

Editor's Note

The previous issue, the special topic of *American Studies in Scandinavia*, volume 44: 1, explored the Scandinavian inroads and presences in North America under the title “Nordic Spaces in North America.” In this way, the guest editors, Lizette Gradén and Susanne Österlund-Pötzsch, alluded to an earlier special issue of the journal, more absolutely titled “American Spaces,” volume 42: 1, guest-edited by Amanda Lagerkvist, topically connecting the concept of “space”. In their delineation of space or spaces Gradén and Österlund-Pötzsch together with the contributors to the previous issue, 44: 1, traced the Nordic presence or influence in such diverse locales as Solvang, California; Lindsborg, Kansas; the Finland-Swedish Ericksson farmstead in Rochester, Washington; Scandihoovian space in the Upper Midwest; Swedish space in Upper Midwestern churches; restaurants and cafés in New York like Aquavit, White Slab Palace, Fika, and Konditori. Their display of Nordic spaces takes “American Studies in Scandinavia” in unexpected twists and turns, yet mapping the field of American studies from a Scandinavian, transnational departure.

In the present issue of the journal, 44: 2, the connecting links between the individual texts are not indicated by the common denominator of a special topic. Nevertheless, they share some features. They are all transatlantic in their outlook. Possible common bonds are also the Scandinavian affiliations of the authors, and topics exploring links between the United States and the Scandinavian countries. More difficult to pinpoint is the general, transnational impact of originally U. S. concerns or phenomena like political icons, indigenous culture, tools for technological transformation, textbook interpretations of American-European relations. These texts add to the exploration of the impact of U. S. culture in the broad sense of the word and of a national U. S. culture included in general, cosmopolitan concerns.

Not to become too opaque in the reflections about the outlines of the field of American studies, let us turn to the texts for a brief overview of pos-

sible juxtapositions: Anders Bo Rasmussen considers Danish educational exchange in a text which he calls “Educational Exchange as a Cold War Weapon: American Influence on Danish Journalists after World War II.” From his exploration of archival materials he finds that the U. S. Department of State, via The American Embassy in Copenhagen, was very skillful in providing young Danish journalists with a “deeper understanding of U. S. affairs” as a response to Harry S. Truman’s definition of the Cold War as a “struggle for the minds of men” (5).

Anne Mørk, winner of the NAAS 2011 Orm Øverland Essay Prize, continues an ideological train of thought when she investigates U. S. Liberalism, personified in Robert F. Kennedy. Her text, “The Once and Future King: Robert F. Kennedy as a Liberal Icon” takes Kennedy’s standing as an icon for both liberals and conservatives as its point of departure and finds that the complexity of his political beliefs and the difficulty of defining them add to the identification of Robert F. Kennedy as the definite liberal icon.

The Mvskoke multi-media artist Joy Harjo is the figure out of which Laura Castor, in her text “Making Songs of the Marrow”: Joy Harjo’s Music and Traditional Knowledge,” considers the psychological and cultural effects and implications of Joy Harjo’s melding of poetry, music, and performance. Harjo’s song “Equinox” provides the instance to display how she in her lyrics poetically alludes to historical events and traditional knowledge in a mental decolonization surpassing all kinds of borders.

“Tools for Transformation” is the exhortative rubric of Peter Mortensen’s text. The second part of the title may leave further hints: “Appropriate Technology in U. S. Countercultural Literature.” It considers second-wave ecocriticism and the “appropriate technology” movement of the 1960s and the 1970s out of two literary texts and finds a model of environmentalism resonating with dilemmas of today.

As a historian, Martin Alm explores the relationship between the United States and Europe the way it is demonstrated in U. S. world history textbooks. He finds a picture of a common democratic tradition, which, so it is presented, has been developed in the U. S. into a more egalitarian and libertarian society. This textbook view refers back to both Anders Bo Rasmussen’s text about educational exchange and Anne Mørk’s text about Robert F. Kennedy as the liberal icon, and juxtaposing the three provides food for further reflection.

Finally comes “Tricky Film: The Critical and Legal Reception of *I Am Curious (Yellow)* in America.” It is the Swedish director Vilgot Sjöman’s

film and its legal reception in the U. S., when it was released after court procedures and verdicts, which catches Jonas Björk's attention. He follows the argumentation of the legal cases involved in "one of the most profitable foreign-language films in U. S. motion-picture history" (126). Those discussions of the film's possible social value also takes him to the Swedish reception of the film and thus to a comparison of the Swedish and U. S. societies in the late 1960s.

The panorama which the six texts in this issue offers of American Studies in Scandinavia, individually and in conjunction, makes an intricate pattern of hermeneutic circles with which to identify the field. It also underlines the lively activity in this identification process. Such activities are further displayed in the reviews section where Pirjo Ahokas, the reviews editor, has collected reviews of works on transatlantic relations (Robin Jarvis, Paul Youngquist), on transcendental poetic discourse (Albena Bakratcheva), on Ground Zero fiction (Birgit Däwes), and on the popular geopolitics of American identity in superhero comics (Mervi Miettinen).

For many reasons the present and the previous issues of *American Studies in Scandinavia* have been long in the making. Trusting reader patience there are now opportunities to make up for lost time. Therefore it is a pleasure to announce, here and now, the subsequent double issue, volume 45: 1-2, of *American Studies in Scandinavia*, soon to be published. It is an issue which will include both the special topic of U. S. conservatism since World War II and a number of general texts. Thus the revised publication scheme will safeguard the continuity of publication and point forward to future issues of the journal.

For the time being, this issue invites you as a reader.

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