

Jones, Michael, and Kenneth R. Olwig, eds. 2008. *Nordic Landscapes: Region and Belonging on the Northern Edge of Europe*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 628 pages.

In this sizeable collection, Michael Jones and Kenneth R. Olwig have assembled contributions from primarily geographers but also landscape theorists, an archaeologist, ethnologists, and anthropologists, who aim to connect the various conceptions of “landscape” with ideas of nation and belonging in the Nordic region (Norden). The editors argue that Norden is a perfect focus for such a study, given its diverse group of regionalisms and identities as well as the landscapes (political, geographical, cultural, artistic) in which the former can be found. In an “acknowledgments” section of their introduction, the editors explain that the essays have their genesis in a series of interdisciplinary research meetings in the 1990s. The work emphasized “how human interaction with the environment is manifested and how it involves more than the ways human activity modifies the physical features of the surroundings and creates new features” (xxvii).

In their introduction, Jones and Olwig acknowledge a growing body of literature on the spatiality of regional identities, the cultural and aesthetic qualities of “landscape,” and historical linkages in landscape between society and nature. These interrelated themes, the editors argue, are rarely combined within studies of place, which this collection seeks to address. Jones and Olwig gained inspiration from Michael Conzen’s 1990 anthology, *The Making of the American Landscape* (Boston: Unwin Hyman), because of its attention to landscape as “place and region” and not only its “scenic landscape surface” (xii). The editors’ project expands to suit the different, perhaps unusual, idea of landscape in Norden. As in the Swedish concept of *landskap*, landscape does not have a purely scenic or visual/visible quality, but instead evokes ties to regions and political entities. Despite historical shifts, these notions remain powerfully embedded in contemporary life in Scandinavia and the Nordic countries.

The book consists of the introduction followed by twenty-two chapters, a list of contributors, and an index. The chapters are divided into six sections: Denmark, the North Atlantic, Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Norden. The number of chapters in the anthology makes it difficult to describe all of the contributors’ work here in depth. Nonetheless, a brief summary of the sections’ content is appropriate. The editors also state that the volume admittedly does not cover all regions within Norden and represents the scholars’ own interests. Some aspects of the organization and presentation (e.g., some authors’ multiple contributions, the amount of material on some countries/regions versus others) remain puzzling, however.

In the section on Denmark, Olwig (one of the editors) contributes two well-written chapters. His first chapter examines the historical definition of the Danish kingdom, touching on the developments in Danish colonialism and territorial holdings. The second treats the incorporation of Jutland (Jylland) into Denmark proper and its dual status as a natural landscape and a cultural landmark.

The North Atlantic’s section presents three chapters on Iceland, the Faeroe Islands, and Denmark, respectively. Kirsten Hastrup’s chapter demonstrates the interconnectedness of history, landscape, and even ancestry in Iceland, especially the relevance of the period of Viking settlement (*landnámsöld*). In his chapter on the Faeroe Islands, Arne Thorsteinsson argues that

the present-day settlement pattern can be traced to an understanding of the land as a commons with shared usage rights. Bo Wagner Sørensen's chapter on Greenland examines the breaks among different conceptions of identity, especially within a binary of Greenlandic and Danish.

Sweden's section comprises five chapters. Ulf Sporrøng's useful opening chapter provides background information on Sweden's physical landscape. It also introduces the notion that most contemporary Swedes are more connected to their affiliations with historical provinces (*landskap*) than they are to the modern, centralized government. Tomas Germundsson's chapter on Scania (Skåne) examines the Swedish-Danish identity politics present in this region. Ulf Sporrøng's fascinating second of three contributions in this volume treats the Swedish *landskap* of Dalecarlia (Dalarna) and its ancient legal customs of joint family inheritance of farmland. Gabriel Bladh offers a chapter on Värmland and its examples of *landskap* as province and scenery, including a reading of the work of Nobel laureate Selma Lagerlöf (1858-1940). In a chapter on Swedish grazing land or wooded grassland (*hagmark*), Margareta Ihse and Helle Skånes describe this particular landscape while proposing a kind of integrated landscape analysis mindful of natural and scientific factors.

The book's section on Norway consists of five chapters. Michael Jones' chapter opens this section and examines the cultural split between north and south Norway, especially as it is exhibited in the labeling of (agri)cultural areas. Venke Åsheim Olsen uses her chapter to focus on regional identity in northern Norway, specifically as a locus of plurality of Norwegian, Sámi, and Finnish elements. In his chapter, Anders Lundberg concentrates on a collection of farmland on the southwestern island of Karmøy, where human activity has perpetually changed the natural landscape. Ingvild Austad and Leif Hauge describe the landscape changes that have taken place in the "fjordscape" of Inner Sogn, West Norway, partly due to developments in farming and landownership. Ann Norderhaug's chapter focuses on southeastern Norway, the Hjartdal-Svartdal area of Telemark, where farming practices have changed the area's ecological and cultural landscape.

Finland's section of the book contains five chapters. W. R. Mead opens the section with an historical look at Finland, which then thematizes the (com)modification of Finnish landscapes, which still hold great cultural significance. In a chapter on Åland, Nils Storå links the Ålanders' regional identity to elements in the territory's history and contemporary society: e.g., the right of domicile and Åland's maritime position. Ari Aukusti Lehtinen contributes a chapter on the eastern Finnish forest, including iconography of this area as a cultural border/marker with implications for Finns' identification of and with their national landscapes. Maunu Häyrynen's chapter discusses the images used in Finland's twentieth-century construction of its own identity, primarily through an assemblage of artists' visions, which persist in contemporary Finnish culture. Anssi Paasi's chapter discusses the contestable, fluctuating quality of landscape identity, reiterating how variable the constituent elements can be.

The book's final section "introduces" Norden as a whole. This section's two chapters may have been better situated at the beginning of the book, as they provide an overview of the region. Michael Jones and Jens Christian Hansen use their chapter "A Geographical Overview," to provide useful background information on each of the aforementioned regions within Norden.

Ulf Sporrøng's third contribution in this volume, on regional characteristics of Nordic physical landscapes, includes sections on, e.g., bedrock, climate, and zones of vegetation.

The remaining features of the book perform their functions. The index is appropriately lengthy and detailed and includes some cross-references to item listings in the Nordic languages for clarification. The volume is somewhat sparsely illustrated in black and white. Given the high costs of image reproduction, this is understandable. The maps that are included, however, are of varying quality (sometimes appearing to be scans of photocopies).

In light of ongoing global discussions of ecology and environmental awareness, the editors' and researchers' emphasis in this volume on human interaction with the environment and landscapes (broadly defined) is timely. While the book will be of primary interest to geographers and scholars of landscape studies, certain contributions (e.g., Jones and Hansen on Norden as a whole; Sporrøng's chapter on Dalecarlia) have widespread applicability for other disciplines. These chapters will have utility in introductory courses on Scandinavian studies as well as in examinations of cultural studies.

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