

Getting Started: Comparative Notes on the Impact of Sigmund Skard on American Studies in Norway

A Talk at the Celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the
Chair in American Literature at Uppsala University

Orm Øverland

University of Bergen

***Abstract:** The first Norwegian Professor in American Studies was appointed at the University of Oslo in 1946. The first chair in American Literature was established at Uppsala University in 1968 and it remains the only such chair in Sweden. This article discusses some political and academic traditions that may help explain the different histories of American Studies in these two countries. It stresses the significant impact of Professor Sigmund Skard on American Studies in Norway, Scandinavia, and Europe.*

***Keyword:** Sigmund Skard—University of Oslo—Uppsala University—History of American Studies—American Studies in Norway—American Studies in Sweden—Higher education policy in Norway—Higher education policy in Sweden*

Rector, colleagues, friends,

I have felt close to the Departments of English and History at Uppsala University throughout my academic career.¹ My first visit to Uppsala was in 1961. I was still a student when I took part in the first conference of the

1 Due to necessary changes in the program for the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the chair in American Literature at Uppsala University on 26 September 2008, only a brief version of this talk was actually presented.

Nordic Association for American Studies in Sigtuna organized by Lars Åhnebrink, the first professor of American literature at Uppsala and the first president of the association. Olov Fryckstedt, who succeeded Åhnebrink and became the first professor in the chair made permanent in 1968, was on the committee whose report ensured my promotion to full professor in Bergen in 1975. Later I was faculty examiner at both Rolf Lundén's and Dag Blanck's defences of their doctoral theses—in the English and History Departments respectively—and a member of the appointment committee that made Rolf Lundén the third professor in the chair. As the culmination of my relationship with Uppsala University, I had the honor of being on the appointment committee which made sure that Uppsala University would continue its tradition of excellence and appoint Danuta Fjellestad as its fourth professor of American literature. I am of course proud of this relationship with Uppsala University, and both honored and glad to be here on this occasion.

The academic organization of American Studies and American literature has had different developments in Sweden and Norway. In 1958, in his monumental *American Studies in Europe: Their History and Present Organization*, Sigmund Skard observed that "Uppsala is the Swedish university where American Studies hold the strongest position" (451). Indeed, an American Institute, at least on paper, had been established in Uppsala in 1944, and a publication series, "Essays and Studies on American Language and Literature" had been introduced the following year. For Norway, Skard notes that "The centre of American Studies . . . is, of course, Oslo" (435).² Now, fifty years later, there are academic positions in American literature and American Studies at all universities and most colleges in Norway. Six of those who fill these positions are full professors. (It should be noted that in Norway there is no distinction between professors by appointment or by promotion as in Sweden. The concept of a "chair" belongs to the past.)

Different Conditions for American Studies in Norway and Sweden

It is tempting to speculate on reasons for the different development of American Studies in our two countries. I will run the risk of simplification and point to three factors that were important in getting things started: po-

² It may be noted that the second Norwegian university in Bergen was only 10 years old in 1958.

litical attitudes to the United States, university traditions, and the perceived role of the university in educating teachers for the secondary schools. There can be no question that the different positions of Norway and Sweden both in the Second World War and in the Cold War had an impact on the establishment of American Studies in our two countries. Indeed, in the mid-sixties anti-American feelings caused by the Vietnam War threatened the transformation of the Uppsala chair in American literature donated by the American Council of Learned Societies to a permanent chair. In Norway, gratitude for the contribution of the United States to the end of the Second World War and, consequently, the liberation of Norway from German occupation was the main motivation behind the decision to create a chair in American Literature at the University of Oslo, then the only Norwegian university, in 1945.

