

Center, Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois. Johansson's expertise in translating and interpreting Swedish texts from the time period under investigation shines throughout the book. Her capable translations make the letters readily accessible to readers who do not know Swedish.

The book would be an excellent choice to include on a booklist for graduate courses on Scandinavian studies, folklore, American studies, and the American West. Thanks to the clarity of Attebery's writing, it would even fit well in advanced undergraduate courses. All topics are fully contextualized so that readers on both sides of the Atlantic can readily follow the thread of Attebery's argumentation. The book rounds off with a substantial appendix, which gathers up supplemental details concerning the letter writers and presents many of the letters in translation in full. The appendix also contains a map of Sweden with designations of the regional provinces and communities where the immigrants were born. This is useful, especially for American readers. It would also have been equally useful to have a map of the Rocky Mountain West, as not all readers will have a mental map of the Rockies.

Attebery has capably demonstrated that personal letters can reveal the forces that defined the experiences of the Rocky Mountain Swedes over many decades. The book will inspire analysis of immigrant letters from many vantage points and will undoubtedly be a forerunner for future comparative research.

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*Reconstructing Hybridity: Post-Colonial Studies in Transition.* Edited by Joel Kuortti and Jopi Nyman Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2007

*Reconstructing Hybridity* takes its starting point in the conviction that hybridity theory enables us to fulfil one of the most central tasks in the humanities today, that of critically examining and questioning those boundaries and phenomena we have learned to take for granted. The concept of hybridity is therefore fundamentally connected to a process of unlearning what earlier generations established as truth, and of seeing the ethical dilemmas inherent in what previously counted as moral and civilized behaviour. The scrutiny which we are encouraged to undertake concerns mainly our "knowledge" about peoples and cultures, specifically areas through which

ethnic difference came to be established as physiological, inevitable, hierarchical and, above all, as clear-cut and separate. Hybridity theory points to the fact that this pseudo-knowledge is historically situated and intimately connected to the needs and interests developed as part of European expansion. Regardless of the specific critical intervention or the theoretical context in which hybridity is used today, it denotes an interest in the power of discursive constructions of difference.

This interest has led to a great variety of interpretations and applications of the concept of hybridity to the extent that, as the editors of *Reconstructing Hybridity* point out, it "has become a buzzword in recent cultural and literary criticism" (2). An additional problem with hybridity theory, and one which is also connected to the interest in the discursive, concerns the often jargon-like and highly specialized language. *Reconstructing Hybridity* is thus faced with the challenge of showing the continued relevance of this concept. The editors have succeeded in bringing together a remarkably wide-ranging collection of essays which show how the ideas about nation, ethnicity, identity and embodiment addressed and questioned through the concept of hybridity still form the way we see the world. The essays are also written in exceptionally intelligible prose but the idea of revisiting a concept implies a reader familiar with the theoretical debate. The editors have, nevertheless, wisely included a discussion of the development of the term in their introduction to the volume. This introduction serves as a very useful orientation also for relative newcomers to the field and it contains some valuable concretizations, as for instance the definition of hybridity as always implying an unbalanced relationship between the cultural identities involved.

Approaching difference through hybridity theory inevitably means an engagement with the relation between the embodied and the discursive, the political and the poetic, the literal and the metaphorical. The essays in this volume illustrate this tension when they situate the concept of hybridity within post-colonial contexts which have, at times, conflicting political agendas. This becomes particularly evident in the essays discussing the question of indigeneity, a context where the deconstruction of notions of tradition, heritage, nation, land and belonging are suddenly revealed to challenge the very notion of indigenous nations as such. A similar tension is brought out in the essays discussing the postethnic in relation to difference within whiteness and the meaning of Eastern Europeanness.

The first part, "Reconstructing Theories of Hybridity" consists of six essays which all take their starting point in existing theoretical frameworks.

This section therefore addresses itself to readers already familiar with the ideas involved, most importantly the work of Homi Bhabha, Robert Young, Gayatri Spivak, and Paul Gilroy. The first three essays focus on central concepts in Bhabha's theory of hybridity and offer new readings in new contexts whereas the last three essays seek to engage with other theorists. David Huddart contextualizes Bhabha by focusing on how the most central insights in his theory, the distinction between cultural difference and cultural diversity expressed in Bhabha's 1985 essay "Signs Taken for Wonders." This reading shows the relevance of Bhabha's theory for the challenges facing us through globalization and global citizenship. In the essay "White Fatigue, or, Supplementary Notes on Hybridity" Sabine Broeck's contribution addresses a concern that faces all theoretical work, that of the relation between the concept as metaphor on the one hand and the material practice and historically situated embodiment on the other. Broeck is here particularly interested in finding a way to engage with whiteness as an embodied form of entitlement within deeply unequal power structures and defines hybridity as "a crisis of homogeneity" (52). Dimple Godiwala's essay on "Postcolonial Desire" is similarly concerned with the embodied subject. She addresses aspects of Bhabha's theory, especially the concept of mimicry but returns to the question of what she terms the "biological hybrid" in her conclusion. The embodied and materially situated subject here seems to return and claim a place for itself also in a context which questions these naturalized divisions.

