

**Ole Høiris, Ole Marquard and Gitte Adler Reimer (eds.), Grønlændernes syn på Danmark. Historiske, kulturelle og sproglige perspektiver (Aarhus: Aarhus Universitets foreleg, 2019)**

Rendtorff, Jacob Dahl

*Published in:*  
Nordicum-Mediterraneum

*Publication date:*  
2020

*Document Version*  
Også kaldet Forlagets PDF

*Citation for published version (APA):*  
Rendtorff, J. D. (2020). Ole Høiris, Ole Marquard and Gitte Adler Reimer (eds.), Grønlændernes syn på Danmark. Historiske, kulturelle og sproglige perspektiver (Aarhus: Aarhus Universitets foreleg, 2019). *Nordicum-Mediterraneum*, 15(1).

#### **General rights**

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain.
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal.

#### **Take down policy**

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact [rucforsk@kb.dk](mailto:rucforsk@kb.dk) providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Ole Høiris, Ole Marquard and Gitte Adler Reimer (eds.),  
Grønlændernes syn på Danmark. Historiske, kulturelle og sproglige  
perspektiver (Aarhus: Aarhus Universitets foreleg, 2019)

This book is about the experience of the people from Greenland of their relation to Denmark, Europe and the world. Based on an earlier book about Greenlandic identity and the integration of Greenland into the world of globalization and cosmopolitanism, this anthology changes the perspective and investigates how the people in Greenland perceived their participation in the Danish commonwealth and the relation to other European countries. In the European perspective, the Greenlander was constructed the radical other, the different human being, the natural man and woman who lived a totally other life, the romantic life in close relation to nature that the Danish and European people once lived, but no longer had any relation to.

In the same way, the Greenlander conceived the ideal of Danish identity, of the Nation state as the basis for construction of the National identity of Greenland and they were nearly adopting and internalizing the Danish view of themselves as the natural people of Greenland. In this sense, the people from Greenland adopted the identity of the nation state and they wanted to construct a common identity based on their historical and cultural identity. In this context of formation of personal and national identity, the book is an interesting contribution to the understanding of the construction of identity through the relation to the other, where one mutually adopts they view of the other as basis for personal identity. It can be argued that the identity of the Greenlanders was constructed through their relation to the people in Denmark and that it was in this conflictual interaction of adoption and rejection of the views of the other that they constructed their personal and cultural identity.

The anthology has a historical and cultural perspective. It traces the relation between the Danish people and the Greenlanders since the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. The first meetings between the Scandinavians and Greenlandic Inuit took place in southwestern Greenland around the year 1300. However, these accounts was written by Europeans and therefore the book argues that there are only sources from later encounters between Europeans, Danish people and the Inuit from Greenland, so this creates difficulties from the perspective of the historical investigation of the experience of the Danish and Europeans from the point of view of the Greenlanders. In fact, this creates a methodological problem for the book since no primary written sources exist from that time where the Greenlandic people describe their encounter with the Danish people and the Europeans.

Accordingly, the book starts with the time from 1721 when the lasting connection was established between Greenland and Denmark. At that time, the priest Hans Egede arrived as the King Frederik IV's envoy with the aim of making the Greenlanders Christian, just as trading stations on primarily the west coast were established during the period. Thus, the colonial intention of making the people in Greenland Christian was combined with the

Ole Høiris, Ole Marquard and Gitte Adler Reimer (eds.),  
Grønlændernes syn på Danmark. Historiske, kulturelle og sproglige  
perspektiver (Aarhus: Aarhus Universitets foreleg, 2019)

business and trade in order to get products from the far North. From that time, the book traces different aspects of the cultural encounter between Danish people, Europeans and the people from Greenland.

As the book is an anthology, it combines papers by researchers from Greenland and Denmark who study a number of the sources that give access to the Greenlanders' somewhat mixed opinion about Danish missionaries, merchants and officials in Greenland. The book also accounts for the experiences and impressions that Greenlanders received when they were travelling abroad to Denmark and Europe. The books mixes studies of written sources, myths and works of art in the description of the Greenlanders perception of the Danish and European people. It is striking that the Greenlandic people are very loyal to the Danish Queen and that they feel attached to the kingdom of Denmark at the same time as they have very complex and mixed feelings with regard to the Danish people.

Thus, the books contains the following articles. After the introduction by Ole Høiris and Ole Marquardt, the book covers as different topics as the Greenlandic origin of the the Qallunaat (Europeans) (Birgit Sonne); The Danish-Greenland Cultural Meeting from the Middle Ages to Hans Egede (Flemming A.J. Nielsen); Colonialism seen from the side of a former colonizer (Robert Petersen); The greenlandic writer Peter Gundel's voice (Søren Rud); Guilt, shame and atonement. About an important work of Grenlandic literature (Kirsten Thisted); 'The Ultra Radical' - Augo Lynges and his like-minded view the Danish people (Jens Lei Wendel-Hansen); The Greenlanders and the Danish royal house - power, ceremonies and emotions (Søren Thuesen); Danes and Greenlanders in the colonial trade-commercial everyday situations with contact potential in the period 1774 to 1900 (Ole Marquardt); Inuit's accounts of appearances in Denmark, Europe and the United States (Ole Høiris); The almost always present Danishness(Bo Wagner Sørensen and Søren Forchhammer); The inviolable ease of existence- a study of differences in worldview among Greenlanders and Danes (Pelle Tejsner); Kikkut Qallunaajuppat? - Who are the Danes? About gaze directions between Denmark and Greenland and the movie Kikkut Qallunaajuppat? (Louise Hollerup); Greenlanders' globalization through Danish fashion- the Greenlandic diaspora in Denmark (Rosannguaq Rossen); Greenlandic identity and development- Danish threats and opportunities: The language debate under home and autonomy (Ulrik Pram Gad); The participation of Greenlanders in social research in Greenland (Steven Arnfjord).

With all these interesting and scholarly well-argued contributions, this book is an important contribution to the understanding of the complex post-colonial relation between Denmark, Europe and Greenland. With the combined methods of historical analysis, ethnography, literature studies, cultural analysis and contemporary social analysis, the anthology is able

Ole Høiris, Ole Marquard and Gitte Adler Reimer (eds.),  
Grønlændernes syn på Danmark. Historiske, kulturelle og sproglige  
perspektiver (Aarhus: Aarhus Universitets foreleg, 2019)

to provide a good foundation for the study of creation of identity through the cultural encounter. The idea of colonialism seen from the point of view of the colonized as the view of the other on the otherness of the other is important for understanding the problems of colonialism and overcome post-colonial traumas and problems in times of globalization and cosmopolitanism. The importance of the voices of the local cultural, historical and literary traditions cannot be emphasized enough. In order to deal with identity it is important to understand the role of the gaze of the other for the creation of the identity of the self. The radical other is significant for the creation of the identity of the self. At the same time, it is interesting how the people of Greenland have appropriated the Danish royal house and how this has contributed to the creation of a national identity of Greenland as a part of the commonwealth with Denmark. Nevertheless, this is still some that happens from the point of view of the otherness of the other to the Danish royal house. In our present times of cosmopolitan globalization with the global interest in the arctic and in Greenland this book is an important contribution for understanding the historical, cultural and social roots of our contemporary challenges.

### **Share this:**

- [Share](#)