

The Study of the USA in Danish High Schools

By

Ole Bom
Copenhagen

First of all I should like to extend my thanks to the Association and its Chairman for the invitation to be the Danish representative in this panel discussion on the study of the U.S. in Scandinavian high schools, or gymnasia, as we say.

I thank you the more, as I remember an animated discussion on these premises at the conference in '71 about the question of what kind of forum the Association should address itself to in the future, i.e. whether that forum should be a selected clientele of active scholars, interested exclusively in an exchange of views on research in progress, or whether it should be widened to include teachers and students in American Studies from all corners of Academe, or, for that matter, from even beyond—to inspired amateurs, those buffs that more often than not tend to be an asset at any professional gathering..

From a contemporary Danish point of view at least, he would be rash indeed who, when surveying native exercises within the fields of, say, American literature, theatre, and music, did not draw attention to contributions by people of letters like Elsa Gress Wright, Klaus Rifbjerg, Poul Borum, and Erik Wiedemann, to mention the first that come to mind from outside the universities.

The very term "American Studies" is an amorphous one, comprising, as everybody here will know, a multitude of subjects, and this conference, as it has proceeded so far—on a high level of scholarship, but even so with lectures in a diversity of fields, some of which were bound to be less familiar to any given participant than others, though never irrelevant to our common interest—

bears witness to the danger of cutting lines of communication for fear of not meeting the demands of scientific respectability.

So the board of governors should be congratulated on this continued policy of the open door. To one who belongs to a generation steeped in the sound, though, I am afraid, vanishing Danish university tradition which prescribed the same basic degree for teachers in higher and secondary education, and who for ten years now has been engaged in the teaching of American literature at both levels, it seems that there are educational barriers enough already. The link between higher and secondary education is vital, also when we talk about furthering the cause of American Studies in Danish high schools, and it is a point I need not labour, even though a Dane may be inclined to differ from Sigmund Skard on the question of where credit is due for the growth of American Studies in Europe after World War II, i.e. whether with the secondary schools (and the population from which they recruit their students), or with the universities.

While Professor Skard in the concluding chapter of his *American Studies in Europe* sees the university status of American Studies as "to a great extent determined by their position in the schools," I would tend to take the opposite view. Relations between the two educational sectors being as close as they still are at home, it would be difficult not to see the teaching at our high schools as basically a mirror of the standards laid down in the universities. So whatever progress has been made in American Studies is due to changes at our universities. This view of the relationship may appear categorical, but I believe it finds support in the following passage from a pamphlet *The Subjects of the Gymnasium*, published in 1970 by The Association of Teachers in Secondary Education. Regarding English, the authors Larsen, Wenzel, and Kragh Mnuksen have this comment, and I quote in translation:

The title of the discipline is English; thus it is still British literature which makes up the bulk of texts studied on all 'sides' of the gymnasium (i.e. modern languages, social sciences, music, and mathematics, as well as in the H.F., or 'comprehensive' branch of our secondary schools); — but add to this that English is the key to an understanding of more societies than is the case with any other foreign language in the Danish gymnasium. Therefore the teacher of English is faced with a vast field to be, or rather, to try to be informed about. Indeed American literature alone might form a discipline in its own right; it is cultivated to an increasing extent in the secondary schools, but it should be noted that in many cases the teacher's university training never qualified him for the practising of American Studies in the classroom. So on top of his regular line of duty in that room many an English teacher has had to obtain the necessary background for the teaching of American literature and language.

With the exception, perhaps, of the country's literature, American Studies, defined as a subject of explicit status in the curriculum, are still virgin land in Danish high schools, and for this reason, and because of the obvious limitations imposed upon me as an English teacher with only hearsay knowledge of what is going on in history and the social sciences, in geography and music, I shall confine myself largely to American literature. This approach may of course lend itself to some distortion, and I am quite aware that a graduate of our modern languages side may eventually know less about Whitman, Faulkner, or Saul Bellow, than he or she does about Huddie Leadbetter, Duke Ellington, or Bob Dylan. This despite the fact that our conservatories and music departments have only recently wised up to the fact that their graduates are simply lost in the country of the young, unless they have been exposed to at least a few blue notes and some of those other sounds that have developed out of America's most significant: contribution to music.

