

Michael Hoberman, *A Hundred Acres of America: The Geography of Jewish American Literary History*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2018. 198 pages. ISBN 987-0-8135-8969-5.

In this ground-breaking work, Michael Hoberman takes a topographical approach to Jewish American writing. He challenges equating this literary tradition with urban immigrant narrative, outlining how it revises major American literary motifs. Engaging with spatial and Sephardic writing and contemporary works, Hoberman clarifies its relationship to multicultural American literature by tracing distinctive American landscapes.

Hoberman's historically amplified canon incorporates the nineteenth-century Solomon Carvalho and Israel Joseph Benjamin. Carvalho's Sephardic genealogy links American Jewish writing to Jewish cultural production in the Atlantic world, from Britain to Barbados; Carvalho expresses a diasporic sensibility, drawing from the Emersonian sublime to construct the American frontier as a location for the "uplift" (18) of all humans, not as an individualistic refuge but as a communal extension of civilization. Benjamin's German-language work addresses European Jews with "a projection of a Jewish future" (23), and both writers' Jewish lens reveals the American west as a space "entirely contiguous with . . . the progress of urbanization and civilization" (30).

For Hoberman, urban space grounds the invention of "a literary colonial revival . . . distinctly Jewish in its subject matter" (32) from 1870-1910. Counter to the local color movement, this revival situates urban commerce and civic activities as central to the founding of the republic (33), and details the "fully committed participa[tion]" (34) of Jews in this effort. Henry Samuel Morais associates the formation of a republic built on Enlightenment ideals with Jews expelled from Spain and Portugal, whose descendants contributed to the cultural and religious tolerance, commerce, and cosmopolitanism of urban American spaces. Writing in and of Philadelphia, Morais provides street addresses for Haym Solomon and other notables, causing Jewish military and financial engagement in the Revolutionary War to be "inscribe[d] . . . onto the urban landscape" (49). This historical inscription bolstered the Jewish colonial revivalists' importantly "pro-immigrant stance" (53). By emphasizing the transformation of "earlier Jewish immigrants into full-fledged Americans" (53) in the cities of an immigrant nation, the colonial revivalists challenged "the dominant narrative of the nation's rural agrarian and Anglo-Protestant heritage" (56).

In Hoberman's readings, the places of Jewish literary imagination resist American literary tropes. Representing Jews as "natural-born inheritors of the rural tradition" (62), modernists like Edna Ferber and Joseph Leiber countered "wistful" or "elegiac" (62) early twentieth-century representations of American small towns. Rather than revisiting the familiar mid-century Jewish American city, Hoberman pivots to exurban diaspora in turn-of-the-millennium novels by Philip Roth and Allegra Goodman. In a mutual "geographical escapism" (103), these writers construct an innovative "trope for the separatist postwar Jewish-American mindset" (103), encompassing religious and secular forms.

Hoberman's view clarifies connections between apparently dissimilar narratives, and usefully distinguishes among multicultural literary imaginations. While Native American and African American writers' topologically focused fiction necessarily explores past and present oppression in a constant American landscape, Hoberman notes that, for Allegra Goodman and Jonathan Safran Foer, "America could only be the continent of the eternal present" (109). Their "negation of narrative linearity" (128) responds to the challenge of evoking a past located in the destroyed shtetl, further concealed beneath mundane contemporary Eastern European life.

While Hoberman's overall argument dismantles the assumption that Jewish American writing began only after the influx of Eastern European Jews at the turn of the twentieth century, the book's final chapter both acknowledges the immigrant narrative as an innovation adapted by successive waves of newcomers, and reveals an ironic, turn-of-the-21st-century twist. Today, the Jewish American immigrant narrative underpins a tradition-dismantling approach to writing about Israel. Building on earlier studies by Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi and Naomi Sokoloff, Hoberman details how exilic longing for, mythologizing, and demonizing of Israel have given way to writing that desacralizes and rehistoricizes the Holy Land. The current narrative engagement with Israel by Jews dislocated from America, Hoberman ultimately suggests, may itself threaten the future of Jewish narratives.

Although few Americanists will have read Joe Papernick's short story collection, *The Ascent of Eli Israel* or Risa Miller's novel *Welcome to Heavenly Heights*, all will benefit from Hoberman's account of how these works adapt the immigrant-to-America narrative to new considerations of "cultural adjustment and assimilation" (133) accompanying American Jews' arrival in contemporary Israel. Hoberman's spatialized approach connects these millennial writers to the New York of both Anzia Yezierska

and Edwidge Danticat, suturing a rupture between Jewish and other ethnic American writings noted by other critics (notably Hana Wirth-Nesher, Michael Kramer, Dean Franco, Benjamin Schreier, and Rachel Rubinstein, on whose work Hoberman builds).

Hoberman's focus on new topological approaches allows his study to expand the work of earlier critics using the spatialized critical lens of home and exile (Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi, Brooke Frederikson, Murray Baumgarten, Barbara Mann). By focusing on a Jewish American frontier, exurbia, and other newly defined spaces, Hoberman demonstrates how powerfully Jewish American writers have interrogated and revised dominant American literary motifs. Hoberman concludes that "geographically inspired Jewish American writing functions as a stay against fragmentation and as an appeal to unity not only among Jews but across all manner of cultural divides" (157), demonstrating the broad implications of this study for critics engaged with spatial and ethnic writing in the Americas.

Hoberman engages effectively with many important voices in the study of Jewish American literature today. Given the study's focus on multicultural and diasporic Jewish writing, Hoberman might have made note of Alicia A. Kent, *African, Native, and Jewish-American Literature and the Reshaping of Modernism* or Judith Oster's *Crossing Cultures: Creating Identity in Chinese and Jewish American Literature*. Its focus on landscape renders more surprising the omission of two recent works by Sarah Phillips Casteel: *Second Arrivals: Landscape and Belonging in Contemporary Writing of the Americas* and *Calypso Jews: Jewishness in the Caribbean literary imagination*. Remedying these oversights, however, would simply have added further richness to an already stimulating study that significantly refigures Jewish American literature.

Gail Sherman

Reed College

Margaret Ronda, *Reminders: American Poetry at Nature's End*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018. 178 pages. ISBN: 978-1-5036-0314-1.

Ecocriticism's prime concern has been, and still is, representation. Some of the foundational texts in the field treated the representation of nature in Romantic poetry, such as Jonathan Bate's *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth*