

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; Scandihooivan 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 Bakratheva), 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.

Anders Olsson
editor

Mid Sweden University

Educational Exchange as a Cold War Weapon: American Influence on Danish Journalists after World War II

Anders Bo Rasmussen

University of Southern Denmark, Odense

***Abstract:** American President Harry S. Truman called the Cold War a “struggle for the minds of men,” and assigned journalists an important role in the conflict. The American administration’s strategy was to influence young people and opinion leaders in countries deemed important during the Cold War in the hope that their views would trickle down to the broader population. This article analyzes transnational flows of people and knowledge between the United States and Denmark after World War II. Through an examination of archival material, the study finds that the U.S. Department of State, via the American Embassy in Copenhagen, consciously attempted to shape Danish journalists’ view of America directly and indirectly. The article finds that American officials were very skilled at picking future opinion and media leaders for educational exchange and thereby provided them with a deeper understanding of U. S. affairs.*

***Keywords:** Americanization—transnationalization—Cold War—cultural diplomacy—journalism practice—Fulbright.*

Introduction

Addressing the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 1950, President Harry S. Truman made clear that the Cold War was more than a struggle over military strategy and economic ideology. The fight against the Soviet

Union, Truman said, was above all a struggle “for the minds of men.”¹ According to Truman, gaining the cultural upper hand in the ideological fight against communism was crucial for the United States, and in this struggle, journalists—both inside and outside the United States—were thought to play a key role.

According to American diplomats, because of its “island possessions,” meaning Greenland and the Faroe Islands, Denmark was considered “vital to the United States security” after World War II.² Greenland especially was a recurring theme in American officials’ reports back to Department of State. Ambassador John Gunther Dean summed up Greenland’s importance when he in 1976 noted that “[t]here are several factors which make US interests in Denmark greater than would ordinarily be expected in a country of its size,” and added that these interests had been relatively unchanged for decades,

[They] stem basically from a similarity in national views rooted in Denmark’s long democratic tradition, its western value system, and its strategic location. Denmark’s position at the entrance to the Baltic and its sovereignty over Greenland and the Faroes, both important to the defense of the North Atlantic, make its role in the NATO alliance a key one.³

Dean’s comments underlined the importance placed by the Americans on Denmark’s participation in NATO. The American air bases on Greenland meant that Denmark was seen as a small, but not wholly unimportant, piece in the puzzle to secure an upperhand in the Cold War. Therefore, influencing Danish media personnel took on added importance as American officials believed that media personnel sympathetic to the United States would result in “good coverage on all aspects of American life,” as Public Affairs Officer William G. Roll wrote in a confidential report from 1950.⁴ Danish

1 Richard Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture since World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), p. 65. Pells writes: “At the moment, Truman, warned, the Communists were winning the battle for those minds by subjecting the United States to a ‘constant stream of slander and vilification.’ But the American people would eventually prevail if they made themselves ‘heard round the world in a great campaign of truth’.”

2 Paul Villaume, *Allieret Med Forbehold: Danmark, Nato Og Den Kolde Krig [Allied with Reservations: Denmark, Nato and the Cold War]* (Copenhagen: Eirene, 1995), pp. 123–124.

3 John Gunther Dean, “Annual Policy Assessment,” (<http://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=84211&dt=2082&dl=1345>, April 29, 1976). Downloaded November 10, 2010.

4 William G. Roll, “USIE Country Papers,” (National Archives. RG 59. Department of State. Decimal file. 1950-1954. From 511.59/12-650 to 511.59/12-2950. Box 2422. May 2, 1950), p. 4.

journalists were seen as inhabiting the top of an information pyramid, from where views and values would trickle down to the larger population.

