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Book Review

Multilingual America: Transnationalism, Ethnicity, and the Languages of American Literature. A Longfellow Institute Book. Edited by Werner Sollors. 1998, 409 pages. Available from: New York University Press, New York and London.

Kenneth W. Rose

"The multitudes of texts written [in the United States] in languages other than English have quietly slipped from view" over the course of the twentieth century, Werner Sollors points out in the introduction to *Multilingual America* (5). Literary histories of earlier generations recognized that the "'language and literature of the United States' was a field not limited to English," he notes (5), but such works "nowadays inevitably present English-only materials and often imply a monolingual Anglophone reader" (6).

Multilingual America is a varied and uneven collection of essays intended as "a first step" toward "a comprehensive history of multilingual literature of the United States" (7). Only time will tell if Sollors and his contributors are successful in inspiring the massive scholarly undertaking necessary to produce such a history, but as he suggests, such a project is one to which the international community of American Studies scholars is well suited to contribute. For while Americans on both the political Right and Left continue to promote the "English only" approach to education, rather than the "English plus other languages" approach that Sollors advocates, American scholars of the future will continue to overlook the large volume of non-English literatures produced in the US because of their inability to read many of them.

This volume itself is an impressive interdisciplinary and international collaboration, with contributors from Canada, China, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Norway, Turkey, and the United States. The book consists of twenty-seven original essays along with the Linguistic Society of America's "Statement on Language Rights" (1996) and a brief essay offering suggestions for conducting research in the field using the Modern Language Association (MLA) Database. The essays are divided into seven parts. The first, "Literary History, Old and New," offers several interesting and useful overviews of neglected non-English US literatures. Alide Cagidemetrio surveys forgotten prose and poetry published in the US in French, German, and Spanish in the first half of the nineteenth century. Michel Fabre discusses the nineteenth-century French-language literature by Creoles of color published in New Orleans. Orm Overland provides an enlightening discussion of perspectives on assimilation in Norwegian-American literature. Perhaps of special interest to Turkish readers, Aviva Ben-Ur surveys the nineteen newspapers in Ladino, or Judeo-Spanish, published between 1910 and 1948 by and for Jewish immigrants to the US from the Ottoman Empire.

The essays in Part II, "The Many Languages of American Literature," discuss more specific works. Turkish readers may be interested in Gönül Pultar's essay, "Ethnic Fatigue: Başçıllar's Poetry as a Metaphor for the Other 'Other Literature.'" It begins with an overview of "Turkish Immigration to the United States and Literature Produced by Turks in the United States," but acknowledges that "much literary archaeology still needs to be done to get a true picture of this particular genre" (125). She then offers an interesting introduction to Seyfettin

Başçıllar's poetry and career. The third section of her essay, in which she "attempt[s] to contextualize the significance of 'ethnic fatigue' within the field of American studies" (135), lapses into the kind of jargon-ridden academic prose that, thankfully, most of the volume manages to avoid. Other essays in Part II include Sandra L. Dahlberg's discussion of the tradition of the folk drama "Los Comanches," performed near Alcalde, New Mexico, and Melinda G. Gray's analysis of the Welsh novel *Dafydd Morgan*(1897) by R.R. Williams. Te-hsing Shan discusses a variety of issues related to the recent Chinese-American works of Yan Geling and Chin Yang Lee, especially the problem of situating such writing in Chinese among "Chinese literature, American literature, Chinese-American literature, and Overseas Chinese literature" (113).

Two of the most interesting and successful essays in the volume, at least for this reader, focus on different aspects of the same work: the novel by Abraham Cahan that was published first in Yiddish as *Yankel der Yankee* (1893) and then in English as *Yekl: A Tale of the New York Ghetto* (1895). In his essay in Part II, Matthew Frye Jacobson places both editions in their historical and intellectual contexts and shows that the Yiddish version "engaged transnational debates regarding the essence of Jewish character . . . ; debates occasioned by the complex of crises known at the time as 'The Jewish Question'" (104). Jacobson reminds us that "many immigrant writers counted themselves primarily emigrant writers, and it was not always the Americanness of the chapter that was foremost on their minds as they were writing" (110), a theme that is echoed in other essays. In her essay in Part III, Aviva Taubenfeld focuses more clearly on "linguistic borders and the immigrant author" (144) exploring the changes that Cahan made to his manuscript as he targeted different audiences and the resulting differences in language and perspective between the Yiddish and English editions.