Second, in Sweden the philological tradition was still dominant in the study of foreign languages in the 1940s and 50s. By this time literary studies were considered an essential part of the study of foreign languages in Norway. The first professor of "literature in the English language" at the University of Oslo was to have been appointed in 1940, but because of the war Professor Lorenz Eckhoff was not appointed to a permanent chair until 1946 (Sandved 2002, 27-28). Swedish universities, on the other hand, had a more conservative structure in most academic departments in that they were organized around one chair. At Lund University, as late as 1963 when Claes Schaar was appointed to the newly created chair in English, he was responsible for English language as well as the literatures of the English-speaking countries ("*engelska språket och engelskspråkig litteratur*") (see Åhnebrink, 199).³ It is not difficult to see that the introduction of a chair in American literature would be difficult in a setting where there was only one chair in English and that in this respect Uppsala had the advantage of having two, one in language and one in literature by the time Lars Åhnebrink became the third professor in the English Department in 1962 thanks to a donation from the American Council of Learned Societies. When the ACLS decided to offer funding for a limited number of years for a chair in American literature, their selection of Uppsala for this offer was no doubt in part prompted by the early work done in American Literature by the then retired professor of English Sten Bodvar Liljegren, who had established

3 This chair marks the beginning of the academic study of English literature at Lund.

an American Institute, at least on paper, at Uppsala in 1944.⁴ But it was the already existing chair in English literature held by H. W. Donner that paved the way for an American chair at this particular Swedish university.⁵ Without the prior establishment of this chair, it is difficult to imagine that a chair in American literature would have been feasible. It may not be out of place, however, to note that S. B. Liljegren was strongly opposed to the establishment of a separate chair in American literature.⁶

Thirdly, in the secondary schools English had a weaker position in Sweden than in Norway. The reform of 1946 made English the first foreign language, but no reference to the United States was made until a new reform in 1954, when for the first time the concept of the “English-speaking countries” rather than simply England or Great Britain was introduced, and explicit reference was made to “British and American literature” (Skard 1958, 443-446). These changes in the school curriculum, however, had no immediate impact on the way Swedish universities prepared future teachers of English. These three factors are relevant for an understanding of the establishment of a chair in American Literature at the University of Oslo in 1945 as well as for the much later establishment of such a chair at Uppsala University.

World War II Allies

In the summer of 1945, only weeks after the end of the Second World War, two initiatives quite independent of each other were to have a profound impact on the development of American Studies in Norway. Sigmund and Åse Gruda Skard, had spent the war years in Washington D.C. Here Sig-

4 The ACLS grant included funding for a lectureship in American history. Håkan Berggren was appointed to this position but he soon left academia and was succeeded by Sune Åkerman. Åhnebrink's promising career was cut short by his untimely death in 1966.

5 Donner was educated at Åbo Akademi, Finland, and returned to this institution after his retirement from Uppsala.

6 Liljegren has several publications on his own significance and the insignificance of others. In his 1962 publication on his 75th birthday he writes about his attitude to “the supposed need of a second English-speaking American chair, the institution of which was likely to be unfortunate owing to the lack of suitable applicants . . .” (33). “In the service of objectivity” (47) he included here a very negative review of the work of the already appointed first professor of American literature at Uppsala (51-55). He also writes about an un-named “Swedish scholar, whose book bore too evident traces of being ‘made to order,’ in addition to its mistakes due to insufficient command of the subject and of the history of the USA” (27). He is obviously slighting Gunnar Myrdahl's classic work, *An American Dilemma*.

mund Skard had first worked in the Consultant Services of the Library of Congress with such fine poets as Archibald MacLeish and Muriel Rukeyser and then for the Office of War Information under the leadership of the dramatist Robert E. Sherwood. For family reasons the Skards did not return to Norway until the fall of 1945, but in June Sigmund Skard wrote a letter to the Rector of the University of Oslo, in part to inquire about his own prospects at the university and in part to point out that the current exclusion of American literature and American civilization from the British-dominated English curriculum no longer corresponded "with our present day realities" and that there should be "a better balance between English and American" (Skard 1978, 60).

