

Introduction to Topic on Danish and Norwegian Welfare Literature

Anne-Marie Mai

Department of Literature, Culture and Media, University of Southern Denmark

Campusvej 55, 5230 Odense M, Denmark.

Email: ammai@litcul.sdu.dk

The thematic issue on Danish and Norwegian welfare literature consists of five articles. Johs. Nørregaard Frandsen's article, "The Insoluble Conflict of transformation: The Modern Aspect of Hans Christian Andersen's 'The Galoshes of Fortune'", discusses the modern themes in Hans Christian Andersen's tale, published 1838. Hans Christian Andersen based his short stories, tales and fairytales on certain experiences from his own life that can shed light on aspects of modern life under the welfare state. Hans Christian Andersen was a so-called mould-breaker. He was born and grew up in poverty and abject circumstances, but via his art was able to rise into the highest social spheres. This rise, or mould-breaking, is present in many of his tales in the form of an enormous productivity, fantasy and restlessness that could never be satisfied. In that sense, Andersen is a highly modern writer, just as his themes point towards a modern welfare society where social change is a societal necessity. Anne-Marie Mai's article, "The Roles of Writers in the Danish Welfare State", introduces the Nordic welfare model and discussed the function of literature in the welfare state from the 1950s to the present day. Anders Thyrring Andersen's article, "The Dialogic and Religious Theme of Welfare in Harald Høffding and the Authors around *Heretica*", shows how religious ways of understanding have been of crucial importance for the literary idiom and the theme of welfare in a Danish context. The article gives a description of the dialogic and religious theme of welfare in Danish post-war modernism, as it was expressed by the authors around the famous magazine *Heretica* (1948 – 1953) and the article also discusses the "welfare-principle" of the Danish philosopher, Harald Høffding (1843 – 1931). Tore Rem's article, "Authorship in the Norwegian Welfare State, c. 1950 – 1975", examines the survival of a Romantic role of the author in post-war Norwegian literature. It shows how an important group of writers in the late 1940s and the 1950s still shared a vision of the writer as an isolated individual, opposed to society and the state. During this time, this old role was reactivated and given a new function in opposition to the developing Welfare State. The writer and intellectual Jens Bjørneboe (1920 – 76) was a prominent member of this loosely organized group, and someone who makes for a particularly interesting case when exploring authorship in the Norwegian Welfare State.

Antje Wischmann's article, "Collage City – City Collage: On the Relation Between Aesthetic and Political Mobilisation in Sven Holm's *Min Elskede — En Skabel-*

onroman (*My Beloved — A Pattern Novel*, 1968)”, examines an experimental, post-modern novel by Sven Holm from 1968. Holm uses a collage technique for critical, theoretical and creative purposes in a typical “revolutionary novel” of the youth movement of 1968. Sven Holms novel is a unique welfare critique and a “city collage text fragment” using the latest art and architecture expressions of the sixties but also with a retrograde romantic notion on politics. Peter Simonsen’s article, “The Welfare State and the Nursing Home Novel; Bent Vinn Nielsen’s *A Life in Ordinarity*” introduces “old age” as a major issue in many political debates in the contemporary Danish welfare state as well as in much contemporary Danish fiction. In contemporary realist fiction several authors address the subject of old age. Among these authors Peter Simonsen singles out Bent Vinn Nielsen and in particular his novel from 2010, *Et liv i almindelighed* (*A Life in Ordinarity*) to propose that this novel provides readers with affective knowledge of the final chapters of life as experienced by ordinary individuals in the welfare state. This knowledge is needed, the article proposes, in order to have a qualified and properly nuanced public debate about old age in the welfare state of the future. The editors hope that the variety of articles on fictional literature of the Nordic welfare state shows the emerge of a new literary research field and will stimulate further scholarly and readerly interest in Nordic welfare literature.

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