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# A Postcard from the Library: A Study of Perceptions of Italy and Foreigners Abroad through Time

Kathlyn Valianti Collins

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A Postcard from the Library: A Study of Perceptions of Italy and  
Foreigners Abroad through Time

A Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements of the Renée Crown University Honors Program at  
Syracuse University

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and Renée Crown University Honors

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Honors Capstone Project in Italian Language, Literature, and Culture

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## **Abstract**

A representative selection of European and American literature reveals a culturally constructed function of Italy as the place of revelation for foreign visitors. This literary construction, founded in a long history of travel from pilgrimage to mass tourism, contextualizes the experience of American students such as myself when we live and study in Italy whether we realize it or not.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

My internship at SeeTen TV in Florence, Italy, inspired me to delve into the written and unwritten rules for foreigners who travel to Italy. SeeTen, a web-television company that was started about six year ago by Lorenzo Galanti, is television for tourists who come to Florence and Tuscany. The company does news broadcast style stories about upcoming events and activities in Florence and neighboring cities that would be of interest to both tourists and locals. SeeTen produces stories on museum exhibits, shows, food, wine, history, art, and more. SeeTen does two versions of each story, one in English for foreigners, and the other in Italian. Hotels broadcast SeeTen to thousands of tourists visiting Italy. SeeTen broadcasts are also available online at SeeTen.it and on ToscanaTV. The company works with many other organizations in Florence such the Official Tourist Office, the Tourist Agency of Prato, SITA, restaurants, museums, and hotels.

I worked at SeeTen three days a week during my spring semester abroad in 2009. Before even starting my internship, my faculty advisor told me not to expect much during the first few weeks at my internship because she said “everything is much slower in Italy.” After about a month of not getting much work to complete at SeeTen, I finally received translations to work on from Italian into English. A final project was also in the works as part of my internship. I began to develop story ideas that I would like to produce for the website as my final project. As a foreigner myself who had been to Italy only once before, I decided that I would base my project around ten things that people should know

before arriving in Florence. Some of my ideas for the ten things were tipping waitresses and cab drivers, the bus system, judging good gelato, the water in Florence, the hours of business, the Euro, the meals, the tourist traps, walking in the city, and where to go at night. I felt that either for people coming to Florence for travel or for students coming for a semester, these would be useful things to know. SeeTen did not move forward with my idea.

With only three weeks left in my internship, SeeTen gave me the task that would become my final project. My boss handed me a poster written in both Italian and English which was distributed by the Comune di Firenze, or city government. The poster listed nine “regole di comportamento,” meaning code of conduct, or rules of behavior in the city. The posters were hung at places throughout the city. These rules included: no climbing on statues or monuments, no graffitiing walls or monuments, littering, no purchasing counterfeit goods from peddlers, no affixing locks to city gates, no performing or causing a scene in public, picking up after pets in parks and public areas, no fouling in public areas, and no playing bothersome or dangerous games in crowded places. With each of these rules there was also a fine listed if someone was caught not following these guidelines. I was to do both an English and an Italian version. The first thing I had to do for my project was to decide what and where in the city I wanted to film for each rule on the poster. I then had to go with a videographer and shoot at various sites in Florence, write both versions of the story, and edit the audio and video together for the two stories.



My SeeTen experience was the foundation for my Honors Capstone project. I was interested in the written and unwritten rules in Italy, specifically throughout the last 200 years or so, to see if they had at all changed. For this project I read about a dozen books, a collection of essays, many articles and studied two films. I looked at these works chronologically starting with Wolfgang Van Goethe and ending with Harold Pinter.

### **A POSTCARD FROM THE LIBRARY**

Last year I traveled to Italy physically, and this year I traveled to Italy through the library. My postcard home from this journey follows here. This is what I learned on this trip: a literary tradition exists in works in English, French, and German that, taking cues from the historical evolution of tourism, demonstrates and builds on two simple notions: Italy is the goal of some sort of personal development and Italy is a place of revealed truth, where this truth is generally, if not always, erotic. Because of this tradition, literary characters in several authors' works come to experience Italy as a result of their culturally determined expectations of the country. Additionally, some come not predisposed to experience Italy in a certain way and are taken by surprise when Italy's effect on them goes deeper than they expected. This deeper version is the more powerful version of the transformative event presumed by popular cultural expectations (Allen).