Part III, "Yekl and Hyde: Different-Language Versions of the 'Same' Texts," includes two other essays. Mario Maffi discusses "the strange case" of Luigi Donato Ventura's short story *Peppino* (1885), which is "the story of the Italian street Arab Peppino, set in the immigrant Lower East Side of New York, . . . told by the Italian writer Ventura not in Italian but in French" (166) and published in a slightly different version in English in 1886. Xiao-huang Yin analyzes the differences in the writings in Chinese and English by Chinese-American authors. He argues that "Chinese-language writers have rarely published in English" because their experience has been that "creative writing in English often demands suppression and distortion of the Chinese sensibility that does not fit into the stereotyped portrayal of 'Orientals' that is popular in mainstream American culture" (178-179).

The essays in Part IV, "Multilingualism as a Way of Life," explores how other literary genres negotiated and responded to the multilingual immigrant experience. In "Divine Comedy: The Jewish Orthodox Sermon in America, 1881-1939," Menahem Blondheim describes the emergence in America of a new kind of Orthodox sermon characterized by a mixture of humor and reproof. Peter Conolly-Smith describes the career of German-American theater manager Adolf Philipp in an attempt to trace the complicated route from the immigrant stage to the mainstream American stage and the role of ethnic self-parody in that journey. Anna Maria Martellone discusses "The Formation of an Italian-American Identity through Popular Theater." Karen Majewski examines Polish-language immigrant narratives of the migration experience and finds insights "into the formation of ethnic and national consciousness among Poles in America" (246).

With a few notable exceptions, essays in the remaining sections of the book are less successful. In Part V, "Melting Glots," the subject is the "'mixed languages,'" with essays

exploring Germerican, Portingles or Luso-American, and the writings of Jeannette Lander. Part VI, "Multilingualism and English-Language Writing," examines how multilingualism has affected writing in American English. The strongest essay in this section is Hana Wirth-Nesher's "The Languages of Memory: Cynthia Ozick's *The Shawl*." Part VII, "Languages and Language Rights," includes essays that explore "the political issues of language loss, universal languages, and language rights" (351). The strongest essay here is Douglas C. Baynton's "Out of Sight: The Suppression of American Sign Language."

Multilingual America will be especially interesting and useful for students of American literature and culture, but social and intellectual historians interested in an introduction to and overview of non-English literatures in the US and the insights they offer into the perspectives, aspirations, and experiences of their authors, also will benefit from particular essays. Intellectual historians, for example, will be intrigued by Baynton's discussion of how Darwin's theory of evolution helped spark a debate over sign language between "manualists" and "oralists" that led ultimately to a late-nineteenth-century "campaign to eradicate" American Sign Language.

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Book Review

Turkey and Atatürk's Legacy: Turkey's Political Evolution, Turkish-US Relations and Prospects for the 21st Century, by Paul B. Henze. Turquoise Series: 2, 1998, 186 pages. Available from the Turkestan and Azerbaijan Research Centre, Haarlem, Netherlands.

Aylin Güney

Originally prepared for the National Defense University (Washington, D.C.), *Turkey and Atatürk's Legacy* is, as its subtitle indicates, a study of Turkey's political evolution and prospects in the twenty-first century, as well as of the past and present state of Turkish-American relations. It discusses the significance of the Turkish political experience; an experience, which, according to Paul Henze, since the collapse of the Soviet Union could serve as a model for its successor states.

The study is composed of eight chapters. The first chapter, entitled "The Foundations of Modern Turkey," gives an account of the rise of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as the founder of the Turkish Republic, of the War of Independence, and of the state-building and nation-building processes that constituted the biggest challenge for Atatürk. The chapter also provides insight into the religious practices, issues of nationality, politics, economics, and international relations of the newly founded Republic.

The second chapter is an account of the history of Turkish-American relations dating back to the Ottoman Empire and the early years of the United States in the nineteenth century. The author examines the evolution of the relationship in the aftermath of World War I, the inter-war years (the Atatürk era), and the World War II.