So after Denmark's entry into NATO in 1949, educational exchange was identified as a key cultural diplomatic component. Roll underscored this belief in his report to the Department of State on May 2, 1950, from the American Embassy in Copenhagen. The report stated that "in the long run the exchange of persons would be our most effective approach to the Danes."⁵

American officials such as Roll assumed that "Americanizing" Danish journalists by introducing them to American values, norms, and beliefs through educational exchange would create a more positive image of American society and culture which again would assure continued broad public support for participation in NATO.⁶

Based on archival research in Denmark and the United States the current article traces the educational exchange between the two countries by examining the United States Department of State reports as well as the Danish journalists' own assessments. It shows how educational exchange created a more nuanced and positive view of the United States for the majority of the leading Danish journalists who were selected by the officers at the American Embassy in Copenhagen. Additionally, building on previous research, the article confirms that the American Embassy worked very consciously to shape Danish journalists' view of the United States through direct and indirect communication.⁷ The arguments may be relevant in a broader European context as well. As Alexander Stephan has shown in his edited volume *The Americanization of Europe, after World War II* there were many similarities between the development in European countries and their experiences of Americanization.⁸

5 Ibid., pp. 5-7.

6 Martin Kryhl Jensen, "En Krig På Værdier—Mål Og Midler I Det Amerikanske Kulturdiplomati [A War on Values: Means and Ends in the American Cultural Diplomacy]," in *Fodnoter*, ed. Bent Jensen (Copenhagen: Center for Koldkrigsforskning, 2009), p. 10.

7 Richard Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture since World War II*. See also Nils Arne Sørensen and Klaus Petersen, "Ameri-Danes and Pro-American Anti-Americans," in *The Americanization of Europe: Culture, Diplomacy, and Anti-Americanism after 1945*, ed. Alexander Stephan (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), as well as Paul Villaume, *Allieret Med Forbehold: Danmark, Nato Og Den Kolde Krig [Allied with Reservations: Denmark, Nato and the Cold War]*.

8 Alexander Stephan, "Cold War Alliances and the Emergence of Transatlantic Competition: An Introduction," in *The Americanization of Europe: Culture, Diplomacy, and Anti-Americanism after 1945*, ed. Alexander Stephan (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006).

Research on Americanization

President Truman's depiction of the Cold War as an intellectual struggle addresses the core of symbolic Americanization, meaning the American impact in the cultural realm—and here defined as processes in which political and cultural influences “emanating from America or Americans impinge on values, norms, belief systems,” and/or “practices of non-Americans.”⁹

The definition is attributed to Dutch scholar Mel Van Elteren, who theoretically grounds his work on Americanization in a hybrid position between the concept of cultural imperialism—meaning American influence that the receiving country has no ability to resist; and what Van Elteren terms “extreme social constructionism” – an approach in which the very existence of a “real” America is called into question. Van Elteren understands Americanization as a middle ground where receiving nations' agency is taken into account, but also recognizes that America is a “stubborn, historical-societal reality,” with tangible political and cultural influence on other nations.¹⁰

The study of Americanization can roughly be divided into three phases, here designated as cultural imperialism, assimilation, and power asymmetry. The current study follows in the tradition of research emphasizing power asymmetry, which acknowledges receiving countries' and individual agents' ability to adapt to impulses coming from the United States as opposed to being powerless in the Americanization process.

The United States has since 1945 held an unrivaled global position of power militarily and economically and consequently the relationship that Denmark entered into with the United States after the end of World War II was one of asymmetrical power. Despite knowledge that Denmark would be abandoned in case of an attack by the Soviet Union on the NATO countries, Danish politicians, like Julius Bomholt from the Social Democrats, nevertheless felt that the nation had to make a choice between east and west, as a Scandinavian defense agreement failed to materialize, and the Danes somewhat reluctantly then chose to join the Atlantic Pact.¹¹

Yet, the American need for access to Greenland's air bases on Greenland

9 Mel Van Elteren, “Rethinking Americanization Abroad: Toward a Critical Alternative to Prevailing Paradigms,” *The Journal of American Culture* 29, no. 3 (2006), pp. 345-354.

10 *Americanism and Americanization: A Critical History of Domestic and Global Influence* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2006). Page 125-131.