At about the same time the Rector received this letter from Washington D.C., he was approached in confidence by a representative of the national government who let him know that they would be glad to approve two new chairs at the university, one in Russian and one in American literature. This was intended in part as a gesture of gratitude to the two major powers in the war against Nazi Germany and in part as a gesture to mark the country's wish to mediate between East and West. It was not necessary to argue that Russian literature was worthy of a chair alongside the chair in Slavic languages, but American literature did not have quite the same status. Moreover, there already was a chair of literature in the English language at the university. The two prominent scholars who sponsored the proposal in the Faculty of Humanities readily conceded that one might have questioned such a proposal a hundred years earlier but that "In the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries American literature, from being a branch of the English, has developed into a distinctive national literature, ever richer and with ever more marked characteristics of its own." It is quite remarkable that these two professors also suggested a different approach to the study of American literature than had been common for the study of European literature: "The study of American literature today is not only of great value in itself," they wrote, "but is one of the most important means, even an indispensable means, for the study of American social and cultural life as a whole" (Skard 1978, 61, Sandved 23-24). Suggested here, perhaps for the first time at a European university, is actually a program in American Studies described in terms similar to those that characterized this new field as it was then being developed at a few American universities. The proposal itself and its emphasis on a broad study of "American social and cultural life" must be understood as an emotional response of both gratitude and

awe for the nation that had played so significant a role in the liberation of Europe from Nazi Germany.

Neither of the proposals for chairs in Russian and American literature was controversial, and no objecting voice was raised in the humanities faculty or in the university senate. Finding the right person for the new chair in American literature, however, proved more difficult. "Who reads an American book?" the reviewer of Melville's *Moby-Dick* in *The Scottish Review* had once asked, and the question was relevant a century later for Norwegian literary scholars. Outside academia American literature had had a significant impact in Norway as in Sweden in the period between the two World Wars, and some of the best Norwegian writers were translators of Hemingway, Faulkner, and others. But at the university no one had written as much as a review of an American book. Sigmund Skard may have exaggerated when he later claimed not to have read an American literary work before his appointment in the chair, but he was nevertheless the obvious choice. At the outbreak of the war he was being considered for the chair in English literature even though English had not been part of his university degree. After the war, however, he expressed his doubts about his suitability for this chair in his June letter to the Rector. While Sigmund Skard had made no concrete proposal for a position in American literature in this letter and had certainly not suggested his own availability for such a position, documents in the university archives make clear that he was from the very first thought of as the best person for the proposed chair in American literature. The professorship was advertised in the fall of 1945. The report from the two professors who made up the evaluating committee is an interesting document in that it makes clear that the single applicant had no formal qualifications in either English or American literature. The report refers to the pre-war report on the chair in English literature where it had been found that Skard's merits in "scholarly methodology, his critical acumen and comprehensive knowledge were so significant that they compensated for this deficiency." The report then mentions his five years in the United States and concludes: "One may safely assume that he has acquired an insight into American society and culture that, in addition to his eminent scholarly qualifications, will make him extremely well suited for the chair for which he has applied" (Sandved 25-27). Later developments are ample proof of the wisdom of these two professors.

Academic Opposition

By the spring of 1946 the two essential decisions to introduce the study of American literature at the University of Oslo and to appoint Sigmund Skard in the new chair had been made without a dissenting voice. The university professors had shared in the celebratory mood of their country and were no doubt sincere in their wish to honor the United States for its contribution to peace and liberation. It had been assumed that American literature would be taught to students of English and that the subject belonged in that department. But it was of course not possible simply to add another national literature to an already fully packed curriculum and just how American literature should be introduced into the English program had not been given much thought when the new chair was created. The question of how to integrate the study of American literature in the existing program of the study of English and, indeed, the question of where to place the new professor led to fierce academic battles that were not settled until 1952.⁷ Indeed, the full integration of American literature as a natural component in the study of English at all levels was not fully achieved until 1957 when there was a general reform of the degree structure.⁸ From then on there has been parity between the study of English and American literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries at Norwegian universities and colleges.

