stanza 4). When the final numbers are drawn, however, the singer-subject must swallow their disappointment: "One – 'leven, Fifty – new Boots and a Hat – still Hardships, good Night!" (stanza 4).

The last verses of the fourth stanza may appear ambiguous to modern readers. When the numbers (1, 11, 50) are drawn and the singer exclaims "new boots and a hat", it could easily be interpreted as the singer winning on three numbers, thus enabling the purchase of new boots and a hat. However, the last verse challenges such a reading. In light of the ongoing debate and contemporary lottery sto-

37 See Florence Buttay, "La Fortune victime des Lumières? Remarques sur les transformations de Fortune aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles", in *The End of Fortuna and the Rise of Modernity: Contingency and Certainty in Early Modern History*, ed. Arndt Brendecke and Peter Vogt (De Gruyter, 2017).

38 Olav Solberg, *Den omsnudde verda. Ein studie av dei norske skjemteballadane* (Solum, 1993), 102.

ries, it is more likely that the two verses reflect embittered comments on the popular lottery manuals and "dream books", which flourished in Europe in the eighteenth century. The marketing of these books exploited the popular (delusional) notion that skills in pseudo-cabbalism and oneiromancy (dream interpretation) could affect the chances of winning lotteries and other games of chance.[39] The principle in these books was simple: if you dreamt of boots and a hat, you could simply look these items up and choose the corresponding numbers for the upcoming lottery. In the Luxdorph collection, we find one "dream book" of this kind. According to *this* book, the winning numbers from the lottery ballad (1, 11, and 50) translate to dreams of the sun, a mousetrap, and a giant.[40] The singer-subject, however, dreamt of new boots and a hat – and obviously chose the wrong numbers: "Still Hardships – good Night!" They will have to dream on.

As mentioned above, the reading of these verses as comments on dream books can also be connected to other lottery ballads. References to dream numbers and dream books occur frequently, and in ways that emphasise connections. The ballad "[A] Cheerful Notification of Dream Numbers in the Lotto" is a good example. This ballad is found both in the Luxdorph collection, dated 1774, and in Palsbo's collection of songs, in a print by the letterpress printer Thorstein E. Rangel, active from 1811 to 1825.[41] The time span shows that this ballad was "sticky", circulating over time to become a well-known reference. As the title reveals, the song is "cheerful". The content further makes clear that it derives from a tradition of carnivalesque folk songs: it contains humorous, almost vulgar, examples of the winning numbers that different suggestive dreams might translate into. However, the opening and closing stanzas of this ballad differ from the other twenty-something stanzas by addressing the listener for sales purposes; the ballad thus appears to be mocking the marketing of dream books. The first stanza contains general observations about the widespread popularity of the lottery. The second recounts rumours that someone won on so-called dream numbers after reading dream books, whereas the third explains the simple principle of these books: "Let us say You dream of a Mouse and a Cat, / A Magician, a Wig, *a Boot, and a Hat* [emphasis mine]; / For Every Thing you will find a digit, /

39 Marius Warholm Haugen, "The Lottery Fantasy and Social Mobility in Eighteenth-Century Venetian Literature: Carlo Goldoni, Pietro Chiari, and Giacomo Casanova", *Italian Studies* 77, no. 3 (2022): 255, https://doi.org/10.1080/00751634.2022.2069409.

40 Anon., "Drømmebog for de som spille i Tal-Lotterie. Af det Italienske", digital edition from *Trykkefrihedens Skrifter (1770–1773)*, 2.23.8, the Royal Danish Library (https://tekster.kb.dk/tfs). Version 2.0, October 2021, 3; 5.

41 Harald Ilsøe, *Bogtrykkere i København og deres virksomhed ca. 1600–1800* (Museum Tusculanums Forlag, 1992), 220–221.

And certain of these, you will win it". These examples (the boot and the hat) clearly recall those from the above-mentioned ballad about the wheel of fortune; the difference is that while the singer-subject in the first ballad is assured of winning, the singer-subject in the latter finds themselves cheated.

This leads to the final example of lottery divination as a motif, namely "A cheerful Lottery Ballad. Sung by one who had dreamt of Boots, Mug, Wig, and Shoes, and then picked: No. 5, 7, 9, 2". This ballad is to be sung to the melody of "Liflig Sang! Pokalers Klang" [Lively Song! Sound of Cups!], which was a popular drinking ballad at the time. The song also takes place in a pub, where the singer-subject – a sanguine drunkard – immediately swings his glass, as if to celebrate the "fact" that he is about to win the lotto: "Good liqueur! Good mood! / I came from a collector: / Did you know, Brother/ Fortuna turns / the Lottery wheel?" (stanza 1). As in the examples listed above, the image of Fortuna with her spinning wheel of fortune merges with the physical lottery wheel; the draw consequently appears as a product of fate, rather than chance. This is significant. When, in the next stanza (2), the singer-subject explains why he will win, the idea that fate (as opposed to chance) can be predicted becomes apparent, as he plays on dream numbers: "First I dreamt, then I took / After [my] true lottery dream book". As the title of the ballad reveals, and the singer-subject later confirms (stanza 5), he has translated his dream of boots, mug, wig, and shoes into dream numbers through entries in his dream book. The dream book is not only described by the singer-subject as "true", but also as his "best Compass" (stanza 2). For readers and listeners, it is however clear that, in line with the ballad's humorous mode and the subject's foolish ethos, the song conveys an opposite view of dream books and number lotteries: they are, like dreams, nothing but fantasies.[42]