11 Paul Villaume, *Allieret Med Forbehold: Danmark, Nato Og Den Kolde Krig [Allied with Reservations: Denmark, Nato and the Cold War]*, pp. 354-357.

ensured Danish politicians a powerful bargaining chip. As Paul Villaume has shown, Danish politicians in the 1950s were strongly encouraged by American officials to spend more on defense in exchange for the economic support provided through the Marshall plan, but Danish politicians wanted to spend the money on domestic programs. Consequently, the Americans in 1955 concluded that the Danish government had not invested enough in the country's military and as a result considered cutting economic aid. In the end, however, the United States decided against decreasing Danish assistance partly because it could "weaken USA's position in Greenland."¹²

The relationship between Denmark and the United States therefore does not resemble the "cultural imperialist" interpretation offered by Herbert Schiller, among others, where America dominates other nations who are "attracted, pressured, forced, and sometimes bribed into shaping social institutions to correspond to, or even promote, the values and structures of the dominating center of the system."¹³

Nor does this understanding of asymmetric power relationships fit with a more assimilationist view as promoted by Richard Pells, among others, wherein Europe has had as much influence on the United States after World War II as the United States has had on Europe.¹⁴

As Danish historian Nils Arne Sørensen has noted, Americanization and Europeanization do not hold equal weight. The United States more often than not sets the agenda in relation to European powers.¹⁵

Van Elteren situates his work in the tradition of power asymmetry by emphasizing the receiving country's ability to resist American influence while acknowledging the structural differences between the United States and Europe. Thus, the overt American attempts to shape Danish journalists' views of the United States, which are the focus of the present paper, can be fruit-

12 Ibid., pp. 348-354.

13 Herbert I. Schiller, *Communication and Cultural Domination* (New York: International Arts and Sciences Press, 1976). Page 9. See also Pierre Bourdieu, *On Television*, trans. Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson (New York: The New Press, 1998), pp. 40-42.

14 Richard Kuisel, "Debating Americanization: The Case of France," in *Global America? The Cultural Consequences of Globalization*, ed. Ulrich Beck, Natan Sznajder, and Rainer Winter (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), p. 98. See also Richard Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture since World War II*, pp. 27, 50-51, 188 and 344.

15 Nils Arne Sørensen, "Kultur møder, Selvkolonisering Og Imperialisme Om Usamerikanseringen Af Europa [Cultural Encounters, Self-Colonialization and Imperialism: About Usamericanization of Europe]," in *Transnationale Historier*, ed. Anne Magnussen Sissel Bjerrum Fossat, Klaus Petersen, Nils Arne Sørensen, (Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag, 2009), p. 190.

fully studied through Van Elteren's analytical Americanization framework focusing on transmission, transnationalization, and appropriation.

In his studies of Americanization, Van Elteren understands *transmission* as processes, such as journalistic practices or new technology, originating in the United States and then transferred to other countries. In the current study, transmission is not just a process, but an object of analysis, whereby the success of American officials in creating a "favorable climate of opinion" amongst Danish journalists may be evaluated and assessed. As it was phrased by the United States Department of State, the object of the cultural diplomacy strategy was stating "the foreign and domestic policies of the United States as persuasively as possible."¹⁶

In order for the American attempt at transmission to have any effect on a receiving country, a "conduit" was needed. In this case, the conduit was journalists on educational exchange, experiencing what Van Elteren calls *transnationalization*, which he defines as a process occurring in "contact zones," which are areas where "local meanings and practices interact with the intruding beliefs and practices." Danish journalists not only encountered American norms and values when they were on educational exchange to the United States, but also when attending events hosted by the American Embassy in Copenhagen. Based on evaluation reports, American officials argued that these encounters would have an effect on Danish journalists' attitudes towards the United States.

Appropriation is a term which is understood as the "volume ('size' and scale) of ideas, goods, services and practices imported or adopted from the United States, and the extent of their reach."¹⁷

In the current study, the extent to which ideas, and journalistic practices, emanating from the United States were appropriated by Danish journalists during educational exchange will be assessed through an analysis of returning journalists' exchange evaluations.

These study tours, as Nils Arne Sørensen and Klaus Petersen note, were important transnational contact zones, where "Danish businesspeople, union leaders, academics and journalists with their own eyes experienced the United States, and where they, according to the plan, brought back in-

16 Willim G. Roll, "USIE Country Papers," p. 3.

17 Mel Van Elteren, *Americanism and Americanization: A Critical History of Domestic and Global Influence*, pp. 145-178.