

Journal of American Studies of Turkey

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Editorial

With this issue, our fourth, we are initiating two firsts for our journal. We are publishing a poem, and a dossier around a theme.

The poem *Medea*, the story of which takes place in what is now Turkey, was written on Turkish soil by an expatriate American poet and scholar, Carl Buchanan, who wrote it during his stay in Ankara, teaching at Bilkent University. We hope that readers will enjoy the poem.

As announced in our second issue, the dossier to be published in this issue was to contain articles treating comparative themes. These are the first four articles, and all four adopt a perspective extraneous to the United States to examine an American work of literature or an issue concerning American Studies.

In a year which saw the Nobel Prize awarded to a Polish poet, we thought it fitting to pay tribute to Polish literature and start the issue with an article that juxtaposes Polish poetry to American literature, and moreover illustrates the inherently close links between language and literature and politics that the "West" is too easily prone to be oblivious to.

Jerzy Kutnik, in "Postmodern Language-Centered Writing and the Question of Ideology: A Polish Perspective," examines first the theoretical writings of some radically innovative authors associated with American postmodernism having engaged in debates about the "politics of language." He then considers Polish language-centered poetry of the 1960s and 1970s, and sees striking similarities with language-centered American postmodernism that are of a nature to question the conceptualization of postmodernism as a purely "Western" phenomenon.

In "The Problematics of Kingstons 'Cultural Translation': A Chinese Diasporic View of *The Woman Warrior*," Toming Jun Liu brings a Chinese perspective to what is now a well-known American text. Deliberately taking *The Woman Warrior* beyond the boundaries of the American context, and providing interpretations that the English-speaking reader is apt to miss, Liu's article raises questions concerning "cultural translation." Is it possible to use English, the *lingua franca* of the day, and render the nuances and intricacies of an "other" culture? It is a question that promises to become a burning issue in its relevance both within discussions of ethnicity in the US and elsewhere, and within postcolonial theory and literature.

In her article "Bharati Mukherjees *Jasmine*: Making Connections Between Asian and Asian American Literature," Kuldip Kaur Kuwahara discusses the Asian-American woman authors novel within an Asian perspective. Comparing the female protagonist with other heroines in Indian (of the subcontinent) literature, which gives a totally novel dimension to *Jasmine*, Kuwahara finds that Mukherjees narrative relates an Indian mystical journey, while at the same time being an American story of self-making.

Marwan Obeidat discusses what it means to teach American Literature to overseas students, in his case, Arab students in the United Arab Republic. His article, "The Cultural Context of American Literature: A Barrier or a Bridge to Understanding?" argues that this is by no means an easy job, as Arab students approach American literature with preconceived ideas, or else tend to seize the universal elements only.

We hope that Obeidat's article will incite other scholars to share with the readers of the *Journal of American Studies of Turkey* their experiences of teaching American Studies abroad and in the US, as well as methods they have devised to cope with existent problems.

In "American Archaeologists in Turkey: Intellectual and Social Dimensions," Charles Gates, himself an American archaeologist at present living in Turkey, considers American archaeology in Turkey a component of US social and intellectual history, and discusses the factors underlying his compatriots' interests in the archaeological remains in Asia Minor, while also surveying the major excavations done by American teams.

Coming after Ernest Wolf-Gazo's "John Dewey in Turkey," published in the last issue, Gates's article falls into what we hope will be a series on "Innocents in Turkey." We plan to publish such articles from now on at regular intervals.

In "Feminist Science Fiction: The Alternative Worlds of Piercy, Elgin, and Atwood," Sema Kormalý argues, through a discussion of the work of these three women authors, that science fiction as a genre enables the feminist writer to question the patriarchal social and political systems, as well as the conventional narrative strategies employed by the male writers of the genre, while at the same time constituting a convenient vehicle for the articulation of feminist ideology and feminist literary theory.

Mahmut Mutman in his article "Television as Cultural Form" argues that in the US television is not simply an effective means of disseminating knowledge or images, but is itself a cultural form, or, what he calls "one of the most powerful metaphors of contemporary American culture." Mutman finds that television does not merely reflect the outside world; the situation is such that the politician now prepares his speech in view of television.

The article which follows Mutman's, "Lyric Poetry in the Age of Global Teleculture: Issues in Contemporary American Poetics," by Peter Grieco, discusses the latest developments in the information age from a different perspective, and examines the exploitation, by avant-garde poetry, of the creative possibilities afforded by "teleculture", producing, for instance, poetry that is perhaps more visual than textual.

This last article is on poetry, as has become the tradition to close our issue. Developing into a tradition is, also, the "letter to the editor" from an expatriate American scholar. We have two in this issue, one from the United Arab Emirates (the poet of "Medea"), and one from the East European republic of Slovakia, by American scholars living and working in those regions.

Last but not least, to provide faster and more reliable service, our website has been moved to a new address:

<http://www.bilkent.edu.tr/~jast/>

Do visit it and send us your comments.