Skard's main opponent was the new professor of English language, Aasta Kihlbom, who came from Lund University in Sweden in January 1949 with the clear understanding that she was expected to strengthen the then long neglected study of the English language, practical proficiency as well as linguistics. It is not difficult to understand that the addition of an entirely new subject of study in the English curriculum could be seen to be in conflict with a necessary upgrading of the traditional but neglected study of the English language. However, there was the added and unforeseen problem that the new professor from Lund regarded English as the study of the language, literature and culture of England alone. She insisted that the new professor of American literature did not belong in the Depart-

7 Skard's account of these battles is in 1978, 112-121. In conversation, Arthur Sandved has told me that when he set out to do research for his second volume on the history of the study of English at the University of Oslo he was convinced that Skard had written a very subjective and unfair account but that the documents verified Skard's version. In fact, there is little difference between Skard's personal account and Sandved's history concerning this issue.

8 To begin with, a one-term study of American literature was made a voluntary part of the English curriculum.

ment of English and refused to accept him as a colleague there. There is no need to go into details of the ten-year academic battle for and against the introduction of the study of American literature and culture in the English curriculum. It should be noted, however, that although the professor of English language was quite extreme both in her limited views of English as a university subject and in her refusal to enter into any compromise, her arguments convinced majorities in the faculty council for several years. By 1952, however, it was obvious to most that American Studies had come to stay, and the professor of English language decided to accept a position at the new University of Bergen.⁹

University and Secondary School: A Two-Way Relationship

A brief consideration of one of Skard's main arguments for the inclusion of American Studies in the study of English may serve to highlight a difference between Norway and Sweden. A decisive factor in the gradual academic acceptance of American Studies in Norway was a growing awareness of the study of foreign languages as preparation for the profession of secondary school teaching. As already observed, English was not made the first foreign language in Swedish schools until 1946. That year the Sweden-America Foundation had proposed that there should be some study of "American civilization, particularly in the English classes, in order to counteract the widespread misconceptions about the U.S.A" But *Skolöverstyrelsen* (the national board of education) responded that "the creation of a more correct picture of the United States was no responsibility of the schools" (Skard 1958, 445). In Norway the official view was rather different. In 1950 a new curriculum for the secondary schools was "based on the idea that the British and American civilizations should be studied side by side" from the junior to the senior level (Skard 1958, 433).¹⁰ I entered the *gymnasium* that year, and a textbook based on the new guidelines was already ready for

9 At the University of Bergen Aasta Kihlbom was the only professor of English and there was no one to oppose her view of the study of English. When a new curriculum for English was submitted to the University senate it was duly accepted, but one member had a comment written into the minutes: in the future it would be necessary to include American readings since the study of the United States was a part of the English curriculum in the secondary schools.

10 Skard 1958, 433-434, gives a detailed account of the place of the United States in the new school curriculum.

our use: *The Anglo-American Reader*.¹¹ The three volumes of this textbook were my formal introduction to American Studies.¹² In Sweden, the school reforms of 1954, that for the first time mentioned both English and American literature, had no immediate effect on the study of English at Swedish universities. At the University of Oslo, however, Skard's most telling argument was the need to have English teachers who were informed about the United States. This was part and parcel of the larger argument of the increased international importance of the United States in the initial proposal for a new chair in American literature in 1945.

In his two-volume study of English at the University of Oslo Arthur Sandved observes that Skard's arguments introduced a question of principle: "Should the university be an institution where teachers and students are engaged in their scholarly pursuits guided only by narrowly defined scholarly and professional considerations (the Humboldtian ideal), or should one be influenced by the professional demands made of candidates of the university by the external society?" Sandved draws a parallel between the introduction of American literature in the English curriculum and the introduction of English as part of the university's education of secondary school teachers in the 1870s, and reminds his readers that balancing a Humboldtian ideal with professional needs and political realities had been present in discussions of English as an academic subject from the very beginning: "In 1869 English had been introduced in the secondary schools and this required teachers of a new kind. In the second half of the nineteenth century, England and English culture played such a dominant role in contemporary culture that the university could no longer neglect this subject. Precisely the same reasons were at play when American elements were introduced in the study of English" (Sandved 2002, 117-119).¹³