### **HISTORY OF TOURISM**

*Pilgrimage*

Before the concept of tourism existed, many Europeans took part in pilgrimages. The American Heritage Dictionary defines pilgrimage as an “excursion, long search, or journey of exalted purpose or moral significance” (“Pilgrimage”). Often times, the pilgrimage is undertaken for religious reasons. Those partaking in a religious pilgrimage may travel for several weeks or months to sacred sites in hope of atonement, salvation, revelation, or healing. The Near East and Europe, being home to the Holy Land and sites such as Jerusalem and Rome, was the center of many of these faith journeys. Estimates put the number of official pilgrimage shrines in Europe at six thousand before political changes in Eastern Europe took place in 1989 (Bohlman 376). Early European pilgrimages intersected political boundaries and passed through structural, linguistic, and cultural borders (Bohlman 377).

Italy, because of its religious traditions, was a popular destination for many medieval pilgrims. Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Rome then became a major site of Christian pilgrimage shortly after Emperor Constantine I declared Christianity the official religion. Christians, who could now practice their religion freely and without fear of persecution, flocked to Rome in great numbers to pay tribute to saints buried in Rome’s catacombs. The catacombs provided space for Christians to pray and participate in memorial services during their time of prosecution. Pilgrims who journeyed to the catacombs often inscribed symbols and writings reflective of the early religions teachings. Because of Christians’ respect for the dead bodies, they did not practice cremation. In Rome alone there were sixty catacombs, or

underground cemeteries. Christians used catacombs as places of burial until the beginning of Christendom when martyrs were then buried above ground or in churches ("Christian Catacombs of Rome").

Pilgrimage continued throughout the Middle Ages in Europe as religion was extremely important for both the rich and the poor. Those who could not make the journey to Jerusalem would often visit the sites of the Roman Catholic Church instead (L. Brown). In the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, many cathedrals and places of worship were being built, the Crusades were taking place, and medieval Popes had much influence (R. Brown). Pilgrims traveled to these new churches to worship the relics and tombs they contained and also to pray for sick loved ones (L. Brown). By traveling to these shrines, people felt they could be saved or healed spiritually. During these pilgrimages, people faced harsh travel conditions, poor means of transportation, and danger from natives (Strachan). Many times pilgrims would travel in large groups for safety in numbers when venturing to an unknown place (Nosotro). By making this journey to the saints' tombs, pilgrims believed they would be absolved from all sins.

Up until the Renaissance, pilgrims were traveling to Italy as well as to other sites in Western Europe. During the Renaissance, people began to travel not only for religious reasons but also for cultural and educational reasons. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, with the creation of the printing press by Gutenberg, pilgrims were able to map their routes across the holy sites of Europe. Many guides were printed during this time to aid those on pilgrimages (L. Brown).

*The Grand Tour*

The term “the Grand Tour,” refers to an itinerary of travel by young English aristocrats and the recently wealthy to Italy and France in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. This travel served as a rite of passage for the Anglophone upper class. Young people would travel away from home to Mediterranean Europe, often Italy, to study the arts or culture in order to return home refined. During the Grand Tour period, Robert Herries set up a system among banks by which travelers could transfer circular notes for local currency (Symes). This system made travel more convenient than previously. The Grand Tour was largely characterized by aristocratic British men who were educated in the classics and sent to Italy to confirm and complete their education. The social elite who did the traveling saw the Grand Tour as a “crucial demonstration of taste” (Black 3).

