

new *thing* signify the beginning of a new (Christian) world. Sverrir Tómasson makes a convincing case for *Skíðarríma* having been performed as a carnival play, even though there is no direct evidence of such performances. Minna Skafte Jensen demonstrates that the two differing versions of the Prometheus myth in Hesiod's works are probably due to variations in oral performances for two differing contexts. Joseph Harris takes Lönnroth's concept of "double scene," juxtaposes it with André Gide's coinage "mise en abyme," and applies it to the repeated motif of the loss or non-existence of a son, etc. in *Beowulf*, and extends it to the macrocosm of a vanishing culture mourning its own passing.

Of the other articles of greater interest, Régis Boyer's "*Einheri* and *valkyria*, which is the sex of the hero in the North?" suffers greatly for not having been edited by a native speaker of English. French is certainly still a world language, and he should have been allowed to write in that language. Hermann Pálsson's "Odinic echoes in *Gísla saga*" is too broad in focus. Jónas Kristjánsson's "**Njáls saga*" (the asterisk designating a reconstructed prototype), in Danish, makes several noteworthy points concerning probable sources of the surviving version and suggests the 'Iainudic nature of modern saga research and its tendency to "wrap around." Asa Arping's "Den benådede barmdomen" presents the special problems of women authors' autobiographical writings in the 1800s.

This weighty Festschrift is clear evidence of the strong and lasting impact which the extremely versatile and productive Professor Lönnroth has had on an entire generation of scholars.

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■ Aage Jørgensen and Anders Thyrning Andersen, ed. *Et Spring ind i et Billede: Johannes V. Jensens myrtefyktning*. Odense: Odense Universitetsforlag, 2000. Pp. 205

This small volume of essays provides the student of Jensen and twentieth century Danish fiction an interesting series of perspectives on one of the more difficult aspects of modernism in Danish literature, namely Johannes V. Jensen's "myths." Jensen's short prose pieces, which he dubbed "myter" [myths] have long sent literary scholars scurrying for generic cover. Indeed, several of the papers assembled here take up directly the question of what inspired Jensen to dub these short pieces "myths," in contrast to more established, traditional conceptions of myth. The volume is based on a seminar focusing on Jensen's myths held in April, 1999 at the Folkeuniversitetcenter at Skærum Mølle. In

addition to the original papers presented at the seminar are papers by Poul Houe and Sven Rossel.

While Johannes V. Jensen as a writer fell out of popular favor in Denmark for several decades, in recent years he has experienced somewhat of a comeback. *Kongens fald* (Fall of the King), for instance, was named "book of the century" by two separate polls conducted by Danish dailies at the end of 1999. This series of essays comes at a propitious moment since Jensen is back in vogue and interest has been piqued among the general reading public in some of his less accessible works including his collections of "myths."

The first three articles in this collection consider Jensen's concept of myth in light of other considerations of myth. Erik M. Christensen's lead-off article evaluates Jensen's myths in the context of anthropological and historical conceptions of myth finding in Jensen's myth "Forsvundne skove" [Vanished forests], a meta-myth, which, in his words is, "opgavestillet[en] for hele forfatterskabet" (12) [the task master for his entire oeuvre]. The myths, Christensen opines, stand as a "kritik af religionen som dærlig ideologi" (14) [critique of religion as poor ideology]. Rossel, in his exploration of the myths, presents a concise literary-historical overview of Jensen's career and attempts to define and place the myths within this broader context. In an argument consonant with arguments he has made in *Scandinavian Studies* and in his monograph on Jensen, Houe suggests in his essay that Jensen's myths should be considered as part of a long tradition of "mytiske aktiviteter" (55) [mythical activity] during the twentieth century and links it to his conception of the post-modern. Houe provides a thorough survey of the "mythical activity" in both twentieth century fiction and critical theory. This essay, coupled with the first two in the volume, provides the reader with a welcome, albeit at times overwhelming, bibliography of the critical study of both myth and Jensen.

The remaining articles in the collection consider specific aspects of Jensen's myths and offer a stimulating series of perspectives. While each essayist clearly has his own voice, the interconnectedness of the articles contribute to a cumulative sense that characterizes the entire volume—one truly comes away with a broad-based, yet robust, understanding of the multiple theoretical and critical questions engendered by Jensen's myths. Iben Holk approaches problems of both genre and style proposing the concept of "mytisme" as a fitting moniker for describing Jensen's writing and its subsequent impact on the literary and academic communities (Martin A. Hansen, Klaus Ribbjerg, Inger Christensen, Kirsten Thorup are just a few of the names that he mentions in this context). Flemming

Harris provides stimulating close readings of "Fusiana" and "Det røde Træ," while Lars Handesten reads Jensen's myths within the context of "eternal return." Anders Thyrring Andersen takes up the question of dialectics and modernity, while Anker Gemzøe focuses on the concept of metamorphosis. The collection is rounded out by Poul Bager's engaging reading of the myths in concert with *Kongens fald*.

This volume is a welcome and exciting addition to the growing body of scholarship on Jensen and modernism in Danish literature. While several of the articles read as what they are—papers presented at a seminar—the overall impression is one of depth and critical engagement. Several of Jensen's myths that are commented on at length by various authors are included conveniently as an appendix.

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■ Byron J. Nordstrom. *Scandinavia since 1500*. Minneapolis: U Minnesota P, 2000. Pp. xii + 393. \$29.95

Most scholars who teach Scandinavian history have eagerly awaited the publication of Byron J. Nordstrom's *Scandinavia since 1500* for several years. That wait has clearly been worthwhile. The book provides a thorough survey of the major political, cultural, social, and economic developments in modern Scandinavian history and will be indispensable for any course covering that area of study.

Rather than beginning in 1500, as the title suggests, Nordstrom includes a concise introductory chapter covering "Scandinavia before the Modern Era." Although this is necessarily brief, it nonetheless provides the background essential for students to understand conditions at the beginning of modern Scandinavian history, as well as many subsequent developments. He then examines the area as it developed through the major movements of European history, from the renaissance through the early modern, modern, and contemporary periods. After the chapter on the pre-modern period, the book is divided into three parts: "The Early Modern, 1500–1800," "The Long Nineteenth Century, 1800–1914," and "The Twentieth Century." The latter ends with a look at general developments in Norden since 1945. Nordstrom shows how Norden has continually been influenced by developments from abroad throughout its history. But the interaction of external and internal factors has created a culture that is unique with a myriad of local variations (even within each Nordic country).

The bibliography is conveniently divided into works dealing with Scandinavia in general, as well as titles specifically related to each Nordic