Seen in this perspective, the introduction of American Studies in Norway was a logical development of the mid-nineteenth century replacement of Latin

11 Some years later I would get to know one of the three authors of this textbook, Kristian Smidt, at the University of Oslo where he had become professor of English literature in 1955. Torbjørn Sirevåg, son of another of these three, became a professor of American Studies, first at the University of Tromsø and later at the Norwegian School of Management in Oslo.

12 On my own initiative I purchased a pocket edition of the one-volume American history by Nevins and Commager to supplement the history texts in our reader. Their somewhat idealized view of American history was in harmony with the largely idealized view of the United States in post-WWII Norway.

13 See Sandved 1997 on the introduction of English in the school system in the nineteenth century and how this influenced the early history of English as a subject at the university.

with English. American Studies has been a response to the westward movement of power—if not necessarily of civilization—as so strikingly evoked by Archibald MacLeish in his “You, Andrew Marvell.” We must remember, however, that for MacLeish the sun at its height was a reminder of “how swift, how secretly / The shadow of the night comes on.” Complacency should not be the mood of our celebration of American Studies here in Uppsala.

The Significance of Sigmund Skard

As we look forward to the challenges to come we should learn from and be inspired by the foundational work of Sigmund Skard. It is difficult to imagine what American Studies in Norway, in Scandinavia and in Europe would have been like without him. Even today, when most scholars active in the field in Norway have had no personal relationship with him, the young have been students of Americanists who were brought up under Skard’s tutelage. Even today, when so much of the excellent work done in American Studies is in areas that were unimaginable at the time when Skard created his American Institute and recruited a second generation of Americanists, American Studies in Norway owes its vitality to the initial efforts of its now distant founder. I myself would certainly not have been here as professor emeritus of American Studies had it not been for his inspiring leadership.

Sigmund Skard was a student. He had claimed ignorance of his new subject, but he immediately set about to remedy his scant reading of American literature and was—moreover—thrilled by much of what he read. He quickly acquired an insight into his new field that gave him scholarly prominence and enabled him to advise later students in their many and varied special interests in American Studies.

He had made clear that he would have to begin his tenure with a sabbatical year in the United States. Already before he had returned to Norway after the war and before he had decided to apply for the new chair he had sought advice from such prominent scholars as Robert E. Spiller at the University of Pennsylvania and Kenneth B. Murdock at Harvard. His work at the Library of Congress and for the Office of War Information must have helped to open doors, and on his visits to American academic and other institutions Skard got to know American academia at the time when American Studies was coming into its own as a scholarly field. His many meetings with both academics and writers had a profound effect on his work as well as on the later development of this field of study in Norway.

Sigmund Skard was a poet.¹⁴ In February of 1946 he wrote to his wife about reading Emily Dickinson: "Many years have passed since a poet moved me so deeply." He describes his near ecstatic state during and after his reading and concludes: "To find myself still capable of such an experience, and a complicated and difficult one, as the direct result of the reading of a new author from far away, strengthens my self-confidence and determination: *this* is going to be my real job, to experience such things, and to make others do the same. What a *challenge!*" (Skard 1978, 68). Skard brought this personal response to literature into the classroom. Indeed, he so insisted on the importance of a personal response to literature that he gave his literature lectures in his own language regardless of the departmental rule that all teaching be in English, and he began lectures on poetry with his translation of the poem to be discussed.¹⁵ His ability to share his enthusiasm for literature gave his lectures an audience that grew week by week through the term.

