

Introduction: Migration, Exile, and Diaspora in the Nordic Region

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Migration to and from the Nordic region is not a new phenomenon. Though migration has been a constant throughout the history of the Nordic region, today the topic of immigration to the Nordic region, particularly from non-Western nations, dominates popular culture and political discourse, has been perceived of as an economic problem, and has been the subject of art and literature. This special volume of *Scandinavian-Canadian Studies*, titled “Migration, Exile, and Diaspora in the Nordic Region,” explores various aspects of migration—through place, space, and time—within the Nordic region. As nationality and national identity is fundamentally complicated by the authors within these pages, this special volume similarly expands the boundaries of the definition of the “Nordic region” to include Nordic-America.

Sarah C. Reed and Mirva Johnson look at Nordic migration’s historical impact on Nordic-America. Reed’s article, “The Cosmopolitan Saint: Nephi Anderson’s Scandinavian-American Mormon Identity,” reexamines the scholarly reception of the author Nephi Anderson. Reed highlights the significance of preserving Norwegian cultural heritage in Nephi Anderson’s works as opposed to focusing solely on the author’s Mormon identity, as is most common in Nephi Anderson’s literary reception. Mirva Johnson investigates the Finnish-American community of Oulu, Wisconsin, in her article “Language Shift and Changes in Community Structure: A Case Study of Oulu, Wisconsin.” Johnson uses quantitative data from the 1910 and 1920 Census as well as qualitative evidence from local histories to demonstrate the language shift, from Finnish to bilingual to a gradual increase to English, in the Wisconsin community.

Where Reed and Johnson detail historical migration in Nordic America, the remaining articles in this special volume look at these issues through a contemporary lens. Benjamin R. Titlebaum’s article, “Missing Links: Politics and the Misrecognition of the Sweden Democrats,” critiques the dominant academic approach to the study of the Sweden Democrats, a controversial right-wing political party in Sweden. Though prevailing critiques of the Sweden Democrats explore the party’s connections to other Swedish extremist right-wing forces, Titlebaum argues instead for a more nuanced understanding of the dynamic movement. In “The Figure of the ‘Climate Refugee’ in Inger Elisabeth Hansen’s Å

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resirkulere lengselen: avrenning foregår (2015),” Jenna Coughlin analyzes the figure of the “climate refugee” in the Norwegian poet Inger Elisabeth Hansen’s 2015 collection *Å resirkulere lengselen: avrenning foregår*. Through a discussion of the term or figure of the “climate refugee,” Coughlin argues that Hansen advocates for a poetics of relation that takes its inspiration from dynamic forms in nature. Marit Ann Barkve’s article, “Writing Beyond the Ending’ and Diasporic Narrativity in Loveleen Rihel Brenna’s *Min annerledeshet, min styrke*,” analyzes Loveleen Rihel Brenna’s 2012 memoir. Through a close reading of the memoir, Barkve highlights Brenna’s usage of both conventional and unconventional patterns of the female *Bildungsroman* (coming-of-age story) genre in order to complicate traditional narratives of female migrants in multicultural Norway.

Julie K. Allen explores the intersection of religion and migration in contemporary Denmark. In her article “Migrant Churches as Integration Vectors in Danish Society,” Allen uses oral histories from a dozen African Christian women in Copenhagen and Aarhus to analyze first-hand immigrant experiences with migrant churches as vectors of integration and identity formation in Denmark. Kate Moffat also analyzes contemporary Denmark in her article “Race, Ethnicity and Gang Violence: Exploring Multicultural Tensions in Contemporary Danish Cinema.” Moffat looks at the occurrence of the “gangster motif” in Danish cinema. In four Danish films, she investigates racial division and how the “gangster motif” is used to reflect and/or subvert cultural and political approaches to diversity in Denmark.

The final article in this special volume explores one theme over three countries. Sabina Ivenäs’s article, “Travelling Home: The Scandinavian Transnational Adoptee Identity on the Move,” examines what she terms Scandinavian transnational adoption literature in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Ivenäs illustrates, through her close reading of a number of Scandinavian transnational adoptee authors, that authors of Scandinavian transnational adoption narratives are simultaneously authors of migrant narratives as they depict the adoptee as a traveller. It is my hope that the articles in this special volume of *Scandinavian-Canadian Studies* serve to expand the scholarship surrounding the themes of “Migration, Exile, and Diaspora in the Nordic Region.”

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