

Book Notes

Anna Katona, ed., *Hungarian Studies in English*, 8 (1974). Publications of the English Department of the L. Kossuth University, Debrecen, Hungary. 106 pp.

Many European publications that include significant material on American Studies remain unknown to scholars and teachers in the field even though they as a rule find their way to university libraries. In recent volumes *Hungarian Studies in English* has for instance published many articles on various aspects of Hungarian–American relations which, beside their intrinsic interest, may also serve to remind scholars in other European countries of the large amount of work that remains to be done in cross-cultural and comparative studies both for Europe as a whole and for individual European countries.

The current volume of *Hungarian Studies in English* also includes articles on Eliot and Vonnegut and a bibliography of the work of Professor László Országh, one of the pioneers of American Studies in Europe.

Kate Chopin, *The Storm and other Stories; with The Awakening*. Edited with an Introduction by Per Seyersted. Old Westbury, N.Y.: The Feminist Press. 1974. 387 pages. \$ 5 (paper).

Professor Per Seyersted, who is the author of the standard critical biography of Kate Chopin as well as editor of the collected edition of her works, has here presented her best work in one handy volume. As Seyersted's earlier publications have become indispensable for the scholar, the present one will at long last make it possible for the general reader and student to become fully acquainted with Kate Chopin. For although short stories form the bulk of Chopin's work, only her novel *The Awakening* and a few short stories have been available in a paper back reprint.

Professor Seyersted's Introduction gives a condensed account of Kate Chopin's development as a writer and of the forces that shaped her career. His 'Selected Bibliography' will be a further guide to the interested reader who would be well advised in turning first of all to Seyersted's own critical biography.

Kate Chopin of course deserves attention as a writer, not merely as a woman writer. Nevertheless, the growing interest in Women's Studies, also in the Nordic countries, will no doubt contribute to the general Kate Chopin revival.

The publishers of the present volume, The Feminist Press, have a number of other items on their list that may be of interest to those involved in Women's Studies.

Marcus Raskin, *Notes on the Old System: To Transform American Politics*. New York. David McKay Company, Inc., 1974. 180 pp. (Paper & hard cover.)

In *Notes on the Old System* Marcus Raskin has provided an intelligent analysis of the crisis of the American political system. Unlike so many of the more superficial commentators on the Watergate scandal and the events leading up to the resignation of Richard Nixon, Raskin's basic premise is that Nixon was not 'a pathological occupant of the Presidency,' but 'a logical successor and legitimate (legal) heir of the Presidencies of Jefferson, Lincoln, Wilson, the Roosevelts, Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson . . .' (p. 123). 'The categories chosen by the Judiciary Committee for its impeachment investigation—bribery, coverup, dirty tricks, impoundment, favors to corporations, waging secret war in South-east Asia, tax evasion, the Huston Plan—amounted to a condemnation not only of a President, but also of imperialism, presidential power, and capitalism: the System itself' (p. 116).

Raskin traces the growth of the power of the bureaucracy and the Presidency and the attempts of Nixon to further develop the power of the Presidency by 'developing his own organization, designed to circumvent the bureaucracy in some cases and rebuff the Republican party by developing a system of alliances and allegiances directly between himself and particular corporations and interest groups' (pp. 45-6). At the center of Raskin's analysis is the impotency of Congress in the political system, and his brief concluding sketched proposal of how American politics may be transformed addresses itself to the possibility of making Congress more directly responsible as well as responsive to the people and thus function as a democratic safeguard of their interests. One basic flaw in Raskin's suggestions of how to develop a more direct democracy at the local level, however, seems to be that he leaves the basic economic structure unchanged. O.O.

Migration

Migration studies is a growing field of interdisciplinary research. Within the Nordic countries several research projects have been organized. There are for instance the Nordic Emigration Research Group, the Migration Research Group in Uppsala, and the Emigration Research Group in Turku/Åbo, in addition to numerous limited projects and individual research. In *From Stockholm to San Francisco: The Development of the Historical Study of External Migrations* (Preprint from *Annales Academiae Regiae Scientiarum Upsaliensis* 19/1975) Sune Åkerman has provided an excellent brief report on the present state of migration research. His survey will be useful for any student who wishes to undertake work in this field, but will also be of interest to anyone who wants an up-to-date historiographical survey.