The third chapter covers the period of the aftermath of World War II (1950s and 1960s), and discusses the process by which Turkey was incorporated into the western defense system. The fourth chapter describes the beginning of a troublesome period for Turkish-American relations with the eruption of the Cyprus problem, the subsequent arms embargo of the United States and its implications. The fifth chapter covers the difficult years (1970s) of a Turkey which suffered from multiple economic, political, and seemingly social ills. The chapter also describes how the politics in the country were in a deadlock as Turkey became, according to Henze, the target of a massive Soviet-supported destabilization effort.

The sixth chapter, the longest in the book, discusses the evolution of Turkish-American relations during the Turgut Özal era (1983-1993). Henze considers this period crucial for the political development of Turkey and its future, as well as for her relations with the United States. Already in the "Introduction," Henze had contended that "Özal's impact has been greater and more fundamental than that of any Turkish leader since Atatürk. His reforms and his vision prepared Turkey for the twenty-first century" (90). After providing a brief background for Özal, Henze touches upon his relations with the military. He also discusses the economic transformation of the 1980s in Turkey, and the country's foreign relations with

Europe, NATO, and the United States during the Özal period. For Henze, two international developments dominated Özal's presidency: the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Gulf War.

In the seventh chapter, Henze discusses Turkey's current domestic politics, economic situation and foreign policy, and argues that the situation is worrisome since political fragmentation and confusion might lead to a period of isolation and confused Islamic leadership. And in the eighth and final chapter, Henze makes a projection to the twenty-first century by re-examining the country's recent past and its people's basic characteristics. After making an assessment of the Turks' strengths and weaknesses, Henze concludes that they possess a capacity not only to overcome their present problems but also to move Turkey into the twenty-first century as one of the most successful and influential medium-size countries in the world. According to Henze, the key is strong leadership with the qualities of an Atatürk or an Özal.

Turkey and Atatürk's Legacy is one of the few books which analyze the Turkish-American relations in a chronological and detailed manner, while at the same providing an extensive account of the past and present situation of Turkish politics. A prominent student of Turkish politics, Henze provides an excellent analysis of Turkish-American relations in the light of Atatürk's legacy. The book not only dwells upon this bilateral relationship in depth, but also provides a comprehensive analysis of the domestic problems that Turkey faces and that would play an important role in determining her relations with the outside world, and thus with the United States. Combining personal experience with academic knowledge, it provides insight from an expert's perspective. It may prove useful for future projections regarding Turkey's role in international relations. It should be translated into Turkish to be able to appeal to Turkish readers, students, politicians, academics, and policy-makers.

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Book Review

Watching MASH*, Watching America: A Social History of the 1972-1983 Television Series,* by James H. Wittebols. 1998, 272 Pages. Available from McFarland and Company, Inc. Publishers, Box 611, Jefferson, North Carolina 28640, U.S.A.

Solomon Davidoff

James Wittebols's *Watching* MASH*, Watching America* was designed to be more than a simple episode guide to the ever popular American television program *MASH*. It is an exploration of the changing society that both influenced, and was influenced by, the program. And while the historical context of the program is interesting, and the 80-page episode by episode guide will provide needed information to the program's researchers, a variety of factual errors in the text concerning the program's history and some key anecdotal omissions and gaps are a cause for concern.

The work consists of a brief examination of the social history of the situation comedy, a look at the evolution of *MASH* from a novel to a film to a television program, and then an exploration of the social events surrounding each year's episodes, as well as discussion of the episodes themselves, followed by an inquiry into the legacy of the program and a look into how television and society affect each other, and concludes with a complete episode guide.

While the cultural background that Wittebols produces is quite useful and interesting, in the way that it presents the events that the program *MASH* was impacted by, and impacted upon, individual points about the series and associated material are at times lacking. In a discussion of the novel, Wittebols considers that Father Mulcahy is nicknamed "Dago Red" because "he has red hair," adding, "but the origin of the name is not otherwise explained [in the novel]" (12). While this is the case, the term "Dago Red" was a cultural slur for the wine used at Catholic ceremonies. The point is explicated in a later novel in the series, but a little research would have pointed out this fact. And when Wittebols writes that "Unlike the television series version, Burns in the novel is a surgeon with a good reputation," he is just plain wrong. Richard Hooker (pseudonym for Dr. Richard Hornberger) was a doctor in the Korean war, and shows throughout the novel disdain for doctors who work beyond their talents. While Frank Burns in said to be good at cardiac massage, he is also mentioned as a doctor who learned surgery from his father, rather than from a teaching hospital. As the novel states, "In Hawkeye's opinion, Frank Burns, despite a definite technical competency, seldom thought and was a fake. In Frank Burns' opinion, Hawkeye Pierce was an uncouth yokel who failed to understand that learning surgery from a father who didn't know any was better than formal training in a teaching hospital" (Hooker 49). While this again is not a major point, any noticeable error in a work of this sort should lead one to approach it with caution.