According to Stendhal, the “Golden Age” of travel in Italy was about 1815-1830 (Stendhal xiv). The Grand Tour could last for months or semesters of studying at universities, but on average it lasted more than a year. The aristocratic youth who embarked on the Grand Tour usually traveled with a tutor. These tutors, however, had little control over the actions of their students. Because of a lack of supervision, many of the activities of those on tour, such as sex, gambling, and drinking, often aroused local criticism (Black 118-141). The freedom afforded to the young and healthy abroad “provided major opportunities for sexual adventure” (Black 118). Because prostitution was prevalent in Italy during this time, young English tourists often contracted venereal diseases. Seeking sex was so widely accepted in Italy that visiting French and English nobility also took part in these adulterous activities. The idea of a married woman having a lover

was popular in Italy, and such lovers were known as *cicisbei* in Italian. Previous travelers often warned new tourists of both the pretty women and “the Italian vice”—homosexuality, before their journey to Italy (Black 126). Because of the abundance and low cost of alcohol, many tourists also drank heavily during the Grand Tour (Black 132). Criticism by Italians of this type of behavior displayed by tourists in Italy existed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and continues today.

Many times artists went to be inspired by Italy’s antiquities; some went for architectural inspiration, lured by Roman and Renaissance architecture. Those going for Renaissance art and architecture often headed to Florence. The Uffizi gallery in Florence was an important goal for many tourists (Black 3-47). During the Grand Tour, English travelers preferred Florence because of the wealth and high society the Medici family had created. Florence’s busy social activities and clean streets were especially appealing to the British. The cleanliness of the city made for a stark contrast to the often criticized dirt and claustrophobia tourists complained of in Venice (Sweet 840). Travelers often recommended Florence as a place for “prolonged residence” because it was not as foreign and unfamiliar to them as other places in Italy seemed to be (Sweet 837-859). Many of the accommodations which tourists took to in Florence were run by English people. For example, travelers on the Grand Tour often stayed at Sir Horace Mann’s residence in Florence, where they enjoyed entertainment for both English and Italian patrons. An English factory in the port of Livorno, producing English food and dry goods, also helped tourists acclimatize to the city as the new arrivals often found the local cuisine “hard to stomach” (Sweet 837-859). Livorno’s close

proximity to Florence allowed the familiar food to be readily available for the English tourists which added to their comfort in the city (Sweet 843). Rosemary Sweet, in her article, “British Perceptions of Florence in the Long Eighteenth Century,” attributes such perceptions of Florence by the English to influences from “the Anglophone tone of Florentine culture” (Sweet 847).

Travelers to Florence began to change their perception of the city from the realm of the Medici to a realm of Renaissance art and architectural revival. This shift in attitude began late in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and continued into the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although the Medici collections were appealing to travelers, tourists were beginning to look to the Florence before the Medici and to its past artistic and architectural heritage. Art and architecture from the Middle Ages began to receive more attention in the 1780’s and 1790’s as the number of middle class tourists increased. Such travelers appreciated some of Florence’s now most famous sites such as the Duomo, the Campanile, the Baptistery, Santa Croce, San Lorenzo, and numerous churches (Sweet 837-859).

Other parts of Italy offered visitors different pleasures- classical antiquity, the opera, and the warm weather which many preferred to the climate of France (Black 4-37). After Paris, the first stop in Italy for those on the Grand Tour was usually Turin where travelers often attended Academy, a type of finishing school (Black 33). They often then toured the major sites in Northern Italy: Genoa, Milan, and Venice. Milan’s famous opera house, La Scala, opened in 1778 and was popular with British tourists. Tourists also went to various cities for special annual events like Carnival in Naples and Venice and Easter in Rome (Black 3-

37). Although there was no rigid plan for the tour in Italy, the main point of travel was to visit Florence, the birthplace of the Renaissance, and Rome, which offered both Classical and Baroque sculpture, architecture, and painting. During the summer however, the heat prevented many from traveling to the urban centers (Black 47). Tourists were less welcomed by Italians in Rome and further south than in northern Italy and Tuscany. Foreigners began to note, perhaps in response, the “vulgarity and ignorance” of the Neapolitans (Black 54). Tourists made the journey south only to see Vesuvius, Herculaneum, and Pompeii. Those who continued south to Sicily often went mainly for archeological purposes to visit sites of classical remains such as the excavations of the theatre in Syracuse. Many times tourists visited Sicily in a separate tour or sail of the Mediterranean (Black 64).