Similarly, with regard to history, the same high school graduate may be fluent rather in the ugly American syndrome, know all about the value of the dollar, the domino theory, the dirty tricks in every bag from Watergate to the Oval Office, and this trend can be traced in English as well, *vide* the persistent occurrence (in examination reading lists) of such diehards as "the Negro," "Crime," "the City," "Pollution," "Waste," etc.

While the appointed guardians of America's image abroad may feel tempted to share the fear of less inobtrusive Danish crusaders on our political right that distorted images from the media are leading our youth astray also with regard to America, I see no grounds for hysteria as long as the authors that provide the background reading for such exercises are *Americans* like for instance James Baldwin, Ramsey Clark, Lewis Mumford, Robert Heilbroner, and Charles Reich. And I am not paying lip-service to our 16-19s, when I state that with or without guidance from their English teachers they know better than to see the above-mentioned themes as problems for only Americans to solve.

How far has the study of American literature progressed in Danish high schools, since Professor Skard in 1958 published his two volumes on the whole European scene? Sigmund Skard's chapter on Denmark is the only record we have on the subject, as the three articles of comparatively recent date that describe the teaching of English in Denmark historically, Prof. Knud Sørensen's *The Teaching of English in Denmark: A Historical Survey* from 1973,

his *The Teaching of English in Denmark from a Historical Point of View* (Engelskundervisningen i Danmark historisk betragtet) from 1969, and Lektor P. Bækkeskov Olsen's *20th Century Cross-Currents within the Teaching of English in Denmark* (Brydninger Indenfor Engelskundervisningen i Danmark i 20 Århundrede) of the same year, are primarily concerned with approaches to the teaching of the language. Still, I find it symptomatic that even when these two authors are discussing textbooks, there is hardly a reference to the status of America.

In the same way it is suggestive that it took Copenhagen University sixteen years to establish the chair in American literature and civilization of which Sigmund Skard wrote with some optimism at the end of a comment which by and large did not present a very cheerful picture of the university scene with regard to the position of our discipline. Many were the Fulbrighters in the sixties, and with high hopes and excellent credentials they came to enhance the minds of the stray bunch of devotees that used to hang around the American Seminar Room in those days; but frustrated some of them left in the attempt to make their subject legitimate, even though they did have sympathizers among the Department staff. Frankly, I am at a loss how to explain this dragging of feet, the more so as it seemed to find no support among students of English, let alone among the population outside the academies. Was the inertia due to the enormous impact of Otto Jespersen, who revolutionized the teaching of English in our country, but who also, I suppose, despite his versatility as a scholar, or "man of languages" (sprogmand), as he preferred to call himself, made the Danes so cherish their newly found ability to *speak* the language that they forgot there were other variants of it than the King's best?

Jespersen, though, was the first Dane to publish a standard secondary school textbook, containing some American material: *The England and America Reader* of 1903, and he was the first to invite an American for a guest lecture in American Studies at the English Department. Still—and here I am ad-libbing from Professor C. A. Bodelsen's memorable farewell-lecture at Copenhagen University in 1964—the following anecdote serves to illustrate an attitude that may well have lingered on till way after Jespersen's retirement from his chair in 1925, or till after his death in 1943: Before the Connecticut Yankee climbed the lectern at King Jespersen's Court, Jespersen introduced the poor fellow to the students by saying that this was an historic occasion indeed, not so

much, though, for what the don might have to say, but rather because of the strange vernacular in which he was going to say it!

And yet, from the vantage point of this bicentennial year it is all too easy to be wise after the event, malting light of the travail which, considering the structure of an old, inflexible institution like Copenhagen University, had to precede the introduction of a new discipline. Innovations take time, and if the standard of teaching and scholarship is to be safeguarded, training of academic staff is a prerequisite. These elementary facts were often overlooked by the students and critics from outside the University who in the late fifties levelled some rather heavy newspaper attacks against the English Department. Since 1951 there had been a lectureship in American literature and civilization, and from a glance at the roster of Fulbright grantees who, albeit on a temporary basis, held this lectureship in the past, it should be evident that Copenhagen University was endowed with top-notch capacity in the field: Kenneth Murdock, Alan Downer, Henry Steele Commager, Stephen Stepanchev, Joseph Blotner, Larzer Ziff, Leon Howard, Robert Falk, Everett Carter, John Aldridge—to mention a few of the Americans that come to my mind.