The frequent occurrence of the lotto in skilling ballads from the 1770s, along with the stickiness of these songs, reflects the general interest in and desire to acquire knowledge about this institution. In light of the contemporary lottery debate, it also becomes clear that these songs, in addition to entertaining, also convey a message: the widely available lotto might have seemed easy to win, but the chances of winning were microscopic – and the winners correspondingly few. This does not mean, however, that people were not deceived. The resistance to exhortations even shines through in the ironic peddling punchline of the cheerful "Notification of Dream Numbers in the Lotto": "A few Coins for this Book is not a lot / Though many by it a Fortune have got; / the Learned may also well tell, /

42 For a more thorough analysis of "A cheerful Lottery Ballad", see Johan M. Staxrud and Inga H. Undheim, "Spill, svir og skjebnesang. En studie av to litterære spillmotiv – fra folkelig vise til moderne prosa", in *Songen og teksten*, ed. Peter Fjågesund, Herleik Baklid, and Sveinung Nordstoga (Novus, 2024).

Whether Dreams may indeed lead to Wealth" (stanza 27). This last stanza might be read as double marketing; on the surface, the singer-subject imitates the marketing of *dream books* and lottery dreams. At the same time, the last few verses contain an intertextual reference to another widespread lottery motif in lottery ballads, namely *imagined winners* who believe they have dreamt themselves rich.

4 Imagined winners

As stated above, no lottery ballads from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have yet been found in Norwegian song collections. The exception is a melody entry: on the title page of the ballad "Britha, or Madame Grosen in Battle with her Kitchen Maid" (1854), the melody "One hears many a Man sleeping his way into Luck by Lotteries" is listed. There are many indications that the ballad this melody refers to was a *hit.*[43] In the current selection of lottery ballads, this is the ballad that occurs in most preserved prints and variants. This section of the chapter will look closer at four of these. It should be emphasised that none of them have the same title. Nor does any have the exact title as in the aforementioned melody entry. Nevertheless, two of the ballads begin with verses reminiscent of the latter. "A cheerful Ballad about an Untimely Quarrel", for example, begins with the following verse: "One hears many a Man sleeping / his way into Luck by Lottery" (stanza 1). In skilling ballads, the practice of referring the first verse of the ballad as its title was widespread, and particularly prevalent in cases where there was no actual title (page) – for example in so-called multi-verse printing and combination printing, or in cases where the title page was purely commercial.[44] What ties the four "hit" ballads together is their basic motif: a simple-minded couple, a husband and wife, are so convinced that they are going to win the lottery that they foolishly bank on victory. In two of the ballads, the idea of the impending prize leads to a fight; in the other two, the illusion of winning leads to hasty decisions and actions.

"A cheerful Ballad about an Untimely Quarrel" and "Father Knud and his Wife" both depict how a man named Knud and his wife decide to play the lottery, and in the run-up to the draw, come to disagree on how to split and spend the potential prize. While his wife dreams of reducing her workload, Knud is determined to keep her where she is: in both ballads, he sternly commands her to

43 For more on what characterises a skilling ballad *hit*, see Anne Sigrid Refsum, "Visa om Ridder Brynning. En skandinavisk *superhit*", in *Skillingsvisene i Norge 1550–1950. Studier i en forsømt kulturarv*, ed. Siv Gøril Brandtzæg and Karin Strand (SAP, 2021), 50; see also Brandtzæg, "Dommedag og skøyteløp", 25.

44 See Brandtzæg, "Dommedag og skøyteløp", 12–13; "Skillingsvisene i Norge", 101.

remain by the spinning wheel, without a single skilling. The situation in these ballads may be interpreted in different ways. On the one hand, it can be read as an expression of a conservative patriarchal attitude, both in terms of gender roles and social rank: the wife is by no means to be elevated to the status of a fine lady, sitting "with her hand in her lap" (stanza 4–5). On the other hand, considering the ongoing lottery debate, in which many warned about the lottery's corrupting effect on common people's work ethics (due to the lottery's prospect of gaining without work), a general criticism of and warning against lotteries can also be read from the ballads.[45] Here, the ballads' farcical mode is central, as the humour may sweeten the moral pill.

