

*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

fall in love, in Juan Antonio and in Spanish life. Juan Antonio is a Spanish painter who introduces them to himself, his studio, and his life in the picturesque town of Oviedo in Asturias and in Barcelona. Maria Elena, his neurotic and passionate ex-wife, soon turns up and elaborates the already complicated relationships between the Spanish artist and the two American girls. All this mess, Maria Elena exclaims contemptuously, "por dos turistas americanas." At the end of the film, when Vicky and Cristina have tasted Spanish life to the full, Vicky, who had come to Barcelona to pursue her studies of Catalan culture for her master's thesis, reluctantly resumes her life in the United States, whereas Cristina, who describes herself as an expatriate with a European soul realizes that she has not found her true calling in Barcelona and Oviedo and therefore stays in Europe to look further elsewhere.

Two American ingénues meet European culture and react in different ways. The international theme and the American girl, one nods in recognition, as Allen, with a buoyant and cheerful touch, portrays American innocence encountering European experience, or U.S. convention encountering European serendipity in unfulfilled love and romantic comedy. It is an old story. What are the origins of the images with which the encounter between the United States and Europe are interpreted?

In her doctoral dissertation, *Florence, Italy: Images of the City in Nineteenth-Century American Writing*, Sirpa Salenius explores such formations with reference to Italy and Florence. As she states in her conclusion, after her many detailed and diligent readings, she may not have analyzed the origin of ideologies and values behind American writers' images of Florence, but she has considered "some of the dominant ideas, problematics, stereotypes and prejudices" which were circled by nineteenth-century American authors in Florence (240). What has she found?

Florence was the capital of art and taste for American authors who searched for what America was lacking (235). Florence and Italian life offered a mirror to reflect on U.S. life (235). They offered a natural way of life—spiritual relief and simple pleasures, and, as Salinen argues, a retrieval of a lost American Pastoral Dream (237). The idea of Italy was idealized and over-romanticized in images where the past was foregrounded and contemporary life erased (236). By following a tradition of previous encounters, authors describe Florence as an imaginary geography "where anticipation and confirmation characterize the encounter" (236). Since authors refer to "shared ideas and icons," the foreign is made familiar through the

texts, “the location is authenticated by visiting the sites, described in novels, poems and travel writing” (236). The transmitted viewpoint was white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant, reaffirming a national U.S. identity characterized by democracy and progress, and the authors patronize both the vulgar, American tourists, dissimilar to the observing intellectual writers, and the inferior others, “a subservient people, incapable of administering a democratic government” (237), thus reflecting an anti-Catholic, American hostility to towards Italian immigrants (239). In this way, the texts about Florence were “intricately interconnected” with U.S. realities (235).

Such conclusions Salinen reaches by pursuing and analyzing texts from a long period, 1820 to 1910. In the second chapter she establishes the tradition of American tourism in Italy by relating it to The Grand Tour and the textual production in the forms of guidebooks and travel writing, and she pursues the images they give of Italy and its people, in particular Rome, Venice, and Florence, the traditional watering-places of the Italian tour. She makes two investigations, identically structured: first, the British Grand Tour, and then the American, set in the template of the already established British tradition and the conventions of the Grand Tour. Thus she demonstrates that the American authors transmitted attitudes and images or, to use Eric Hobsbawm’s term, they added to “the invented tradition” of British Italian travel writing where the tourist was the observer, who, excluded from the country he visited, reassured the readers of the norms of their home societies (63). Salinen’s parallel structure may enclose the American travel writing too neatly in a British tradition, thus foregoing a broader, and older, European tradition of the Grand Tour, even if her documentation is meticulous and convincing.

Salinen refers to the “subjugating gaze” of the nineteenth-century travel writer who reduced what he saw as he elevated it to the position of the authoritative knower (34), condescendingly approaching the Other. Her description of Frederick Douglass’s grand tour provides an exception here in his equation of African Americans and Italians and his observation of African influence in Italian men, manners, and prevailing customs (69). She also finds that the genre of the travel book displays an interdependence of fact and fiction which she traces back to Laurence Sterne’s *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, and which, of course, could be traced to other linguistic and cultural backgrounds—Goethe’s *Italienische Reise*, to name but one.