The problem, as Sigmund Skard also pointed out, was how to incorporate the discipline in the examination requirements along with English, thereby obtaining formal status, which again would appeal to those students who took a strictly pragmatic view of their English studies. The cand. art. degree referred to by Prof. Skard never materialized, but the new university regulations at Copenhagen of 1976, to which I shall return later, hold out brighter prospects for the future.

Turning to the secondary schools proper, let us now try to trace the development of American Studies as it manifests itself in the years after Sigmund Skard wrote his book on the subject. An obvious, though perhaps not very stimulating, way of doing this is to examine the curricula regulations issued by the changing ministries of education and their Department for the Gymnasia.

Before 1953 there was no reference to American literature at all and thus hardly any activity within the field, if we make allowances for the few English teachers with a special interest, or a special background. If they managed to squeeze some American material into G.C.E. (Studentereksamen) reading lists, this material must have been acquired almost exclusively from outside the school-book market.

Those Americans here who are not familiar with the Danish secondary school system, and who may feel tempted to knit their brows at this or later states of affairs, should note an elementary fact often forgotten by foreigners: That English is our second language, and that the aim of our English teaching is twofold: On the one hand the students on the modern languages side should be brought to a level of proficiency in both spoken and written English that will enable them to pass on directly to the humanities department of any one of our five universities; on the other, they should acquire a certain knowledge of the literature and civilization of the English-speaking world, the world that remained Britain until the start of the fifties.

1953 saw the appearance of new regulations in the high schools, and in English we notice for the first time a reference to American literature, and I quote in translation: "American texts may be read instead of British texts to a reasonable extent." 1953 also saw the appearance of the first anthology in English for secondary schools, comprising all-American material: O. Friis-Hansen's *America through its Literature*. In a preface in Danish which today reads almost like a facetious apology for introducing a civilization which to the reading public of the time was synonymous with "Hollywood, hard-boiled novels, assembly-line techniques, popular mechanics, and money-making" the editor lines up Christopher Dawson's theory of the new balance of power as expounded in *Understanding Europe* and goes on to state "for a fact that America's influence has become of overriding importance since the last war" and that "as a consequence of this, it is in our own interest to learn about America and the Americans." Its publication heralded if not a flurry, then a slowly increasing output of textbooks offering Americana, edited by colleagues like Mouridsen, Hunosøe, Salling, Gram Andersen, and Bay.

However, the kind of "reasonable extent" representation quoted earlier might of course be no representation at all, and certainly, this was the way the line was interpreted by the majority of the teachers who had received virtually no training in, or exposure to American letters. I myself am a child of that 1953 high school regulation, and I still recall the uneasiness with which I presented myself in 1958 at the school-leaving exam in English, an uneasiness shared by my English teacher, who had spent several years in Chicago. Thus among his fine talents as a teacher he had a wonderful command of the American idiom, but since fortune smiled on us

in the form of an outside examiner who had also been visiting over yonder, a good time was had by all, if yesterday's authority on transformational grammar will allow the cleft.

Those were the days, mind you, when in written composition colour without the "u," or the past tense of "to travel" without the double l, would have been blue-pencilled right then and there; and I doubt that things were much different at the University at the time. At least I shall never forget the shock that was mine when I enrolled in Bengt Jurgensen's course of English phonetics at Copenhagen six months later. On balance and to illustrate innovations in the Phonetics Department I should add in passing that the same Professor and present board member of NXAS gave lectures on American dialects when in 1963 he returned to Copenhagen from a year at Ann Arbor as an ACLS grantee.

