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Editorial Statement

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Editorial Statement

One of the first things I learned when I began studying Danish American culture is that there are dozens of different but equally valid ways for people to express their Danish American identity. Some of the dominant identifiers of Danishness in the public imagination—Danish windmills, Hans Christian Andersen’s fairy tales, folk high schools, and flaky pastries, for example—are beloved by nearly all Danish Americans and converts to Danish American culture, but others, such as religious beliefs, language patterns, and lifestyle choices, are particular to specific groups of Danish Americans and can be a source of tension and conflict between them, as the first article in this issue reminds us.

In “Prohibition among Danish American Lutherans,” Nick Kofod Mogensen looks at differing attitudes toward Prohibition within the Danish American community in the early decades of the twentieth century and discovers that while opinions ran the gamut, they generally aligned not only with particular religious orientations within Lutheranism but also with either a more American or a more Danish attitude toward the problem.

Differences in the way Danish Americans preserve their linguistic connections to Danish are evident in the second article. In their paper “Social Narrative and Sustainability of a Danish Diaspora Community in the American Midwest,” Craig Molgaard and Amanda Golbeck look at the persistence of particular sociolinguistic mechanisms (code switching, speech acts, storytelling) among Danish Americans in western Iowa. When (and sometimes why) a person’s ancestors immigrated to the United States plays a significant role in how much Danish usage is conserved and perpetuated within a given family or community.

In some cases, however, one doesn’t have to choose between Danish and American words, ideas, or legacies. The third article, “Saving the American Farmer: The Impact of Danish Agricultural Practices on American Policy Direction,” by Byron Rom-Jensen, highlights how the productive application of Danish solutions to American problems in the early twentieth century offered hope in a desperate situation faced by American farmers belonging to various socioeconomic and racial groups. The final selection in this issue features the results of a collaborative translation project by a Dane

and a Danish American, Peer Aarestrup and Jack Brondum, to reveal how the fusion of Danish and American cultures and languages can create powerful poetry that should not be forgotten just because styles and tastes change over time. With these translations, the translators reclaim the legacy of Peer's great-great-grandfather, Emil Aarestrup, whose poetry was considered too sensual by his contemporaries but has often been neglected by modern audiences because it was written nearly two centuries ago. These elegant, witty poems are rendered for the first time in English and do honor to both their original author and their gifted translators.

The widely varied books reviewed in this issue offer additional insights into the many different dimensions of Danish American culture. Dan Mikel explores the spiritual dimension of Danish Americans' lives in his review of Joy Ibsen's memoir *Here and Hereafter*, while Samantha Brown introduces readers to the delights of Danish public and private foodways, as documented in Carol and Katrina Schroeder's *Eat Smart in Denmark*. Ed Polk Douglas offers us a witty glimpse into the elegant Danish country manors featured in *The Danish Country House*, while Troy Wellington Smith ably deciphers the philosophical and cultural intricacies of Armen Avanesian and Sophie Wenerscheid's edited book *Kierkegaard and Political Theory: Religion, Aesthetics, Politics and the Intervention of the Single Individual*. Each of these books and the meaning that their reviewers reveal in them highlights the complexity and richness of Danish and Danish American culture, reminding us not only how much there is for us to learn and enjoy about it, but also how many ways one can connect to it, regardless of who or where you may be.

Correction: The caption under the photo on the cover of our last issue (39:1) incorrectly identified the location depicted in the photograph as Greenville, WI instead of Greenville, MI. We apologize for the mistake.