The power balance between husband and wife is a well-known motif from the culture of laughter, where humour often derives from the reversal of roles.[46] Midway through the lottery ballads, the hierarchy between husband and wife is inverted when the wife, in response to her husband's admonition, furiously puts him in his place. She is, however, not being unreasonable: in both songs, it appears that they are gambling with *her* savings, whereupon she claims to be entitled to her share of the "thousands" of prize money.[47] Just how real the delusion of success is for the couple, becomes clear when their dispute turns into a brawl: "Look, they are fighting for the prize / They neither have nor will ever get", the singer-subject comments at the end of both songs.[48] This highlights not only the foolishness of the situation, but also – and more importantly – the underlying point of the ballads: the stupidity of believing that you will win the lotto, and of counting one's chickens before they are hatched.[49] This lesson is also a main concern in the next couple of ballads.

The ballads of "The Lotto" (1773; 1818–1829) and "[T]he proud Shoe-Mender and his courtly Madame" (1802) are both based on the same plot: a gullible couple – a cobbler and his wife – are convinced that they will win the lotto using different divinatory methods. In the ballad of "The Shoe-Mender", the shoe-mender sees

45 See, for instance, Johan Friedrich Baumgarten, "Aarsager til Tall-Lotteriernes Forvisning af alle Riger og Lande", digital edition from *Trykkefrihedens Skrifter (1770–1773)*, 1.9.12, the Royal Danish Library (https://tekster.kb.dk/tfs). Version 2.0, October 2021, cf. Lütken, "Beviis".

46 Well-known examples of this recurring motif are William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* (1590/1592) and Ludvig Holberg's *Jeppe paa Bierget* (1723). References to the latter also appear in the ballad on dream numbers (stanza 11) and (indirectly) in "A cheerful Lottery Ballad" (stanza 4; 6).

47 "Untimely Quarrel", stanza 2; "Father Knud", stanza 5.

48 "Untimely Quarrel", stanza 11; "Father Knud", stanza 6.

49 Jesse Molesworth quotes a number of similar English anecdotes of players anticipating their win. See Jesse Molesworth, *Chance and the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 21–22.

the numbers in a dream (stanza 1), whereas in the ballad of "The Lotto", his wife reads the winning numbers in her coffee grounds (stanza 2). Convinced that they are about to win, one spouse rushes to the venue to witness the draw, while the other stays at home to await the great triumph. However, their plans are thwarted when their numbers fail to appear in the draw, after which the cobbler (or "shoe-mender") in one ballad, and his wife in the other, collapse and need to be taken home in a carriage. The awaiting spouse misunderstands the situation and, at the sight of the carriage, starts throwing their belongings out of the windows, thus making room for a new and richer life. Instead, they expose themselves to public ridicule.[50]

In accordance with classical and classicist poetics and humour theory, the ridiculous lottery players of these ballads are portrayed as dupable types that the listener may look down upon and laugh superiorly at.[51] In this respect, it is noteworthy that, in both ballads, we meet representatives of the cobbler's trade, i. e., professionals who literally deal with the garments we wear at the bottom end of our bodies.[52] The fact that one ballad even depicts a *proud* shoe-mender and his "courtly madam" further emphasises the mocking aspect. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the term "shoe-mender" (*skoe-flicker*) was used derogatorily to describe someone who only carried out repairs, in contrast to master shoemakers. The epithets "proud" and "courtly" (i. e. haughty) thus play out ironically, signalling the shoe-mender's lack of self-insight – a trait Socrates, in Plato's dialogue *Philebus*, highlights as characteristic of comic types. Socrates goes on to derive three variants in which the ridiculous lack of self-insight typically occurs: 1) the imagined wise, 2) the imagined beautiful, and 3) the imagined rich, i. e. "believing oneself to be richer than one is".[53] As Socrates explains, the comical mismatch between who we *think* we are and who we *are* is

50 As Horstbøll, Langen, and Stjernfelt point out in *Grov konfækt*, the plot in this ballad is based on the fable of the Granddam in the ditch. In this context, it is also relevant to point out the transnational and transmedial nature of the motif, as a strikingly similar motif appears in Spanish *sainetes*. See, *infra*, Michael Scham, "The Failed Promise"; Johanne Slettvoll Kristiansen, Marius Warholm Haugen, and Angela Fabris, "A Cultural History of European Lotteries".

51 See, for instance, Aristotle, *Om diktekunsten*, 1961; Horace, *Brevet om diktekunsten*, 1963; Boileau, *Diktningens kunst*, 1967; John Moreall, ed., *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humour*, 1986; Simon Critchley, *On Humour*, 2002.

52 The lottery player portrayed as a cobbler is a recurring, trans-European figure. See, *infra*, Kristiansen, Haugen, and Fabris, "A Cultural History of European Lotteries"; Scham, "The Failed Promise"; Marius Warholm Haugen, "Staging Lotteries"; Jeroen Salman, "The Political, Socio-Economic, and Cultural Impact"; Paul Goring, "The Lottery in British Prose Literature".