Towards the end of the fifties the ice had been broken, and the 1961 Ministry regulations for the schools mark a tremendous one up for American literature. They read as follows (in translation): "American literature must be represented, both among those texts that are read intensively and among those that are dealt with cursorily." The accompanying guidelines (*Vejledende Bestemmelser*) for English, issued by the Chief of Section in the same year, offer illuminating insights into the possibilities now afforded the teacher of English, in casu on the modern languages side. I quote in translation:

The requirements in American allow for a latitude which makes it possible for the individual teacher not to go beyond, say, a single (American) poem under §1 (i.e. texts studied intensively) and a short story under §2 (texts dealt with cursorily), while on the other hand the teacher who so wishes, is given the possibility of making an indepth study of the U.S., not only with regard to the country's literature, but also with due consideration for a general introduction to American civilization.

From personal experience I can testify to the validity of following the second line of approach. It goes without saying that any teacher is faced with the problem of selection, a problem which becomes more acute when these and later regulations add the literatures of America, the Commonwealth, and the Third World to that of the mother country.

As mentioned earlier, English is the student's second language, which explains why the regulations, while still making room for Shakespeare and later authors, give priority to contemporary texts, but even so, and within just one of the fields above, it would be pretentious indeed to attempt a survey course covering the whole

ground over a span of three academic years. So willy-nilly, choices have to be made, and a frequent one of my own with regard to the disciplines poetry and prose, for instance, has been to present the students with equal options in the great tradition of English poetry on the one hand, and with samples of 19th and 20th century American fiction on the other. The bias in evidence here is not lost on the students, who sometimes want to know whatever happened to the 20th century British novelist; yet it is not in violation of the rules.

The optimism of the booming sixties also manifested itself in education, and innovations were many. Thus 1970 saw the emergence of a completely new branch of secondary education, "Den Højere Forberedelseseksamen," or H.F., which may roughly be compared to the British comprehensive, and which with the relevant options among the subjects, gives access along with the "Studentereksamen" to any given field of study at our institutes of higher education. In English, where we recognize the British system of O-level and A-level, we also notice that the Department of the Gymnasia has learnt from past neglect. I quote in part from the regulations (in translation), as revised in 1974:

"The aim of the teaching is a continued training in the ability to understand and use the English language, both in spoken and in written form. At the same time the students should gain an insight into characteristic aspects of the culture of those countries that have English as a means of expression, especially England and the United States."

Under the syllabus, we further learn that "both American and English texts should be studied," and we may note in passing the reversal of the two adjectives.

One interesting aspect of the H.F. Division is that the students have to write an individual paper of their own choice on the basis of what might be characterized as a modest form of research; at least they spend three months out of a total of two years preparing it, and from our two present inspectors of schools I understand that a considerable number of these papers have discussed topics within American history or literature.

Returning to the Gymnasium, we have the most recent regulations of 1971. The article dealing with the aims of the teaching of English reads almost like the one just quoted from the comprehensive schools, so I will not repeat that. Further on, under the syllabus for English we see again that "Both American and English texts should be studied. Besides, texts from other English-speaking

counties may be included to a certain extent." But before we start wondering what will happen to American lit., once the Third World begins to flex its literary muscle in our schools, let us note that *de jure* the American ethos has now obtained a place equal to that of the mother country.

One advantage of the brevity of our school regulations and curricula is that they allow for a large amount of liberty, once the qualitative demands, such as those I have quoted, plus the quantitative minimum requirements (of 1025 pages on the modern languages side), have been met. One disadvantage, especially to an audience like the one I am facing, is that this freedom of choice makes it very hard to give you an idea of how the study of American literature and civilization is being pursued in the schools. As stated in my introduction, the discipline itself is multitudinous and so should appear like a godsend to the vanguard of teachers who for years have been advocating the breaking up of our traditional school structure, the rigidity of which makes it far too easy for the individual teacher to do his thing with no regard for the fact that the class next door may be tackling the same problem from a different, though often related angle. There is no doubt that interdisciplinary studies are—and have been for some years—a major concern of our school authorities as well as of the rank and file members of the profession, and the despairing optimist can now seek inspiration from such concrete facts as our three experimental high schools at Herlev, at Birkerød, and at Avedøre, where innovations in this as in many other areas are being tried out against the heavy odds of tradition.

