

experiments. Most of the blending process, Turner argues, happens below 'the horizon of conscious observation' (109) and it draws on such entrenched, and to most of us 'invisible,' patterns that bias is extremely difficult even to detect. Blending is part of an almost instinctual 'backstage cognition,' as Turner and Fauconnier call it, the efficiency of which cannot afford to wait for slow conscious thinking. The ability to blend, Turner and Fauconnier have argued elsewhere, is what makes us human and what has given us the immensely complex modern world we have and distinctly human things like language, religion, refined tool use, art and philosophy. If the mental work that underlies these magnificent phenomena had been conscious mental work, if we could only blend at a conscious level, we would probably still be living in caves. It would be like having to be conscious of your every heart beat, your every breath, every step you take when you walk, and so on. Living would be impossible.

Just as we are not aware of the genes and the evolutionary development that constitute us, we are mostly unaware of the evolution of meaning of which we are the ultimate source. And this takes us back to the beginning of this review. To understand human meaning, and this is Turner's high-level argument, one must understand how it comes about and the principles of its evolution, its descent. We must have a theory that is to human meaning what the theory of evolution is to biology. Human beings do not just pick up and accumulate meaning; they develop new meanings on the basis of 'existing' meanings, while preserving (or sometimes discarding) the 'existing' meanings. And the emergent meanings may serve as inputs for further emergent or altered meanings. Social scientists have tended to be content with observing beautiful butterflies, so to speak; they have not inquired into the maker of these creatures. But in order to reach a deeper understanding of what constitutes the phenomena they are studying and to reach a deeper understanding of what determines even the nature of their own approach, they have to take the concept of human meaning much more seriously. This is an extremely challenging task, but a whole new generation of cognitive science is ready to suffer with them.

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Orm Øverland, ed. *Not English Only: Redefining "American" in American Studies*. European Contributions to American Studies XLVIII. Amsterdam: VU University Press, 2001. ISBN: 9053837566; 202 pages; paper, \$45.

As the editor of *Not English Only* states in his 'Introduction: Redefining 'American' in American Studies,' 'in their different ways, the majority [of the articles collected in the present volume] explore how ideological and cultural traits recognized as 'American' have found expression in a variety of languages' (8). Indeed, the present volume starts from the paradox that though multiculturalism since roughly the late 1980s has been the new orthodoxy in American Studies, this has not led its practitioners seriously to question, let alone qualify, the monolingualism – 'English only' – that has characterized the discipline if not from its inception (Øverland insists that early histories of American Literature, such as the

first Cambridge History of American Literature and Robert E. Spiller et al.'s *Literary History of the United States*, did deal with non-English writings, and that H.L. Mencken in his *The American Language* discussed the role of non-English languages in the United States) then at least since the middle of the twentieth century. Recently, a select group of scholars, from the US itself as well as based elsewhere, has started to address this issue.

Among these scholars, the editor of the present volume, long-time professor at the University of Bergen in Norway, and one of the deans of American Studies in Europe, has played a pioneering role with his *The Western Home: A Literary History of Norwegian America* (1996), and by co-organizing and chairing various workshops and sessions on the topic in hand at the Nordic Association for American Studies (Gothenburg 1997), the American Studies Association (Washington 1997), the European Association for American Studies (Lisbon 1998), and the Modern Language Association (San Francisco 1998). On these latter occasions he received support from the Longfellow Institute of Harvard University, the 'only formally institutionalised body for the study of the multilingual United States,' as Øverland himself puts it, and the collaborative input of which he honors by formally labelling the present collection a 'Longfellow Institute book.' It is also the scholarly community active within the Longfellow Institute, viz. Werner Sollors and Marc Shell, that of late has propagated most forcefully the idea of multilingual America. Sollors has done so in a collection of articles he edited in 1998 and which is also called *Multilingual America*. Sollors and Shell together edited *The Multilingual Anthology of American Literature*, published in 2000.

*Not English Only* contains a generous selection of papers presented at the various sessions and workshops Øverland chaired in 1997 and 1998. Some of these papers appeared earlier elsewhere, notably in a recent issue of *American Studies in Scandinavia*.<sup>7</sup> Together, they cover topics from Japanese language schools in the United States between 1900 and 1941 (Teruko J. Kumei), via literary works of Afro-Creole Louisianians between 1837 and 1896 (Caryn Cossé Bell) and Hawaiian texts in an American context (Houston Wood), to the politics of Polishness in the United States (Karen Majewski). There are contributions on Swedish Americans (Jennifer Eastman Attebery, Dag Blanck), Norwegian-Americans (Øyvind T. Gulliksen), German-American literature (Peter Conolly-Smith, Werner Sollors), Austrians in the United States (Walter Hölbling), the 'cinematic translanguaging' of John Sayles in his film *Hombres Armados/Men with Guns* (Steven G. Kellman), Mexican-American interlingual texts (Gabriele Pizarz-Ramirez), Raymond Federman's *Amer Eldorado*, a 'novel written in French in the United States' (Gönül Pultar), the use of Sephardi in the writings of Victor Perera (Ada Savin), Esmeralda Santiago's memoirs (Keith Alan Sprouse), and Chinese-language literature in America (Xiao-huang Yin).

7. *American Studies in Scandinavia*, 32, 1 (Spring, 2000): 'Redefining American Studies: Not English Only,' guest editor Orm Øverland.

In his introduction Øverland offers a survey of the issues addressed in the volume as a whole, as well as brief summaries of all the articles included. He also closes off the book with a 'brief bibliography of multilingualism in the United States.' Taken together, these articles make a convincing case for the study of the United States as a multilingual society, both historically and in the present. As such, they offer an original viewpoint on the subject covered by 'American Studies,' and an equally original entry into the discipline. At the same time, they hold out the possibility and the promise for those of us foreign scholars of the United States to contribute to our chosen field of study on an equal footing with our American – i.e. United States – colleagues; in fact, we may even hold the advantage here. If anything, however, they likewise show our American colleagues how indispensable a knowledge of languages other than English is for a truly informed study of 'America' not just in some of its more particularized aspects having to do with the import of specific immigrant cultures in the United States, but also – and perhaps more importantly – from an international point of view, situating the United States within a truly global context. For all this, the editor of *Not English Only*, and the contributors to that volume, have earned our thanks.

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