Food and drink in Italy added to the foreignness of the Grand Tour. From the preparation of food to the type and availability of meats, much of the food was new and strange to these tourists, who encountered a wide variety of local wines along with individual dishes common to each particular area (Black 76-80). Tourists also noted the power of the church, as they needed certificates to eat meat during Lent (Black 77). In regard to lodgings and similar to the attitude in Florence, tourists felt most comfortable in hotels run by non-Italians in the main cities as opposed to hotels outside the cities which often had bug problems (Black 68-74).

Coinciding with the Enlightenment period, the Grand Tour allowed for the promotion of new ideals of intellectual and moral improvement. The diversity

in Italy among the north, central, and southern regions and cities made a profound impression on tourists by challenging their long-ingrained status quo. Although many tourists were chaperoned by a bear-leader, a tutor traveling with a wealthy or aristocratic young man, many on this journey were able to break from the mold and discover a new sense of self (“bearleader”). In his book *Italy and the Grand Tour*, Jeremy Black, says the perception of Italy as inflexible and strict as seen through a typical guidebook or bear-leader was often misleading. Black says, “If tourists, naturally independent, ended their journeys with different experiences, this diversity increasingly accorded with a stress on personal intellectual and emotional responses to travel” (Black 67).

On the other hand, those tourists traveling with a closed mind did not get the same type of experience abroad. Stendhal often noted that the English taking part in the Grand Tour had a tendency to travel in groups (Hornsby 1-198). The group often stayed together, rarely interacting with native Italians, as such contact was not their reason for being there. During this time, the two cultures, Anglo-Saxon and Mediterranean, met but rarely mingled. Many who returned to England became increasingly xenophobic as their time abroad re-enforced their notion of English superiority (Black 12). It was at this time that tourists and foreigners expectations and perceptions of Italy became even more solidified.

### *Mass Tourism*

Although tourism dates back to its early form of pilgrimage, mass tourism to Europe begins in the 1800s. Before the 1800’s the sea passage to Italy from the West, and even Britain, was long (Black 23). New forms of transportation made



travel much easier and economical for those traveling within Europe and across the Atlantic. Steamships and trains allowed for more predictable routes of travel. During this time, certain hotels and resorts across Europe became increasingly selective and could rely on a specific class of clientele. High-class luxury resorts were beginning to spring up in southern Europe. Tourism, as an industry started investing a great deal of money on amenities and comfort for travelers.

Transportation companies and resorts began advertising their travel services in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many of these advertisements came in the form of guidebooks and handbooks that included travelers' personal accounts and journal writings (Alastair).

Travel was becoming popular not just among England, Germany and America's wealthy, but also among their middle classes. Middle class families were often able to cross oceans in second, or even steerage class on oceanliners. Travel companies began to democratize the industry. Thomas Cook established a travel company in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that appealed to this new class of tourists (Black 4). Cook was successful in his business because his planned trips were very well-scheduled and he made his prices transparent for travelers. Some 50,000 American tourists traveled to Europe in 1880 compared to around 250,000 in 1913 (Alastair). The invention of the airplane and its subsequent use later, in the mid-1900s, made once unreachable destinations accessible to travelers (Alastair).

Italy stabled an Office of Tourism in 1931 (Alastair). Governments in other European countries were also creating tourism agencies around this time.

Before nation states became interested in the economic advantages of the tourism industry, private companies and firms promoted travel. All literature and information about travel was done independently from the state before governments saw how profitable the industry could be. Nations began to realize how beneficial tourism could be for the economy in terms of GDP and job growth (Alastair).

During the World Wars, tourism slowed dramatically. However, in the 1960s tourism took off again. Because the Italian state viewed the tourism industry as purely beneficial economically, it engaged in little regulation in this sector. The Ministry for Tourism and Entertainment in Italy, created in 1959, failed to unify the industry in Italy because its responsibilities were unclear. The twenty different regions of Italy thus began to regulate tourism in their own manner, leading to difficulties in trying to promote Italy as a whole. The Department for Tourism replaced the Ministry for Tourism and Entertainment in the 1990s. Since Italy joined the European Union in 1993, policies in place promote sustainable tourism and reduce negative impacts on the environment (Ruzza).