Also important are local, but now nationwide phenomena like the "Introductory Week" and the "Feature Week", during which our Ministry Department allows the suspension of normal schedules for the benefit of interdisciplinary activities. One such at my own school, "Limits to Growth"—chaotic and disorganized as it might appear to even the insider—still found much support with the one class of mine that participated and contributed in English on the basis of articles by American scholars; and exams half a year later proved that the message of these authors had been got in a manner no less acceptable than might have been the case through traditional classroom work.

Individualistic responses and methodical approaches to the possibilities inherent in our subject are harder, if not impossible to get at. One way of digging out some information would be to go

through the annual reading lists, as they are submitted to the Ministry by each teacher, before he presents a class at the final examinations. They are a useful source to our purpose here today on two scores:

1. They provide, or rather provided, detailed lists of all material studied by a class over a period of three years (in the case of the modern languages side),—the reservation being that as of 1973 the English teacher is required to list only complete items and/or *titles* of anthologies used.
2. They give complete specifications of texts and pages submitted for the oral exams.

So for the statistician it is possible to trace *fairly* accurately the numerical growth of American literature within the English syllabus, and *quite* accurately the share it holds in the corpus of texts submitted for the orals.

Though I was granted access to the forms for 1975—as submitted by the approximately 1000 teachers that make up the body in English at the 125 schools—I quickly realized that a responsible study of these with a view to valid statistics would entail a longer leave of absence than the three days needed to participate in this conference. However, from browsing through the 1975 pile I would consider it a fair estimate that about one third of the texts studied by my colleagues and their classes over the preceding period of three years were American. But as I said, the problem with these lists is that they offer only the titles and the figures—and rarely any insight into the imaginative and pedagogical ways in which the material has been handled by the individual teacher and his students. Ambitious thematic approaches—other than those mentioned, involving the whole school—are sometimes in evidence from the constellation of authors and titles chosen, but in the case of the single author, like for instance the frequent one of Ernest Hemingway, the lists tell you nothing about how the teacher goes about the job.

To conclude, let me sum up what further evidence there is of development—or the lack of it—with regard to the American scene in our schools.

Textbooks

By these I mean annotated editions and anthologies, published by members of the profession; not, of course, the flood of American

or English paperbacks that is becoming an increasingly important part of the teaching material. Of the kind of textbook that presents a fair blend of English and American texts, there are well above fifteen commonly used. Of purely American textbooks (fiction, non-fiction, drama, and poetry, if I need specify), there are at least fifteen, the majority published within the last eight years, which also may be an indication of where the action is at now. It should be no matter for surprise that the best American textbooks have been edited either by visiting Americans and Danes in collaboration, or by Danes who got onboard the Fulbright train while it was still in good shape, picking up passengers also from among the teaching staff at our schools.

American *history* seems to have more attraction for both textbook editors and scholars, and though the field lies outside my chosen topic, it would be one-sided not to mention the abundance of publications relating to emigration that have followed in the wake of Librarian Kristian Hvidt's 1972 doctoral dissertation *Escape to America — Muss Emigration from Denmark to the United States 1868–1914* (Flugten til Amerika etc.), a summary of which will be known to readers of *American Studies in Scandinavia* and a popular edition of which appeared this year.

Through a workbook series promoted by one of our publishing houses the schools are just now benefiting from interest in this period of Scandinavian history, which strangely enough did not receive the attention at home that Swedish and Norwegian historians devoted to it.

The Bicentennial has been instrumental in giving us a facsimile edition of Schmidt-Phiseldek's old *Europe and America*, as it has spawned already quite a number of books relating to American history, most notably Dr. Hvidtfeldt's *North America* (Nordamerika) and Grunnet Jepsen's *Birth of a Nation* (En Nation Bliver Til).

Since we have digressed now into bicentennial publications, mention should be made of Poul Borum's critical anthology *Det Amerikanske*. This Danish poet appears to be following in the steps of the late poet Poul Sørensen, who, along with Prof. of Danish Sven Møller Kristensen, has done much to popularize American poetry and prose in our country.

Radio & TV

The Danish State Radio, i.e. its Educational Department pays some attention to America through its Senior English Program

for the gymnasia. There is currently one broadcast in American with printed material put out every semester. And I shall refrain from commenting upon the immense impact that regular radio and TV has upon the teaching of American civilization in the schools.—Just one shot of Alistair Cooke's America for thirteen weeks, and you needed no more boosters for the class that semester.

