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as childish and children of nature, clearly indicating to which domain they belonged. The Finnish folk was equally strange, ridiculous in its attitudes and values, but respected as a nameless, faceless collective. The superiority of the bourgeois travellers was marked by verbal means, and the folk was characterized as silent. From their power position the upper-class travellers could assume the ways of the rabble, but peasants aspiring to bourgeois heights were simply a pathetic lot. The inherent potential of the folk was still ideologically recognized and in the nationalist rhetoric of the time, the folk played an essential role.

Movement from centre to periphery was an act of heroism, whereby the gentleman penetrated a difficult, almost mythical border, that between East and West, barbarism and civilization. North and South had a similar negative connotation, although the injured parties did raise positive interest as well, as underdeveloped regions just waiting to be included in the cultivated sphere.

Varpio's pioneering work – it is the first comprehensive overview of Finnish travel literature – fills its purpose perfectly well. His examination of nineteenth-century ideology rests on a solid foundation of intimate familiarity with his sources, and as a research topic it is timely in a period when the problems of modernity very much preoccupy a scholarly community searching for its own identity in the postmodern world. The uncomplicated manner of presentation does however make it suitable for any interested reader. The final section is a thorough, multifaceted analysis of manifest and latent attitudes to fundamental cultural oppositions expressed in travelogues. I did miss a greater stress on the metonymic, mediating aspects of the narratives, now buried beneath the more conspicuous dissociative ones. To finish on a positive note, I must commend the physical appeal of the book: the cover is attractive and the illustrations are exquisite.

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Danish Migratory Legends

Robert Zola Christensen: *Det døde barn i hoppegynge. Moderne danske vandrehistorier. Copenhagen, Borgen 1998. 227 pp. Ill.*

With this volume, Christensen provides the first book-length collection of contemporary Danish legends and, in the process, adds another voice to the growing chorus of contemporary legend collections which have been proliferating worldwide since the 1980s. Christensen's work is somewhat predictable and offers little new or of interest to the folklorist apart from the purported Danish provenance of his collected tales. As with many other collections of contemporary legends, Christensen has arranged his material thematically and each of the ten chapters provides a series of a dozen or so individual narratives. The stories are preceded by a short introduction and followed by an annotation. Christensen has written the work with a popular audience in mind and, in fact, it appears that he is writing to the very people from whom he collected, a suspicion confirmed by his appeal to his readers to send him additional stories. Because he has targeted a popular audience, it is not surprising that his story introductions and annotations lack scholarly rigour. His analysis of the stories is done with an apparent lack of knowledge of the now-considerable folklore scholarship on contemporary legends. Instead, he relies on standard literary interpretations of narrative structure or, in some cases, tired psychoanalytical pronouncements. On the few occasions when Christensen does make use of folklore scholarship, he either misrepresents it, as in the case of the section on "Cokelore," or uses it uncritically. Some times, Christensen plays the "debunker" ("Den tænkende elektronik", pp. 105f), while at other times, he proposes that the stories may be built around a kernel of truth ("Det afrevne kønslem", pp. 61f). At his worst, Christensen simply mentions scenes in popular films that re-enact a contemporary legend, apparently as a means for validating the legend – an odd analytical endeavour if ever there was one. In short, his analysis of

the stories reveals a profound lack of training in folklore, a gap that carries over not only into the somewhat suspect fieldwork that constitutes the basis for the collection but also into the short critical essay that concludes the volume.

Early on Christensen admits that much of his material has not been collected in face-to-face interactions with informants, but rather has been sent to him through various solicitations on radio, television, and in the print media. To justify this methodology, Christensen proposes that contemporary folklore is just as likely to be presented in the media as it is to be performed in face-to-face interactions. This theoretical position allows him both to sidestep the thorny issue of the validity of his fieldwork, and to rely almost exclusively on written accounts. Rather than acknowledge the shortcomings of such methodology, Christensen presents these tales as a true reflection of extant Danish oral tradition. Since much of his narrative analysis of the tales is based on written variants, one cannot help but be suspicious of his conclusions concerning oral performance which pepper his annotations. Furthermore, Christensen provides little or no useful information on the informants or when they might have told the legend, likely because such important contextual information was not collected. In a time when folklorists have become more attuned to the role of the individual in tradition, the relationship between teller and told, and the importance of performance, Christensen's collection, despite all of its focus on contemporary culture, seems remarkably old-fashioned.

Christensen's project is to present a corpus of extant Danish oikotypes of well-known contemporary legends and, because of this, he conveniently fails to consider the possibility that his informants are reporting stories that they have read in other collections, stories that may in fact not be part of contemporary Danish tradition. He himself strays from the purported Danish emphasis of this collection quite early on, reporting several American tale variants, translated into Danish, such as a variant of "The Hook" from an article by Daniel Barnes and a variant of "The Room-

mate" collected in 1998 at the University of California, Berkeley (its correct name, not "Berkeley University" as Christensen writes).

Ultimately, what Christensen provides here is not a collection of Danish contemporary legends, but rather a collection of contemporary legends in Danish. Throughout the work, Christensen insists on referring to the contemporary legends he has collected as *vandrehistorier* or migratory tales, seemingly unaware of the importance of proper genre classification (fairy tales could also be referred to as *vandrehistorier* given their migratory nature). His suggestion that contemporary legends are generically different from earlier legends is countermanded by considerable proof to the contrary. While he is correct in saying that many of these stories "excite, stimulate, frighten, or entertain" (p. 13), he fails to explore critically why these stories have these effects. Instead, he contents himself with sharing his own immediate reactions to the stories with his readers – one story is funny, one is scary, another is embarrassing.

In his concluding critical essay on the genre, Christensen proposes that folklorists believe that contemporary legends present a unified folk moral, a misunderstanding of theoretical work on the contemporary legend at best and a misrepresentation at worst. In short, what could have been a useful addition to the growing literature on contemporary legends falters due to an uncritical approach to the field data and interpretations that rely too heavily on literary paradigms without the proper awareness of the massive theoretical literature on the interpretation of legends.

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One Day in Norway

Dagbok fra en dag i Norge ed. by Bi Five Magnus. Oslo, Pax Forlag 1997. 266 pp.

On a Wednesday in April 1995, all Norwegians were invited to write diaries about their day. The investigation was arranged by Norsk Etnologisk Gransking, where the material is