The global tourism industry today has grown so large that it may be second only to the oil industry (Alastair). Italy has remained appealing to tourists with its cities of Florence, Venice, and Rome and sites such as the Coliseum, Pompeii, and the Amalfi Coast. In 2008, Italy was the fifth most popular destination for international tourists and fourth for the amount of money spent by tourists. The World Tourism Organization, a United Nations agency, put the

number of tourists to Italy for 2008 at 42.7 million who spent 45.7 billion dollars (“World Tourism Organization”).

### *Education Abroad for American Students*

American students who study abroad are assuming a role of those who participated in the Grand Tour generations before. American college students began studying abroad in the early 1900s and continued throughout the century with the exceptions of the periods of the World Wars (Alastair). Often, such students come from wealthy families who can afford to send their children abroad during their college education. For such students, studying abroad is an essential part of their education. Some programs even make studying abroad a required component in order for students to receive their degree. In reality, only a small percentage of privileged college students actually study abroad. Less than 2% of all the 14 million students enrolled in U.S. higher education study abroad (Obst, Bhandari, and Witherell).

Europe has historically been the dominant host of study abroad students. According to the Institute of International Education, the top study abroad destinations for 2009 included six of ten destinations in Western Europe. The most popular countries for study abroad are Britain, Italy, Spain, France, Germany, and Ireland. Of students who studied abroad for 2007-2008, 11.7% studied in Italy- or approximately 30,700 American undergraduate students (Jaschik). More than 80% of the students who study abroad are white, and the ratio of females to males who study abroad is two to one (Redden).

American higher education institutions have increasingly been adding campuses overseas for study-abroad programs. While foreign universities in Australia, England, India, and France have their own international campuses, American-created programs dominate with 48% of the total number of branches. The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education did a report saying that 111 of the 162 abroad branches were established by Anglophone institutions. Since 2002 the number of branch campuses, in countries other than a university's home country, has increased eight times. Around the world 22 countries have universities with campuses abroad (Geoff).

Florence alone has 37 American college and university programs. All of these institutions are members of the Association of American College and University Programs in Italy (AACUPI), founded in Rome in 1978. In all of Italy there are 134 AACUPI member institutions that see about 20,000 students a year. (AACUPI). Some of the larger campuses are Syracuse, Gonzaga, Stanford, Georgetown, and New York University. Syracuse University in Florence recently celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In recent semesters, the Syracuse campus has hosted around 300 students from Syracuse University and other U.S. colleges.

From my own study abroad experience and observation, I would confidently state that the experience American students have in Italy is more often than not a positive life-changing one. Students return home having gone through a kind of metamorphosis as they learn to appreciate culture, language, and people more so than they had before. Students become self-confident and mature during their time abroad.

## LITERARY HISTORY

### *Travel Journals*

We begin our literary itinerary with a glance at Chaucer. The early writings of tourists to Italy framed the way Italy was perceived in following years. Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, a series of stories told by a group of pilgrims, is one of the first pieces of travel writing in Europe. Written in English in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, this work set the stage for future travel tales.

As the printing press spread across Europe in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, travel works began to disseminate across Europe. People in different parts of Europe were now able to read and learn about foreign cultures. Travel literature was extremely influential in the growth of tourism during the Grand Tour. Most travel writing was done by males, and most travel literature was quite subjective (Black 5-20). Fewer guidebooks and journals were written about southern Italy compared to the North during the Grand Tour because, fearing poor conditions, tourists were less likely to have traveled south (Black 64). However, guidebooks were helpful during the Grand Tour because they often provided predictions of the costs of travel, the most expensive part being transportation (Black 95).

Modern travel writing essentially began with the advertising techniques used by travel companies, transportation companies, and resorts. Much of these firms' advertising appeared in the form of travel guidebooks or handbooks. Travel firms produced their own forms of literature in which travelers would reflect on their experiences abroad (Alastair). Two well-known publishers of these handbooks were Murray and Baedeker.

