



**HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS**

**Hugvísindadeild**

# **The Performative Man**

***Níð* and Gender in a Skald Saga**

**Ritgerð til M.A.-prófs**

**Veronika Egyed**

**Maí 2009**

Háskóli Íslands  
Hugvísindadeild  
**Miðaldafræði – Medieval Icelandic Studies**

# **The Performative Man**

*Níð and Gender in a Skald Saga*

**Ritgerð til M.A.-prófs**

**Veronika Egyed**

**Kt.: 271281-2189**

**Leiðbeinandi: Ármann Jakobsson**

**Mái 2009**

## Ágrip

This thesis is intended to address the matter of manliness and its challenge in a poet's saga. The issue has been associated with two concepts, *níð* and *ergi*. In Old Norse literature, *níð* is an insult directed against an individual's reputation often implying sexual deviance. In the last century, three Swedish scholars discussed *níð* from a historical view of point. I intend to consider these offences as literary phenomena. The same scholars set themselves the aim of defining *níð* exactly which proved to be difficult. Instead of pursuing a formal definition I intend to focus on the dramatic function of insults in sagas and approach *níð* as a ritual demonstration of manliness. I make use of performance theory, with emphasis on Judith Butler's idea of gender construction.

In the second part of the thesis I discuss one of the poets' sagas, *Bjarnar saga Hítðælakappa* focusing on poetic rivalry, conflict development and the masculine gender identity presented in the text.

*Ég vil þakka leiðbeinandanum mínum, Ármanni Jakobssyni fyrir stuðninginn, þolinmæðina og alla hjálpa við skrif þessarar ritgerðar.*