

# Editor's Note

The interdisciplinarity intended by the editorial policy of *American Studies in Scandinavia* is evident from the contents of the present issue: comparative cultural studies, political science, literary studies, institutional history; a topic or two may even fall between defined disciplines, as it should be in the ever-redefining field of American Studies. Contributions come from junior and senior scholars and from all the Nordic countries, thus demonstrating the Scandinavian range of the journal and American Studies as both an established and revitalizing area of studies.

This spring issue, 2009, consists of three parts: five articles on general topics, a speech, and a reviews section. Alan Shima writes about Barack Obama's *Dreams from My Father*, the memoir which has met an enormous public success since it was reissued in 2004, and finds a text where personal history relates to cultural myth and fact to imagination in the tradition of African American stories of self-representation and liberation. Barack Obama is also integrated in Erik Åsard's contribution about the rise and fall of the liberal label in American politics, in which he describes the process where the positive connotations of Roosevelt's "liberal" has gradually turned into an impossible "L-word" and the implications for the future of this stigmatization.

"Sisu" is the topic of Raija Taramaa's text. She investigates its transfer to North America from a selection of Finnish-American writers and their works, and by using imagology she establishes that "sisu" has affected the authors, their work, and their life in North America. The discourse of African American masculinity in Gloria Naylor's book *The Men of Brewster Place* is what Helena Wahlström writes about. She finds competing and conflicting discourses and an ambivalence in Naylor's representation between a critical problematization and a reinscription of ideals of masculinity. Rasmus R. Simonsen discusses the narrative game between reader and author in Paul Auster's *Oracle Night* and suggests that it is from the effect

of doubling that the reader challenges the authority of the author, and he considers the reader's role in framing literary texts.

Finally, in reference to the Scandinavian institutional history of American Studies, Orm Øverland offers a speech about Sigmund Skard and his impact on American Studies in Norway, Scandinavia, and Europe. The energy and acumen of Orm Øverland also suffices to add a review to the reviews section. He should have a prize: two texts in the same issue. Together with Sverker Sörlin, Erik Falk, and Asbjørn Grønstad, he completes the reviews section.

*American Studies in Scandinavia* provides a means for publication, and you are therefore invited to contribute and spread the invitation to fellow scholars and networks to gain a broad confirmation of scholarly work in this field. The invitation also includes reviews and suggestions of books to be reviewed.

A special topic in the fall issue will be devoted to "American Space," but first, enjoy the issue in front of your eyes.

Anders Olsson