Similar lapses in the discussion of episodes include a lack of details. That is actually quite understandable. There is only so much space available in a work of this kind, and when events are described, this must be expected. But at times material that is missing can lead to possible misinterpretations, such as in the discussion of the episode "The Life You Save" from the ninth year of the program. A major plot point of the episode concerns Major Winchester's

new obsession with death, after nearly being shot by a sniper. He makes an effort to get to the front lines, in order to be with a dying soldier. Discussing Winchester's time with this soldier, Wittebols finds that "As he asks the man to describe what he is going through, the man gasps and dies" (113). While this is true, it leaves out the last words of the dying soldier, who says after Winchester asks him to describe what he is experiencing, that he smells bread. This answer leads to a variety of philosophical questions, and was a typical moment for the treatment of death in the final years of the program. Death was given respect and serious attention for the first time in a situation comedy on *MASH*, and the abbreviated version of this scene not only does not do it justice, but can be a detriment to researchers.

Wittebols's analysis will be of most use to someone new to the concept of cultural analysis. There is very little present here in the way of theoretical examination, but some good basic information and exploration of themes. This study will also be useful for the scholar investigating the program *MASH* for the first time, since the episode guide in the back is likely to be the most complete one ever produced within an academic work. I would suggest, however, that if any work is being done on the program and this book is used, that one examines individual episodes personally for additional information.

Work Cited

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Book Review

Writing Home: American Women Abroad, 1830-1920 by Mary Suzanne Schriber. 1997, xiv + 254 pages. Available from the University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, U.S.A.

Pere Gifra-Adroher

Travel writing has been one of the burgeoning areas of literary criticism in the 1990s as several scholars have tried to give this genre renewed canonical attention. Mary S. Schriber is one of the scholars actively involved in this project of literary reassessment. Her essays and her anthology *Telling Travels* (1995) have contributed to the recovery of several neglected nineteenth-century American women travel writers, a task which she now fully broadens in *Writing Home*, the most comprehensive critical survey published to date of American women's travel writing from the antebellum period to World War I.

Writing Home begins with two chapters that scrutinize the ideological and historical contexts that fostered European travel and travel writing as well as the paramount role that women played in these two cultural practices. Schriber acutely argues that female gender discourses soon became intertwined with travel writing. Yet, she also exposes the paradox whereby going abroad came to be regarded as a liberating experience for women at the same time that it reiterated the existence of the home they left behind. The women who wrote travel books, Schriber contends, had to face many odds, ranging from the rhetorical conventions of the genre or the hostility of reviewers to the exhaustion of themes and destinations or the demands of literary professionalism. They nevertheless managed to excel in a genre that embedded their gender concerns and concomitantly heralded middle-class, Protestant American views on race, class, and nation.

This study also devotes three chapters to specific cases that exhibit the use of travel writing for autobiographical, political, and cultural purposes. First, Schriber examines texts by Abby Morrell, Sophia Hawthorne, and Martha Coston to speculate on how travel writing respectively functioned as "self-construction," "self-destruction," and "self-revelation." Next, drawing on the travel accounts of Margaret Fuller, Mary Hannah Krout, Kate Field, Nelly Bly, and Lilian Leland, she evaluates their political dimension and argues that they used gender and their experience of otherness to rewrite their own nation "in the image of domestic and womanly interests" (134). Finally, Schriber dissects the cultural agenda of travel writing as it shifted from being a repository of domestic expectations in the antebellum period to becoming a vehicle for highbrow culture in the last quarter of the century. The travel books of Harriet Beecher Stowe, Constance Fenimore Woolson, and Edith Wharton cogently illustrate this evolution, which Schriber reads vis-à-vis the culturally-significant transition from the figure of the True Woman to that of the New Woman. A coda on Edith Wharton's two French travelogues serves Schriber to conclude *Writing Home* by signaling the abrupt change that women's travel and travel writing were to undergo after World War I.