One important source for migration studies is letters. While the written sources available to the historian generally reflect the point of view of social elites, the large body of letters European immigrants sent to their homelands, particularly after the growth of literacy in the 19th century, offers a unique opportunity to study a mass movement as it was experienced by its rank and file participants. In 1955 the dean of American-Scandinavian immigrant history, Theodore C. Blegen, published a large selection of Norwegian immigrant letters:

Land of Their Choice: The Immigrants Write Home. Now H. Arnold Barton has edited a collection of Swedish letters: *Letters from the Promised Land: Swedes in America, 1840—1914* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1975). Most of the letters have been published before, but this is the first comprehensive collection. Given the mass of letters that were written, one of the first problems for an editor would seem to be that of representativity, but Professor Barton warns that a representative collection is neither possible nor desirable: only a small proportion of the millions of letters written have survived, and most of them do not make very interesting reading. Those selected by Professor Barton, however, are often fascinating human documents. Moreover, his introductory chapters form a brief but informative survey of the history of Swedish emigration up to the first World War.

July 4th 1825—1975: 150 years of Norwegian Emigration

The 150th anniversary of the first organized emigration from Norway to the United States has been marked in many ways in the course of 1975. Under the heading "American Studies News" above, there is a report on the NAAS conference on emigration in Oslo. Papers from the conference will soon be published in *Americana Norvegica*, Vol. 5.

The conference was co-chaired by Ingrid Semmingsen, the author of the most extensive study of Norwegian emigration, *Veien mot vest*, published in two volumes in 1941 and 1950. Professor Semmingsen's retelling of the story in *Drøm og død: Utvandringen til Amerika* ("Dream and Deed: Emigration to America," Oslo: Gyldendal, 1975) is the work of a historian who combines the two prerequisites for excellence in her profession: scholarship and narrative talent.

1975 has seen a spate of publications on Norwegians in the United States. Einar Hovdhaugen and Oddmund Ljone have written very different books on individual immigrants. The first is a factual account of one of the earliest pio-

neers, Jehans Nordbu, who came with his family to America in his 64th year in 1832 (*Frå Venabygd til Texas: Pioneren Jehans Nordbu*, Oslo: Det norske samlaget). The second "*Mine tårer fløt rikelig*" ("My Tears Ran Abundantly," Oslo: Gyldendal), is the story of Gro Nilsdatter from Hallingdal, one of the thousands of young women who struggled to build new homes in the West. Although the book itself is an unhappy mixture of fiction and biography, the many letters are eloquent documents.

Another fictional account of a unique incident in the history of Norwegian emigration is Jon Moe's *Akamai: Sagaen om den norske utvandring til Hawaii* (Oslo: Gyldendal), a documentary novel about the more than 600 Norwegians who left Drammen in 1880 with three-year contracts as sugar workers on a Norwegian owned plantation in Hawaii.

Perhaps the most interesting of the many Norwegian books related to the 150th anniversary is Arnfinn Bruflot's volume of poems, *Dei kom til Amerika* ("They Came to America," Oslo: Det norske samlaget). Bruflot is an American poet: born in Norway in 1904 he has lived in the United States since 1928. He is also a Norwegian poet: he writes a powerful *nymorsk* and this is his fourth volume since his rather sudden and belated appearance on the Norwegian literary scene in the 1960's. Ole E. Rølvaag comes to mind. But differences are more striking than similarities. In Bruflot there is none of the nostalgia of *The Boat of Longing* nor the tortured sense of being between two worlds that permeates so much of Rølvaag's writing. Bruflot is American. If he has any regret he does not parade it. He writes with love and warmth of the American landscape and the men and women who peopled it. He writes with anger about American corruption and imperialism. He is never sentimental:

The good old
European days
were not for America.
In America it was
make or break.
And that's the way it still is.

Thus a rough translation of his opening poem: "America."

Limited space does not permit even brief mention of more than a selection of the many books related to the U.S. in general and to Norwegian emigration in particular in 1975. Perhaps the great publicity given the celebration of the 150th anniversary may lead to increased interest in Norwegian—American studies and to that handclasp across the sea that the most prominent student of Norwegian America, Einar Haugen, invites to in the thoughtful epilogue he has written for the 1975 reprint of his classic little book from 1939, *Norsk i Amerika* (Oslo: Cappelen).

O. O.