Such generic interdependence Salinen supports with her American ex-

amples, be they Nathaniel Parker Willis, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Margaret Fuller, William Dean Howells, Mark Twain, Henry James, Constance Fenimore Woolson, or Edith Wharton, whose texts link her analysis of the Grand Tour tradition and its textual output to the subsequent categories of texts: biographical and fictional. It is in her analysis of the biographical texts, in the third chapter, that Salenius detects the rediscovery of the American pastoral in the descriptions of the scenery and still life of Florence. She claims that the romanticized landscape already existed as a part of the shared culture (81), as she portrays a tradition of painting leading up to Thomas Cole, and as she observes Americans' familiarity with copies or etchings of famous Florentine art works (83). This shared culture provided an imaginary geography which was, to Salenius, internationally constructed.

Thus, the encounter with Florence rested on anticipation and recognition, confirmed in a literary, conventionalized view where, as she puts it, "the dichotomies of past-future and history-modernity became a part of the interplay of the Old World-New World polarities" (88). Italian otherness was in this way mediated through Italian classics and British or American novels. From the writings of the period it became increasingly obvious that the dichotomies underlined modernity as a loss and that progress equals the loss of a poetic past (101). At the turn of the century, the utopian vision depicted "a rural land where modernity and urban progress are replaced with timeless stillness" (121).

From the shared, invented tradition of the guidebooks and travel writings, from the biographical notebooks and diaries, Salenius turns, in the fourth chapter, to the topic of Florence in fiction. Here she investigates a number of fictional texts: *Künstlerroman Paul Fane* by Nathaniel Parker Willis; *The Marble Faun* by Nathaniel Hawthorne; "The Madonna of the Future," *Roderick Hudson*, "The Diary of a Man of Fifty," and *The Portrait of a Lady* by Henry James; *Ragged Lady* and *Indian Summer* by William Dean Howells; *The Front Yard and Other Italian Stories* and *Dorothy and Other Italian Stories* by Constance Fenimore Woolson. In their Florence-based texts she finds attitudes and motifs which she analyzes and relates to the findings from the previous chapters in order to discuss the development of the images of Florence in her long period, 1820 to 1910, and she can in this respect state that the image of Italy as Arcadia disappeared with the advent of World War I.

In a section of the first chapter called "Central Concepts," Salinen introduces a number of concepts in relation to her investigation. It is here that

the reader retrieves concepts like *imaginary geography*, *anticipation*, and *confirmation* (10, 13). She furthermore introduces and discusses Mary Louise Pratt's idea of the contact zone, the "interaction of people from different origins who encounter each other in a spatial and temporal intersection" (14), and she also considers *race*, *gender*, and *class* in reference to her texts. Thus, her section makes both a conceptual survey in which to situate her investigation and a toolbox for her subsequent analysis. The former function may suit her topic better, whereas the latter is not always immediately related to the detailed readings which follow. In this way, *race*, *gender*, and *class* as well as *contact zone* constitute useful points of departure even if their relevance is not always obvious because of the differences between the text genres Salenius analyzes—guidebooks, biographical texts, and fictional texts—and her consequent approaches to them.

In her conclusion, Salenius states that "the narratives remain inseparable from the historical and cultural context of their production" (240). They certainly do, but as a final statement it is too modest to pay full justice to her detailed, meticulous, and versatile analysis which definitely provides much insight into the mechanisms of nineteenth-century U.S. authors and their double-edged experiences of travel, Italy, and Florence, to confirm their own national identity. In this way, the American images of nineteenth-century Florence in Salenius's work offer an instance from which one can approach travel and travel writing in general. The international theme even links nineteenth-century Americans in Florence to Vicky and Cristina in Barcelona.

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