The idea of Hybridity as Anthropopagy is developed by Jeroen Dewulf who wishes to move beyond Bhabha's vision of hybridity towards a Latin American perspective. Global Creolism is here seen as the antidote to the North American dominance—Bhabha replaced by Glissant. Dewulf moves towards the idea of global Creolism through a deconstruction of the idea of pure languages and arrives at the idea of Cultural Anthropopagy, which expresses an acceptance of change through the absorption of the foreign. Paul Sharrad's focus on indigenous concerns points to one very important area in which hybridity theory might lead to problematical assertions if unconnected to issues of power and privilege. What his reading of Pacific writing shows, however, is that a use of strategic hybridity allows for adaptation without assimilation as well as the assertion of tradition and authenticity as useful concepts in an ongoing process of globalization. Sharrad here argues for syncreticity rather than hybridity as a model which allows for ethnic specificity and interchange without fundamentalist separatism. Andrew Blake takes issue with Paul Gilroy's critique of popular culture as

racist in *After Empire*, a work which Blake sees as offering an alternative to theories of hybridity rather than a development to these. Against the post-post-colonial *hybrid new* envisioned by Gilroy Blake reads *The Matrix* and the subsequent productions that this film has generated within different art forms as a site of a truly cosmopolitan possibilities.

The second part of the volume, entitled "Reading Hybridity," approaches a number of literary texts which are thematically connected through their concern with indigenous or immigrant experience. Despite the diversity of the material and the often rather disparate use of the term hybridity, these articles can be seen as a continuation of the first section in the sense that they, also, offer suggestions for alternative concepts beyond hybridity theory. Zoe Trodd reads Native American autobiographical texts against the binaries of resistance or absorption and finds dialogic strategies that, in themselves, already challenge the binary thinking of colonialism. Hybridity here becomes a way of expressing everything that includes a multiplicity of voices. American immigrant experience is discussed in the three following essays, where Sheng-Mei Ma focuses on Asian American mixed raced discourse from different time periods, covering a variety of generic conventions; Jopi Nyman discusses Cynthia Kadohata's novel *The Floating World*; and Joel Kourtti reads Jhumpa Lahiri's short story "This Blessed House." The juxtaposition of these essays shows that the concerns expressed by Native American, Asian American and Indian American narratives are illuminated and developed through hybridity theory. Sheng-Mei Ma concludes that the epistemological dilemma of the mixed race remains caught up between the political and the poetic and that different strategies are needed in order to articulate these different modes of representation. Jopi Nyman's reading shows that the acceptance of a hybrid identity also brings to the surface past realities of violence and trauma that come to be articulated in the narrative in the form of memory and ghosts. Hybridity thus comes to stand for an acceptance of loss and the articulation of an identity which is constituted through loss. Joel Kuortti similarly addresses hybridity as something which becomes visible only when the seemingly "empty space" is approached through translation and revealed to have been inhabited all along. Translation functions here as a mechanism which brings the hybrid identity into being.

With the last four essays discussing the work by writers Hanif Kureishi, Kwame Kwei-Armah, Tanika Gupta and Salman Rushdie the geographical focus moves from the United States to Britain, India and, thematically also to Eastern Europe. Andrew Hammond looks at Hanif Kureishi's *The*

*Buddha of Suburbia*, *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*, *The Black Album* and *My Beautiful Laundrette* and argues that these texts depict hybrid societies, including Thatcher's Britain, as racist and intolerant. Valerie Kaneko Lucas reads the plays by Kwame Kwei-Armah and Tanika Gupta and finds hybridity articulated through a painful past. This definition of hybridity as fundamentally connected to the painful history of colonialism, slavery and racism, and only reluctantly re-articulated in the present thus comes to be one of the most important elements of the fiction discussed in this volume. Samar Dayal's essay on "Subaltern Envy" focuses on Salman Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh*, a novel, which, according to Dayal, articulates the challenge of an ethical postcolonial project in the monoculturalist ethnonationalist culture of contemporary India. Hybridity takes its meaning through both the ethical and the ethnic. This tension within the concept of hybridity is also addressed in Mita Banerjee's reading of Salman Rushdie's *Fury* and Hanif Kureishi's *Gabriel's Gift*, novels in which the postethnic postcolonial is brought into contact with a postcommunist discourse of ethnicity. Banerjee argues for a postcoloniality which returns to the question of historical specificity by addressing Eastern Europeanness and the possible intersections between colonialism and communism.

*Reconstructing Hybridity* allows the reader to see the concept of hybridity at work in a variety of context and opens up to a number of useful alternative ways of approaching the challenges posed by globalization and migration. The project revisits the concept and therefore partly remains caught up in the intricate complexities of conflicting theories. But before we distance ourselves from the theoretical by evoking a simplistic dichotomy we should consider the history of education and science. If the problems addressed by hybridity were first created in the areas of science and education might it not be fitting that the academic arena should be where hybridity continues to engage us.

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Sirpa Salenius, *Florence, Italy: Images of the City in Nineteenth-Century American Writing*, Publications in the Humanities 46. Joensuu: University of Joensuu, 2007. 240 pages; ISBN 9789524589307

In *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* (2008), Woody Allen's comedy about two young American women spending a summer in Spain, the two protagonists