Sigmund Skard was a professional librarian and well knew the importance of a well stocked and well organized library. More than half of a large Rockefeller grant in 1946-47 was used to buy books. Wherever he came on his journeys in the United States during his "introductory" sabbatical, Skard visited second-hand bookshops, and since this was before the growth of American studies at American universities and the resulting great demand for Americana, he was able to get a considerable number of volumes for his planned research library.¹⁶ Other grants made it possible to have a growing library in the decades that followed.¹⁷

Sigmund Skard was a leader, an administrator and an organizer. A library needs a home, and, as I have noted, Skard was at first not accepted in the English Department. In the 1940s the Humanities Faculty at the University of Oslo had departments organized for teaching, while research was assumed to be a personal matter for the individual professors. In the sciences, where laboratories and collaboration were essential, there were institutes

14 His first volume of poetry was published in 1942, his last in 1987.

15 These translations eventually became a volume of selected American poems in translation: Sigmund Skard, *Under nye stjerner: Amerikansk lyrikk gjennom 300 år*. Oslo: Gyldendal, 1960.

16 "I gradually discovered that there was a grapevine about me among the dealers. At the end of the trip, when I started digging into the shelves of a small shop in Boston, the manager yelled: 'Are you the guy who intends to buy 10,000 books for \$4,000?'" (1978, 81).

17 Among the significant donors were the Rockefeller Foundation (with further grants), the American Council of Learned Societies, and the Norwegian-American shipping magnate Erling Dekke Naess.

for research. Skard saw the desirability of having an American Institute as a research center and submitted his proposal for such an institute soon after his return to Norway after the war (Skard 1978, 70-71).¹⁸ The American Institute—the first institute in the humanities—was formally opened soon after Skard returned to Norway after his sabbatical. With its large and growing library and the welcoming and encouraging inspiration of its founder and leader, Skard's institute was for many decades the intellectual home and research base for American Studies scholars in Norway.¹⁹

Sigmund Skard was a European.²⁰ When the project of making American Studies a part of the study of English was brought into question he felt a need, he writes, to support his “own initiative . . . by information about similar work which I felt sure must be going on in . . . other nations of Europe, great and small, where Norwegian education had often found its models in the past” (1978, 125). The report he submitted to his university based on a questionnaire he had sent to twenty university teachers became the germ of his two volumes on *American Studies in Europe* published by the University of Pennsylvania Press in 1958. In the course of his research for this book he probably got to know more European academics with interests in the study of the United States than any other contemporary. Skard's ideas for a European organization of Americanists were presented at a conference held at the Salzburg Seminar in 1954, and then and there the European Association for American Studies was created. Skard, however, would not accept election as the leader of the association. Nor would he accept leadership of the Scandinavian Association for American Studies when it was formally organized in Oslo at his initiative in 1959 with Lars Åhnebrink as the first president.²¹ As a European, Skard was ambivalent in his attitudes to the United States and this ambivalence, that he describes as “my own

18 In his plans for an institute Skard was, he explains, influenced by his war-time experience in the OWI.

19 The American Institute at the University of Oslo ceased to exist in 1990, as did the British Institute, when the two institutes merged to become *Institutt for britiske og amerikanske studier*, the Department of British and American Studies. At Norwegian universities the concept of an “institute” has lost its earlier meaning and is now used in the same sense as “department.”

20 The first three chapter titles of his 1978 memoirs serve to underline the importance of Europe in his identity: “A European Childhood,” “A European Student,” and “A European career.”

21 Skard and Åhnebrink had been good friends since they first met in 1946. Skard had met Erna Åhnebrink at the University of Pennsylvania and then got to know her husband who was doing research at Princeton (Skard 1978, 124). Skard's admiration for Lars Åhnebrink comes through in the obituary he wrote for his friend in the first issue of *American Studies in Scandinavia* in 1968.

sympathies and antipathies, my deep worries, and my divided heart” (1978, 199), is a central motif in his memoirs.

Sigmund Skard was a fine scholar who put his own work on hold during the decades he devoted himself to his foundational work for a new field of academic study. In this he was a builder. He built an institute and a library, he built organizations, but most importantly he saw the need to build a new academic field of study by constantly being on the lookout for potential recruits and encouraging promising young scholars. It is above all his sense of responsibility for the future, for creating a foundation for future research in American Studies, that makes him so important for us as we look back on the history of our field and share our visions of its future.