53 Plato, *Filebos* (Vidarforlaget, 2005 [ca. 360 BCE]) 48a–50a; 71.

particularly evident in our relation to love and money, body and status.[54] When Ludvig Holberg's *Jeppe on the Hill* (1723) wakes up in the baron's bed, this is comedy of the same cast. In the drinking ballads discussed above, the gullible lottery players in general, and the imagined winners in particular, all appear as variations on Plato's vicious type – perfectly exemplifying the folly of participating in the lottery.

There is never any doubt that the lottery ballads' "greatest hit" comes with a lesson. This lesson is typically expressed by the singer-subject at the beginning and/or the end. It is "foolish" to believe that you will win the lottery, the ballad of "The Lotto" explicitly states, whereas the ballads about the cobblers conclude that one cannot dream oneself to riches. Instead of dreaming, readers and listeners are encouraged to understand the realities, thus avoiding losing one's welfare and sanity in frantic gaming, "as the Bird in one's hand / counts for more than ten in the Air" (stanza 10). The ballads' call for rational thinking is not accidental. When these ballads of imagined lottery winners were published, the lotto debate raged. As Johanne Slettvoll Kristiansen's chapter demonstrates, many aimed to explain the mathematical principles that governed the game, particularly the low probability of winning.[55] The ballads convey the same message, using amusing examples. The genre-specific function of the ballads as communicators of popular motifs and traditional material, also make them ideal for satirising and refuting naïve ideas, such as the belief in the ability to predict lottery draws or to influence one's own chances of winning through prayer: "And may Heaven want us to win"; "Will and ability are not the same thing".[56] That said, it is worth recognising that some people *did* in fact win lottery prizes; indeed, some ballads even describe their hapless fates.

5 Fatal winners

Compared to ballads about imagined winners, there are few ballads about actual winners. Yet, the motif exists: art historian Anna S. Vejlby, for instance, draws attention to the print series *Lotterisedlen* [The Lottery Ticket] (1815–1816) by painter

54 Plato, *Filebos*, 70–71; Ole Thomsen, *Besindig rebel* (Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2024), 95.

55 See, *infra*, Kristiansen, "Innovation, Temptation, and Mathematical Education". See also, for instance, Jens Reimert Schumacher, "Afhandling om Gevinsternes Forhold imod Tabet, samt Lotteriets Kasses Fordel udi Tal-Lotterier", digital edition from *Trykkefrihedens Skrifter (1770–1773)*, 1.9.13, the Royal Danish Library (https://tekster.kb.dk/tfs). Version 2.0, October 2021; Philoplebis, "Patriotiske Tanker".

56 "The Shoe-Mender ballad", stanza 3; "The Lotto", stanza 1.

Christoffer W. Eckersberg (1783–1853) and engraver Johan F. Clemens (1749–1831).[57] In the series, consisting of six illustrated tableaux featuring short explanatory prose texts in Danish and French, the reader meets two acquaintances: a cobbler who, accompanied by his wife, tries his luck in the lottery – and wins! However, this stroke of luck turns out to be unfortunate and comes with a cost. When the cobbler becomes wealthy, he loses his work ethic and attracts false friends and freeloaders. When the prize money has been squandered, in the sixth and final tableau, the cobbler and his wife are back where they started, but with a tragic twist. Fortune has turned to misfortune, as the cobbler's infant child – held in her young father's arms in the first tableau – ends on her old father's lap in the last tableau, offered as a prostitute. The moral lesson is thus sharper in Eckersberg's series on actual winners than in the ballads about the imagined ones. "The cobbler in the ballad is the object of ridicule", writes Vejlby, "but Eckersberg's family is destroyed by being unlucky enough to win".[58]

As Vejlby points out, Eckersberg's work was based on a motif with strong impact on his contemporaries, and which the painter himself was strongly passionate about.[59] In addition to allusions to popular skilling ballads, the series was reportedly designed to illustrate a piece of poetry by Eckersberg's friend, Oluf Olufsen Bagge, originally intended to be printed with the pictures.[60] However, the stanzas were instead replaced with a prosaic explanatory text, while Bagge's poem has been lost. It is therefore difficult to establish whether this was a ballad. When Eckersberg's series nonetheless is included in this chapter, it is partly due to its motivic similarities to the "greatest hit" of the lottery ballads discussed above, and partly because of its popularly accessible form. The series of graphic prints are, in a way, comparable to skilling prints.[61] More important, however, are the many structural similarities between Eckersberg's series and the skilling ballad "Good Night, Line Jensen" (undated).

"Good night, Line Jensen, or how the noble-minded Ole Peter's Girlfriend was dismissed when she had no more Money to spare from the prize she won in the

57 Anna S. Vejlby, "The Jew that Disappeared. C. W. Eckersberg and Satire", *Perspective Journal* (2016), https://www.perspectivejournal.dk/en/the-jew-that-disappeared-c-w-eckersberg-and-the-realm-of-satire/. Since Vejlby's digital article is not paginated, references to page numbers come as they appear in the available print version.

