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| Sørensen, Villy (1929-2001) |
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| Villy Sørensen was a prominent intellectual figure of twentieth-century Denmark. His work spanned social commentary, philosophy, and literature. He was a sophisticated literary critic, author of tales based on Norse and Greek mythology, and an outstanding translator of Latin and German literature, particularly of modernist writers of the German-language tradition such as Franz Kafka and Hermann Broch. His fiction comprises only a small part of his oeuvre, the most notable being the early tales *Sære historier* (1953) and *Ufarlige historier* [*Harmless Tales*] (1955), and a later collection of short prose, *Formynderfortællinger* [*Tutelary Tales*] (1964). The remainder of his legacy consists of philosophical and cultural treatises, and literary criticisms such as *Digtere og dæmoner* (1959). In this latter work, Sørensen, who was especially oriented towards German letters, provides in-depth perspectives on such modernist writers as Franz Kafka, Hermann Broch, and Thomas Mann. To the philosophy of culture belongs *Seneca – humanisten ved Neros hof* [*Seneca: The Humanist at the Court of Nero*] (1976), in which Sørensen’s impressive scholarship and overview are displayed to the full. Moreover, his body of work includes a number of renderings, collections of lectures, speeches and essays, and newspaper commentaries. |
| Villy Sørensen was a prominent intellectual figure of twentieth-century Denmark. His work spanned social commentary, philosophy, and literature. He was a sophisticated literary critic, author of tales based on Norse and Greek mythology, and an outstanding translator of Latin and German literature, particularly of modernist writers of the German-language tradition such as Franz Kafka and Hermann Broch. His fiction comprises only a small part of his oeuvre, the most notable being the early tales *Sære historier* (1953) and *Ufarlige historier* [*Harmless Tales*] (1955), and a later collection of short prose, *Formynderfortællinger* [*Tutelary Tales*] (1964). The remainder of his legacy consists of philosophical and cultural treatises, and literary criticisms such as *Digtere og dæmoner* (1959). In this latter work, Sørensen, who was especially oriented towards German letters, provides in-depth perspectives on such modernist writers as Franz Kafka, Hermann Broch, and Thomas Mann. To the philosophy of culture belongs *Seneca – humanisten ved Neros hof* [*Seneca: The Humanist at the Court of Nero*] (1976), in which Sørensen’s impressive scholarship and overview are displayed to the full. Moreover, his body of work includes a number of renderings, collections of lectures, speeches and essays, and newspaper commentaries.  Villy Sørensen was born on 13 January 1929 and grew up in the Copenhagen suburb of Valby. In 1947 he suffered a psychological breakdown, most likely on account of unrequited love, compounded by his sensitive nature. Following his secondary education he read philosophy at the University of Copenhagen and spent a period as an exchange student in Freiburg. He never found his footing within the philosophical establishment and abandoned formal study in order to devote himself to his own poetry and thinking. In 1974, Sørensen received the Nordic Council Literature Prize for his book of essays *Uden mål – og med* [*Moralske tanker*] (1973), and was a repeated candidate for the Nobel Prize in Literature. Sørensen died on 16 December 2001.  Despite his unassuming nature, Villy Sørensen created a furore with *Oprør fra midten* [*Revolt from the Center*] (1978), a critical treatise in defence of a Third Way that reconciled liberalist and communist ideologies. While Sørensen’s subject matter was often demanding, his books achieved widespread public popularity, not least by virtue of his lucid pen and ability to make accessible even the most complicated of ideas.  [image: Sorensen.jpg]  Figure Villy Sørensen List of Works:Short Stories *Sære historier* (1953)  *Ufarlige historier* (1955)  *Formynderfortællinger* (1964) Essays on Literature and Philosophy *Digtere og dæmoner* (1959)  *Schopenhauer* (1969)  *Seneca – humanisten ved Neros hof* (1976) Political-philosophical Essays and other Prose *Uden mål – og med. Moralske tanker* (1973)  *Oprør fra midten* (1978) English Translations *Revolt from the Center* (trans. Christine Hauch; 1981)  *Seneca*: *The Humanist at the Court of Nero* (trans. W. Glynn Jones; 1984)  *Tutelary Tales*, (trans. Paula Hostrup-Jessen; 1988)  *Downfall of the Gods* (trans. Paula Hostrup-Jessen; 1989)  *Another Metamorphosis and Other Fictions* (trans. Tiina Nunnally and Steve Murray; 1990)  *Harmless Tales* (trans. Paula Hostrup-Jessen; 1991)  *Four Biblical Tales* (trans. Paula Hostrup-Jessen; 1991) |
| Further reading:  (Haarder, Villy og Sørensen: Skitse til genlæsning af et forfatterskab)  (Haarder, Villy Sørensen)  (Øhrgaard, Med Villy I Midten: 28 Vidnesbyrd Om Villy Sørensen)  (Øhrgaard, Villy Sørensen )  (Støvring, Det Etiske Kunstværk: Villy Sørensens Poetik Og Litterære Kritik)  (Støvring, Villy Sørensen Og Kulturkonservatismen) |