Libraries

Regarding school libraries, American has to compete with English for acquisitions, and as again English has to compete with twenty-one other subjects for the limited annual funds, I shall have to go against the teacher's grain and disregard a self-evident, but in this case, potential source of knowledge. It would be both preposterous and beyond its means to expect the USIS Library in Copenhagen to help the Danish State fill the school stacks, as has been the fortunate case at the newly built school where I am presently employed. With regard to the American Library proper and the cultural section of the Embassy, I may be prejudiced in favour of the services they offer, having taught for some years right across the street from them; but with holdings that amount to 10,000 volumes, besides special collections of music, spoken word records and cassettes, films, video tapes, journals, papers, and magazines, the expert staff there serve the schools—through the mail, or on personal call—in a manner that deserves a lot of credit.

Denmark's largest library, The Royal Library in Copenhagen, is of small consequence in the day-to-day life of the average high school student, but to this audience I may add in passing that since Sigmund Skard commented upon its holdings as of 1958, when Eric Jacobsen left the office of chief of the American literature section there for a chair in English at the University, Librarian Merete Licht has been tending the acquisitional duties of her predecessor through the affluent sixties and the not-so-gilded seventies. Holdings—especially of American reference works—have grown considerably, also because the joint annual budget for the acquisition of English and American books has been allowed to accommodate demands in the latter category to an increasing extent.

Scholarships, Exchange Programs, and other matters of *relevancy*

For the students before they graduate, there is a total of ten agencies devoted to the task of exchanging youth between Denmark and the United States, the most active in the gymnasia being

the American Field Service and the Rotary Programs. Many of our students have benefited immensely from these two programs. Upon graduation from high school the serious student may compete for a variety of scholarships, most of them, of course, awarded on the strength of high school, university, or similar records.

Though it lies beyond the scope of this presentation to go into the subject of university fellowships, American and Danish, open to the student of topics American, two institutions ought to be mentioned for their persistent efforts to promote scholarship, understanding, and friendship between our two countries.

The oldest, and most well-known, is the Denmark–America Foundation, which through the years and thanks to generous donations from Danish corporations and private individuals has managed to keep up a strong line of propositions, ranging from short/long-term trainee-ships to full academic programs like the "Thanks to Scandinavia Fellowship." Thus for 1976 alone, and out of a total of 187 applications, the Foundation sponsored or financed programs in America and Denmark for 114 students and trainees.

The other is the Commission for Educational Exchange between Denmark and the United States, formerly the United States Educational Foundation in Denmark, formerly the Fulbright Commission. Into the changing alias you might feel tempted to read an increase of programs sponsored, but unfortunately the reverse has been the case. Though the Fulbright program is still in operation at the universities, albeit on a reduced scale, it has come to a dead stop for the secondary school teachers, since the dismal year of 1969, when cutbacks became the ticket in Washington. There is cause for concern about this situation, and it is felt by the Commission as by the teachers who in the fifties and sixties benefited from the Teacher Development Program and the Fulbright-Hays, Smith-Mundt Acts. Because quite apart from the fact that the teacher will always be in varying need of post-graduate training, it is self-evident that this need is felt more strongly in a subject that he may well have had no formal training in at all, and it seems odd that these programs were cancelled at a time, when things were beginning to look up, but before our own universities were quite ready to take over in American Studies. Besides, a phase like the one we are entering, when Danish universities command the necessary local expertise in the field, will not make superfluous the stimulus that such exchange programs afford teachers on all levels in both countries.

Lest these remarks should be interpreted as ingratitude on the part of a speaker who has had a full share of what the past had to offer a student of American literature, let me add that they are uttered from a personal conviction that without close, institutionalized relations between our two countries, we are bound to see a falling off of professional competence in the field. It meant something to my class in the gymnasium to be instructed in an American subject by an American college teacher for most of a semester, and it meant equally much to his Danish counterpart in America—and to her students, when she returned to take up her regular duties at home with fresh and added insights. Just as it set the pattern for my own professional life to be granted a year of study at a good American graduate school.