58 Vejlby, "The Jew that Disappeared", 11.

59 Cf. Eckersberg's other sketches and drawings from this time, like *Udenfor Tallotteri-Kollektionen* [Outside the Lottery Agency] (1808).

60 Vejlby, "The Jew that Disappeared", 11.

61 In the nineteenth century, most people had little access to visual representations and images. Coffin prints make an exception (cf. the ballad of "The Lotto" mentioned above), graphic series another.

Lottery" is, in line with the genre-typical explanatory subtitle, a farewell song to the tragicomic title character. The melodramatic singer-subject is Line's boyfriend, Ole Peter, whose song not only ends a tippling evening, but also his interested love affair. In the ballad, Ole Peter portrays himself as a passionate romantic, but it is clear that his love is false; like the cobbler's new friends in Eckersberg's series, Ole Peter is a deceitful lover and a parasitic figure.[62] The term "noble-minded" in the title thus acquires an ironic connotation. Initially, Ole Peter is portrayed as aristocratic and gracious, but it soon becomes clear that this primarily reflects his taste for precious metals: "I loved you like a rare coin", he mournfully sings in the second stanza, comparing his girlfriend to the amount of money she once won in the lottery, but is now running out of.[63]

The ballad of Line Jensen has two distinct projects. Firstly, it paints a negative portrait of the lottery winner. The lottery prize has brought Line Jensen into the abyss. Ole Jensen judgmentally laments her hasty and reckless use of money; "you have hurried / too much with the silver", reads the second stanza. Furthermore, one understands that the money has enabled a depraved lifestyle, characterised by idleness, gluttony, and drunkenness. "You go too often on the Boulevard", Ole Jensen sings. When Line Jensen reportedly continues her debauchery, even *after* her money has run out, her moral decline seems complete. To maintain her lifestyle, she not only pawns and sells her possessions (stanzas 5 and 6) but, it seems, also herself (stanza 3). Rock bottom is hit in the sixth stanza, when not even the cobbler grants Line credit:

> Today you walked along Vesterbro
> With lopsided shoes, but you can trust
> That such manners are no good,
> When you want to be a lady.
> Your cobbler will not give you more credit,
> The clothes you are wearing are not yours,
> Your simplicity has gone way too far,
> Therefore: Good night, Line Jensen.

62 For more on parasites in literature, see Anders M. Gullestad's chapter "On the Genealogy of Parasites", in *Melvillian Parasites* (Cappelen Damm Akademisk, 2022), 45 f; Vejlby, "The Jew that Disappeared", 11; 20.

63 The concept of loving someone like money or gold is a recurring motif in skilling ballads; one of the best-known and well-used ballads, about Knight Brynning, states that the Princess of England "had Brynning as dear as a thousand barrels of gold". See Refsum, "Visa om Ridder Brynning", 59.

Line Jensen's "lopsided shoes" may be read as symbolising both poverty and drunkenness; when she staggers home drunk, her shoes get crooked. The location in Vesterbro may further be read as a social marker; in the nineteenth century, this area was a working-class neighbourhood characterised by rapid population growth. In Ole Peter's eyes, Line Jensen descends (or returns) to a markedly low strata of society, even below the cobbler. She thus ends up a world apart from the upper middle class, to which the singer-subject aspires.

This brings about the second project of the ballad, namely the critique of the haughty subject. For although Line Jensen is exposed in this song, her parasitic friend is portrayed as the ballad's most despicable character. The parasite, a recurring literary type, appears both explicitly and implicitly in lottery texts. In Eckersberg's and Clemens' *The Lottery Ticket*, they appear midway through the story. In the third tableau (figure 1), the cobbler, winning the lottery, lifts his hat as he turns to face an impeccably dressed gentleman, mirroring the cobbler's pose. The caption, entitled "The Great Prize", comments neither on the draw nor the prize, but is devoted entirely to the lottery winner's new acquaintance: "Fortune is already providing / the Labourer with false Friends, / as it overwhelms him with its dangerous Benefits".[64] The personified Fortune is seen in the background of the image, enthroned both on the wheel, from which the numbers were drawn, and the tableau/situation as a whole. However, "Fortune" in this context is clearly to be understood ironically, as a threat. The previous two pages in the series have left no doubt that the cobbler was already blissful. Before purchasing his winning ticket, "Happy Mediocrity" reigned, characterised by "Industriousness and Conscientiousness" in the home of "The Happy Couple".[65] In the second tableau, the winning ticket is described as "the unfortunate Note", as if to warn that fortune will now change – even if the couple wins. In the third tableau, this reversal is reflected in Fortuna's pose, which mirrors that of the cobbler. The one who affirms the cobbler's movement in the "wrong" direction, however, is the elegant dandy to the left in the image – the parasite.