The Place of American Studies in a Changing Academia

The history of academic American Studies in Norway began with the proposal of a new chair in 1945. It was then assumed that the new field of study would have its home in the English Department and there was little or no interest in the United States in any other departments in the humanities or the social sciences. Today any speculations on the future of American Studies must consider a radically different situation at our universities. The relatively new media studies departments at Norwegian universities have taken over aspects of American Studies that earlier were the exclusive domain of English, while English departments have been integrated into larger humanities departments of varying contents and cohesion. American Studies have also increasingly become part of academic subjects such as history, sociology and political science. At the University of Oslo there is a North American Studies program and at the University of Bergen there is a United States Studies program, and at both universities departments in the faculties of humanities and social sciences are jointly involved in these endeavors.²² These programs depend on the subject-specific interests in the United States in several departments. To me it seems obvious that Departments of English

22 Among Lars Åhnebrink's unfinished business was a new multi-disciplinary program in American Studies. His report on Sweden in the 1966 publication based on the second NAAS conference in Oslo in 1964 concludes with a note on "A new discipline": "Plans are under way to inaugurate an entirely new subject at the University of Uppsala called *Amerikansk kultur* (American civilization). An Uppsala committee has drawn up tentative plans for the new subject. The aim is to concentrate on five areas of study: American history, American literature, sociology, art, and geography or music. The plans have been accepted by the university but await final approval by the Chancellor" (Skard 1966, 200).

can no longer claim American Studies as their particular property and that the future role of these departments in American Studies will depend on their openness to cooperative programs with other departments.

At Uppsala University, whether we take the beginning of academic American Studies to be with an American Institute in 1944, the 1962 appointment of Lars Åhnebrink to a chair in American literature donated by the ACLS, or the 1968 appointment of Olov Fryckstedt to a permanent chair of American literature, the prospects for American Studies today seem very promising. To me, this 40th anniversary celebration is as much about a vision of future tasks and goals as about memories of past achievements. This weekend the conference of the Swedish Association for American Studies will provide ample illustration of the significant work in American Studies now being done by a new generation of scholars from a variety of departments at universities and colleges all over Sweden.

My congratulations go to Sweden for the great tradition of American Studies at the English Department at Uppsala University; they go to Uppsala University for its incomparable series of chair holders in American literature: Lars Åhnebrink, Olov Fryckstedt, Rolf Lundén and Danuta Fjellestad, and they go to Danuta Fjellestad for her significant achievements.

Sources

- Liljegen, Sten Bodvar. *American Studies in Sweden*. Essays and Studies on American Language and Literature XIV. Uppsala: A.-B. Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1962.
- Sandved, Arthur O., *Fra "kremmersprog" til verdensspråk: Engelsk som universitetsfag i Norge 1850-1943*. Oslo: Forum for universitetshistorie, 1998.
- . *Fra "kremmersprog" til verdensspråk. Bind II: Engelskfaget ved Universitetet Oslo 1945-1957*. Oslo: Unipub, 2002.
- Skard, Sigmund. *American Studies in Europe: Their History and Present Organization*. I-II. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958.
- , ed., *USA in Focus: Recent Re-Interpretations*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1966.
- . "Obituaries: Halvdan Koht and Lars Åhnebrink," *American Studies in Scandinavia* 1 (1968), 25-26.
- . *Trans-Atlantica: Memoirs of a Norwegian Americanist*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1978.
- Åhnebrink, Lars, ed., *Amerika och Norden*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1964.
- Øverland, Orm, "Studying Myself in the United States—Studying the United States in Myself." *American Studies in Scandinavia* 37:2 (2005), 1-24. Revised and expanded in David Nye, ed., *Beyond the Crisis in US American Studies: Scandinavian Perspectives*, 165-197. Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2007.