Using a lucid style and mixing cultural analysis, biographical information, and relevant feminist theory, Schriber's book offers a penetrating reading of a hitherto neglected area of the American canon that will surely stimulate further studies on the gendering of the travel book. In summary, it represents an exceptional contribution to our understanding of an enriching period of women's writing that should appeal to a wide readership of scholars and students of American literature and gender studies alike.

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Book Review

Melville's City: Literary and Urban Form in Nineteenth-Century New York, by Wyn Kelley. 1996, 312 pages. Available from Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K.

Kenneth J. Speirs

Examining the entire range of Melville's literary output, Wyn Kelley deftly details the "continuity between two kinds of cultural productions: the form of the city itself—its plan, its parks, promenades, and wharves, its political wards and social districts, its monuments and its streets—and the literary forms in which it finds representation—books, periodicals, guidebooks, and the visual arts" (2). Reflecting the current interest in identifying the lines of force and influence between a writer's work and the historical and social context, *Melville's City* demonstrates the extent to which both urban form and its popular literary forms inhabit Melville's work, "shaping his plots, coloring his language, and signalling his dialogic relations with the city and its culture" (2). An impeccably researched, cogently argued and eloquently written book—this is a significant enrichment of our understanding of Melville's fiction and of special interest to those engaged in urban studies.

In a nifty, informative initial chapter, Kelley deftly details both the evolution of New York City during the nineteenth-century and the various generic tropes through which these developments are represented. She focuses her attention on the significant events of the City's growth: primarily, the New York Commissioners' Plan of 1811 (the survey that established New York streets on the gridiron plan), and Frederick Law Olmsted's 1858 proposal for Central Park. She also describes the opposing strategies for encountering the City, which she calls "the mode of mastery and that of surrender" (22).

Then, in chapter 2, Kelley considers the ways the narrative personae of Melville's early adventure novels, *Typee*, *Omoo* and *Mardi*, adopt a version of the middle-class urban male "spectator," first brought into being by Addison and Steele, and later refined by Irving and other Knickerbocker writers.

In chapter 3, popular mid-century reformist writings, that frequently sensationalize the "mysterious" city or the city as "labyrinth," provide the backdrop for Kelley's suggestive considerations of Redburn, White-Jacket and Pierre. Kelley demonstrates the ways in which the failures of Melville's heroes to negotiate the mysteries of the city point, not to their own moral weaknesses as in reformist literature, but "to the power of the labyrinth myth to mystify city dwellers about the misery in which they dwell" (95). In this way, Melville's novels resist, Kelley maintains, "the middle-class mystification of poverty that urban novels typically enact" (95), and thus work to implicate and indict the culture that permits such urban iniquities.

Although chapter 4 launches with an exploration of the strategies of withdrawal from contested urban space implied in *Moby Dick*, it soon moves into actually arguing that the novel is "the most pro-urban" of Melville's books. Carefully tracing Augustine's retelling of the story of Cain and Abel as urban tropes of the "City of Man" and the "City of God," in

chapters 5 and 6, Kelley offers particularly keen-eyed and provocative readings of Melville's works of the 1850s, including "Bartleby," *The Confidence Man*, "Israel Potter," and*Clarel*.

A brief conclusion considers Melville's late poetry and "Billy Budd," identifying in them a shift in Melville's concerns away from "the spectator leaving the city behind, the provincial in a bewildering labyrinth, the sinless Abel sojourning in the wicked city, or the pilgrim journeying toward the urban center," and, in response to his own decision to remain in New York City from 1863 until his death in 1891, to a position as the "quintessential insider: 'citified man' himself" (272).

"This book is about Melville and nineteenth-century New York . . . " So begins Kelley's highly original and ambitious book. Acknowledging that her subjects—Melville and nineteenth-century New York—are by nature "never still," Kelley's method in *Melville's City* is, to be sure, Melvillean in aim and execution. If at times Kelley's voyage out feels discursive—steering us, for example, through the complicated legal etymology of the word "assumpsit"—we learn to journey with her, and are in the end amply rewarded. Despite its reach, *Melville's City* does achieve a clarity of vision, and an economy of purpose. Students of Melville and of urban studies, and those interested in concise and conscientious analyses of individual texts in their cultural contexts will find *Melville's City* an engaging and energetic book—one to stimulate debate, and one for points of departure.