"A swindler immediately approaches the newly prosperous fool with advice", Vejlby writes, "the outcome of the encounter is easy to predict".[66] In the next page of the series, to which both cobbler and parasite point through their gestures, "Abundance" prevails; work ethic is replaced by vanity and hypocrisy, personified by the graceful parasite.[67]

64 C.W. Eckersberg and C.F. Clemens, *Lotterisedlen* (The Royal Collection of Graphic Art, The National Gallery of Denmark, inv. no. KKS10961/1–6), III. Tableau.
65 Eckersberg and Clemens, *Lotterisedlen*, I. Tableau; II. Tableau.
66 Vejlby, "The Jew that Disappeared", 11.
67 Eckersberg and Clemens, *Lotterisedlen*, IV. Tableau.

Figure 1: C.W. Eckersberg and J.F. Clemens, *Det store Lod* (1815–1816). SMK Open / National Gallery of Denmark.

As Vejlby points out, the parasite appears in several places in Eckersberg's lottery universe. In the drawing *Udenfor Tallotteri-Kollektionen* [Outside the Lotto Office] (1808), he appears as an exquisitely dressed dandy at the bottom left, with his eyes turned towards the victorious winner at the top right. The winner is here drawn

in the same pose as in the *Lottery Ticket*. Interestingly, Eckersberg's characterisation of the parasite figure resembles Ole Peter in the song about Line Jensen. On the frontispiece of this skilling print, a dandy sits facing the viewer. To his left, a dainty woman clings to his arm. She seeks his eyes, but her attempt is not reciprocated, as the dandy gazes absently towards the horizon. He is already about to leave her, as he confirms in the first verse of the song: "Farewell, my Precious. Farewell, my Precious".

A double-layered irony permeates both text and genre in the ballad of Line Jensen. The ballad is a farewell song, which can be read in light of so-called "mourning songs". These much-used songs expressed grief over tragic events and people who passed away.[68] At the same time, the songs were consoling, as they promoted hope of being reunited in heaven.[69] Mourning songs are characterised by sensitive language, which blossomed with early Romanticism at the end of the eighteenth century.[70]

In the ballad of Line Jensen, the singer-subject imitates the sensitive soul verbally, while the constant elements of crude and direct references to Line's vain, drunken, and sexual excesses add a parodic touch. This is reinforced by the singer-subject's frivolous motif. In the end, the song begs the question of what "treasure" the narrator is really mourning and waving goodbye to. Is it Line Jensen or the squandered lottery prize? That the grief (and the ballad) may be about *money* rather than a person, is hinted at in Ole Peter's near-tears: "Behold, I'm moved, *almost* to Tears, / My Chin is wet, I don't know what to do" (stanza 7; emphasis added.). In a survey of skilling ballads about death and grief, Bjarne Markussen explains that many of these songs end in "a farewell to the bereaved".[71] In the ballad of Line Jensen, the genre parody is emphasised when the singer-subject waves goodbye to Line Jensen, not as someone who has died, but as someone bereaved of the lottery prize. The tragic loss thus appears farcical. The parody and irony are complete when the faithless singer-subject concludes by comforting the bereaved, Line Jensen, through the genre-typical hope of a reunion in paradise – if she should happen to win again: "if you win quite a lot again / In the lottery, just come / To me, – I will be a faithful friend, / And now, good night, Line Jensen" (stanza 7). The farewell is finite, but not final; Line Jensen

68 Sarah D. Hermanstad, "Menneskets møte med overmakten. Skillingsviser om forlis i Norge på 1800-tallet", in *Skillingsvisene i Norge 1550–1950. Studier i en forsømt kulturarv*, ed. Siv Gøril Brandtzæg and Karin Strand (SAP, 2021), 148.

69 Bjarne Markussen, "Skillingsviser om sorg og død", in *Skillingsvisene i Norge 1550–1950. Studier i en forsømt kulturarv*, ed. Siv Gøril Brandtzæg and Karin Strand (SAP, 2021), 102 f.

70 Markussen, "Skillingsviser om sorg og død", 114.

71 Markussen, "Skillingsviser om sorg og død", 117.

may still cling on to her dream. The situation is quite different in the last ballad to be examined – another farewell song, this time to the lotto itself.

6 Dreams go up in smoke

In 1851, opponents of the Dano-Norwegian lotto were finally victorious: after eighty years, the last numbers were drawn, and the lotto was history. It did not take long for this event to find its way into the skilling ballads. In the same year that the lottery was abolished, a "Farewell song [*kvad*] to the Lotto" was written and printed, subtitled "A brand new, but very sad Aria, about the Abolition of the delightful Lotto". The suggested tune was "Julia, Julia, Hopsasa", which also provided the opening line and refrain of the song. Before coming back to this use of the *contrafactum*, the main theme of the song will be explored, namely the processing of loss, or possibly a parody of such a processing.

