

## Abstract

In this master thesis I present a rhetorical critique of the learning material *Denmark Then and Now — A Learning Material for the Naturalization Test on History, Culture, and Society* published in 2007 by the former Danish Ministry of Integration. Passing the naturalization test is a prerequisite for applying for Danish citizenship and test questions are based on the information available in *Denmark Then and Now*.

This material, I argue, is not only a didactic text, but a text with ideological perspectives as well. These perspectives appear from the narratives presented in the text constituting norms and values of Denmark as a nation and Danes as a people. The purpose of the text seems to be to constitute the applicant within these norms and values, but instead, I argue, the text seems to position the applicant and thus its reader as an outsider to the Danish community. A third persona position underscored by the general discursive nonexistence throughout the text.

This presents a complex situation for the applicants and begs the question: How does this self-contradictory function arise? One that I enlighten by vibrating the theory of constitutive rhetoric voiced by Maurice Charland and the concept of the third persona described by Philip Wander against each other as well as the text of *Denmark Then and Now*.

I conclude by calling attention to two essential problems: First, a discrepancy between the positions 'applicant' and 'Dane' which results from a lack reciprocity between the two identities and thus a lack of identification; and second, a set of closely defined anecdotes essentializing the Danish identity and thereby creating a back drop of static and unchangeable narratives. As an outsider, the applicant is positioned as an agent oriented towards change, but towards the kind of change projected by the narrative.

On a broader level I view this critique as a study within the frame of rhetorical citizenship and thus focus on citizenship as a discursive act that materializes in many different ways. *Denmark Then and Now* illustrates a view on communication as a means to overcome dissent, disagreement, and difference in society. Instead, I along with rhetoricians such as Kendall Phillips, Robert Ivie, and Robert Asen argue that these types of communication have important value in society as dynamic forces oriented towards change.