The funds that remain at the disposal of the Commission for secondary school purposes are spent at home on coveted annual seminars in American Studies, sponsored jointly by the Commission, the Embassy, and the Association of Teachers of English in the Gymnasia. The teaching staff at these seminars used to be all-American and made up of visiting Fulbrighters, or American scholars on the lecture circuit. Recent years have seen an increase in the number of Danes (or Americans in permanent employment at home), lecturing on American topics at the seminars. In 1972 The Association of Teachers of English sponsored a seminar in American Studies at Tufts University, Massachusetts, but this, again, may have been possible only because the Danish Ministry of Education was not as quick as its American counterpart to realize that recession was just around the corner. Today, it would be wishful thinking on the part of the board of governors to indulge in plans for a repeat performance, however legitimate they may appear to you.

Sabbaticals we do not have, so one's bid for one's post-graduate training in American Studies is limited to the activities mentioned here; even in this age of cheap, trans-Atlantic charter flights, and despite the notoriety (false in the case of the teachers, anyway) of Danish academic salaries, it would be impossible to the vast majority of the profession to undertake a course of study in America without some outside financial support. This fact, along with a regular teaching schedule of twenty-two weekly periods, may account for the modest output of scholarship from the members of the profession. Those contributions — in American Studies also — that people have time for are published in *Engelsklærerforeningens Meddel-*

elser (The Journal of Teachers of English), a quarterly, which also contains publications of many of our university colleagues. Incidentally, the university scene, which I promised to return to earlier in this talk, has seen interesting developments in the formal status of American lit. and civilization. For one thing, the number of teachers in the English Department at Copenhagen University, lecturing and doing research in American Studies, has grown considerably, and in 1974 the regular chair of the subject was finally filled, its first and present holder being Dr. Paul Eevine. For another, though it would lead too far to go into all the relevant details of the 1976 regulations that will take effect at Copenhagen from the start of next semester, I might add that American literature and civilization form part of both the requirements and the options in the lower, or minor division (1.del/bifag) syllabus. The—and I quote from the original draft in English—“option in American literature and society is meant as an introduction to the study of American civilization” and—quoting now in translation from the printed regulations—“may form the basis of further, higher, or major division (2.del/hovedfag) American Studies, or of studies for the 'magisterlionferens.'” On an average the option comprises three semesters' work with three required seminars on "Approaches to American Civilization" and on "Major American Writers.”

Among the higher division courses, American lit, or civilization are referred to explicitly in seven out of a total of twenty-seven options, of which the student is required to choose four within the general areas of language, literature, and civilization. It goes without saying that aspects of American Studies are relevant to many of the remaining twenty options.

The perennial "battle of the tongues" seems to have come to a peaceful solution: At Copenhagen we learn that—quote in translation—“pronunciation by and large should be consistent with the norms of British or American English.” Still no reference to the mid-Atlantic idiom here, unless the "by and large" can be thus interpreted. Concerning pronunciation, the 1974 regulations at Aarhus University require "a command of British or American standard that may serve as a model for students of English."

The University of Copenhagen is the only one in Denmark to now boast a professorship in American literature, so apart from the question of immediate relevance to today's topic, it is for this simple reason that I have skipped mention of conditions at Aarhus,

Odense, Roskilde, and Aalborg; naturally, the growing importance of the field at Copenhagen University is reflected also in the other four, as well as at our other institutes of higher education.

As I tried to make clear at the opening of this comment, there is to me no doubt that change and innovation at the university level are bound to have consequences all along the line of Danish education. If we accept this commonplace, and add to it that the study of the U.S. has by now gained a firm footing in Danish universities, it follows that the future prospects for the position of American Studies in our secondary schools are bright, though with the important reservation made earlier.

The emphasis I have given to the relationship may have narrowed the scope of my presentation, and it has given it the kind of tedium that comes from shuttling back and forth between two related areas. With regard to the scope, I am not unmindful of the argument of some that the most important factor determining the position of the academic discipline is far and away the influence of America upon our daily lives, along with the interest that we may, or may have to take in the country as members of a society, or nation. The argument carries a lot of weight, and it is definitely the one that makes it so rewarding to teach American literature and civilization to students both in the gymnasia and at other levels.