In the ballad, the singer-subject laments the abolition of the "noble" lotto; why, they ask, could they not have banned card games instead? (stanza 1–2) After this general complaint and the comparison of the regulated lotto with other more loosely organised forms of gambling (taking place in pubs and inns), the complaint is justified by what was really at stake when the authorities decided to abolish this lottery, namely the dreams and hopes of the common people. "What kind of people are these who / So carelessly *kehr* / What [was] the Welfare [*tarv*] and Benefit of the common people: / The Lotto in Copenhagen?" (stanza 3) The word "kehr" is probably from German "kehren", which means "to sweep away". It may also be an abbreviation of "Kehraus", i. e., a final dance.[72] In this final dance, the singer-subject contrasts the decision-makers, who handle the "sweeping broom", with the common people, whom the singer represents. What might appear as insignificant rubbish to the decision-makers is, to the commoners, a fundamental necessity that benefits society overall: the term "tarv" represents not only a necessity, but also utility, benefit, and progress.[73] This critique of financial capitalism and the ruling classes resembles Victor Gelu's popular song "La Loutarié" [The Lottery] (1838), examined by Marius Warholm Haugen in this volume.[74] How harmful the abolition of the lotto would be in practice is suggested when the singer-subject, in the last two stanzas of the song, rhetorically

72 See the entry "Kehraus", in DSL Historic Dictionary of the Danish Language 1700–1950, https://ordnet.dk/ods.

73 Entry "tarv", in DSL.

74 See, *infra*, Marius Warholm Haugen, "Plus de loterie".

asks how the benefits of this lottery could be replaced: "where do we go from here / And buy for a lousy *hvid*[75] / Consolation for our endless toil and hardship?" (stanza 8) The implied answer is: to the local tap. In a time when the number of taverns was high, and a single drink cost as much (or little) as a lottery ticket, heading to the tavern would be a logical next step. This solution is also insinuated in the final stanza of the ballad, when the narrator concludes: "The whole thing was damn hard / It has made me *lightning* [*lynende treqvart*; emphasis added]" (stanza 9). In the nineteenth century, the term "lynende treqvart" was a crude expression for drunkenness; the expression reflects not only the singer-subject's low social status, but also a likely consequence of the abolition. Without the lottery, common people were left to find solace, comfort, and hope in alcohol. The melody then fades out and the song ceases: "That Game, which was my only Pleasure… / I will not bother my soul to sing any more" (stanza 9).

The farewell song to the lotto may be read as a combined news- and mourning ballad; through the singer-subject's lament on behalf of everyone who has lost hope and joy in everyday life, a current event is fictionalised and dramatised. There are several references to the actual abolition of the lotto; in the fourth stanza, the singer-subject informs about the process. The lottery was first cancelled in Altona, then in Wandsbek, before it finally came to an end in Copenhagen. Malapropos, the singer-subject also includes a complaint about the loss of a coffee lottery ("Fonnesbek's Kaffelotterie"), before recognising the real "victims" of the lottery's demise: "The lottery ticket seller – the poor thing" (cf. 5th stanza) and "the little Street Boys" (stanza 5–6). These characters were significant real-life contributors to the extensive lotto apparatus and are often referred to in the lottery ballads. The ticket seller's job was to promote the lottery, and possibly also the dream of winning. In "A cheerful Lottery-Ballad", rendered above, the deluded singer-subject excitedly came "from a ticket seller" (stanza 1), convinced that his dream was about to come true. Similarly, the ballad of "the Fortune Wheel" refers to "The Boy who picked the Numbers" (stanza 2). The boy[s] referred to here and in the "Farewell Song" are the street orphans who drew the winning numbers as part of the grand drawing ceremony in the town square. The characters are not only referred to in the lyrics but are also depicted in several of the ballads' frontispieces, including the "Farewell Song".[76]

In the "Farewell Song", it is striking that the ticket seller and the orphans are equated as victims, as these characters have quite different functions in other

75 Danish medieval coin, worth 1/3 skilling.

76 See also the coffin print "The Lotto", http://www5.kb.dk/images/billed/2010/okt/billeder/object274/da/.

forms of lottery literature. Where the ticket seller often represents a cunning and even diabolical figure, luring people to play, the street boys represent the hands of Lady Fortuna, as innocent guarantors of chance. Equally striking is the pathetic mourning over the ticket seller's fate in the fifth stanza; he is mourned "most of all" with the lines "[t]hough everyone went broke / He still made some profit of it". Recalling the lottery debate of the 1770s, the argument in this ballad seems reversed: although the ticket seller profits from the naivety of *everyone*, the singer-subject now expresses compassion for *his* loss. Similarly, the complaint about the street boys' misery may read as a counterargument to earlier accusations towards the organisation of the lotto (vis-à-vis the competing class lottery), in which the lotto was accused of not giving *any* of its profits to the poor.[77] In the "Farewell Song", these arguments are inverted, as a defence of this reviled lottery. The question is, however, how seriously one should take the singer-subject's defence or complaint in this ballad, or *aria.*

According to the subtitle, the "Farewell Song" is a "very mournful aria". In opera, the *aria* is a section where emotional content, in this context grief, may be given momentary priority over the ongoing action, often in such a way that the soloist's vocal splendour may shine. However, several factors contribute to signalling the "Farewell Song" as ironic and parodic and the aria as satirical. For instance, the style and the low-cultural references reveal the singer-subject's compulsive drinking and weakness for gambling. More important in this context, however, is the significance of the melody reference. For contemporary readers and listeners, the melody and refrain "Julia, Julia, hopsasa" reveals the satire, as the melody alludes to a farcical ballad often referred to as "the ballad about Pjaltenborgs' fire".

"Pjaltenborg" was the popular nickname for a notorious lodging house (hostel) for the homeless, located on the corner of Åbenrå and Rosenborggade in the old town of Copenhagen. The house burned down in March 1850, marking the beginning of the end for this type of hostel, which, due to the city's explosive population growth, were at all times filled to the brim with people in need. The hygienic conditions in these houses were terrible and contributed to a considerable lowering of the city's average life expectancy. When Pjaltenborg's devouring fire was chanted in the cheerful (!) ballad "Julia, Julia, hopsasa", it was both a sensational news ballad and, as the song's subtitle emphasises, a warning against playing with fire: "A new and cheerful Ballad about Pjaltenborg's fire, written

77 See, for instance, Anon., "Tanker over det alleene Privilegerede Lotterie til Landets almindelige Nytte, fattige Børns Opdragelse, og det fattige Væsens bestandige Underholdning i København", digital edition from *Trykkefrihedens Skrifter (1770–1773)*, 1.9.10, the Royal Danish Library (https://tekster.kb.dk/tfs). Version 2.0, October 2021.

to Encourage and Warn the lower Classes to be careful with fire, candles and matches". In other words, readers were warned against coming to the city, where they might end up in such miserable houses as Pjaltenborg, which was now burned down.[78]

The melody from the ballad of Pjaltenborg's fire quickly became popular in new ballads. A search for the tune "Julia, Julia, hopsasa (Pjaltenborgs brand)" in Palsbo's collection of songs yields 67 hits – including the "Farewell Song". The use of *contrafactum* in the "aria" of the lotto casts a completely different light on the content. Not only does it equate the lotto with the shabby hostel; the cheerful warning against playing with fire may also transfer into participation in the lottery. Similarly, one may read the mourning ironically; the loss of the lottery may just be as tragicomic as the loss of Pjaltenborg, i. e., *Pjolterberget* (trans. "Mount Highball") – which, after all, was perhaps for the good of society. In any case, the "Farewell Song" contains an ambiguous tension; like several other ballads discussed in this chapter, it may be read both literally and ironically – an ambiguity that reflects the societal attitudes to the at once both beloved and reviled lotto.

7 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how various attitudes to the Dano-Norwegian lotto are reflected and channelled in skilling ballads from 1771 to 1851 – from new and exciting, to alluring and dangerous. In line with the debate of the 1770s, warnings are hard to miss. Due to the genre's fundamental "bottom-up" perspective, the ballads do, however, differ from factual and polemical pamphlets in their ambiguity, also expressing the positive aspects of the lottery. The lotto might have been fraudulent. Nevertheless, it provided common people with hopes and dreams to live for – dreams they were brutally awakened from when the lotto was abolished in 1851. In the "Farewell Song" (stanza 8), the singer-subject despondently asks how, without the lotto, the lowest classes in society will be able to buy consolation for the everlasting "toil and hardship" of everyday life. Without the lottery, the singer-subject no longer has anything to sing about (stanza 9) and, by implication, nothing left to poetise, compose, or *live* for. This correlation between the lottery and the motivation for living, not to mention the connection between the lottery, for-

78 The popular nicknames of similar hostels in Copenhagen ("Hell" [Helvede], "The Lice Club" [Luseklubben], "The banging hut" [Knaldehytten], "The Cave of Rascals" [Rakkerens Hule]) reflect their bad reputation.

tune, and life, is neither unique nor new to the "Farewell Song" but rather runs like a golden thread in Scandinavian lottery ballads from 1770 to 1850, and even in their afterlife.[79]

The prize does not have to be grand; it does not even have to be real to be recognised in a lottery ballad. As long as there is a ticket and a draw, there is reason to dream and keep singing. This is essentially also what lottery ballads are all about: the value of hope and hopefulness – even if just for a fleeting moment. For most people, happiness *is* just fleeting; it comes in glimpses, like a dream that tantalisingly dissolves when trying to capture it. These are nonetheless the dreams that the lottery ballads succeed in capturing, in small prints.

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79 Lottery songs did not cease to exist even though the lotto was abolished; on the contrary, numerous lottery songs are found in song archives of the twentieth century.

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