Tourists relied heavily on their Baedekers during the Grand Tour: We find Baedekers referred to in E.M. Forester's *Room with a View*, for example, when the author says the English never went anywhere "outside Baedeker" (Forester 60). Edith Wharton's *Roman Fever* also mentions Baedeker (Wharton 23), while Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad* refers to Murray guidebooks (Twain 273). Karl Baedeker was a German publisher in the 1800s who issued guidebooks with information for travelers to European countries ("Baedeker"). Murray was another prominent brand of travel guide at the time which was started in 1836 by John Murray III. His love of traveling also took him to Russia, Turkey, Palestine, and Egypt (Nicholson). Today there are numerous publishers of travel guides from Fodor's, Frommer's, Rick Steve's to Lonely Planet.

Writers kept travel diaries for both personal and professional reasons. Some writers, such as Mark Twain, were hired by newspapers to document their experiences abroad. Twain wrote a total of 51 letters for the San Francisco newspaper, *Daily Alta California*, which became the basis for his book, *The Innocents Abroad*. The newspaper financially supported his journey with \$1250 ("Reporting the Holy Land Excursion"). Today, this practice seems to have evolved into blogs as a way for people to recount their experiences overseas.

#### *History of the Novel*

The novel as we know it today began with the historical novel between the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the Romantic period. Most historical novels at this time were written in English or French followed by Italian, German, and Russian. Many of the first historical novels came from France and Scotland with work's such as

Madame de Lafayette's *La Princesse de Clèves* in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and Walter Scott's *Waverly* in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Maxwell 2). Writers began to write fictional biographies with historical settings, an important characteristic of the European historical novel. It was common for writers to recount tales of prominent historical figures and historical battles or sieges in a fictional way. France was especially known for a multitude of fictional works about the Bastille (Maxwell 4). During the 1870s journalism also began to take shape in France. In England, historical fiction became used for children's education in history in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Regarding early historical novels, it was difficult to distinguish between writers who were novelists and writers who were historians. In the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, historical novels became popular but also somewhat dishonorable because of the indistinguishable line between fact and fiction (Maxwell 11). During the Renaissance, the distinction between history and fiction had been encouraged. History was fact and deserved to be given more weight while fiction was merely entertainment (Maxwell 11-13).

The Italian novel, in comparison to the English and French, was almost non-existent at this time, as Italians perceived this genre to be a negative influence in many ways. They thought that the novel would corrupt idle people— especially women, that it was not up to the par with either the epic or tragedy, and its foreign origin did not conform to Italian culture (Pellini and Cesarani). Therefore, few Italian novels and novelists at this time were held in high esteem by Italians. One of the influential writers to escape such condemnation was Alessandro Manzoni, whose *I Promessi Sposi* (*The Betrothed*) served as a kind of fictional constitution

for the unification of Italy. While the novel gained popularity in other European countries, the literacy rate in Italy and the issue of a universal literary language contributed to the novel remaining unattractive. English novels by writers like Walter Scott began to be translated into Italian in the 1820's and began to influence the modern Italian novel. After the historical novel, until about the 1850s, came the works that idealized country life. These works were followed by literature written during the periods of romanticism, realism, naturalism, surrealism and neorealism respectively, which also contributed to shaping perceptions of Italy (Pellini and Cesarani).

### **ITALY ACCORDING TO SELECT FOREIGN AUTHORS**

Previously unknown places in Italy become fascinating and idyllic sites thanks to the impressions given in various forms of literature. In many literary works, Italy functions as a place of revealed truth. All travelers go to Italy seeking that which they came for and leave with that and more. Each traveler leaves Italy with a newly-discovered sense of self and enlightenment. Both the eroticism and the sense of identity displayed in Italy seem to be catalysts for revelatory experiences in foreigners.

The body of literature I have studied suggests, among other things, that only when travelers can get past the idea of being in Italy as a tourist do they get the full benefit of their experience. Those who go to Italy for travel or vacation often do not acquire the understanding and appreciation of Italy that, according to the literary tradition I study here, can so often be life-changing. As travel to Italy has continued, many tourists still get the superficial impression of Italy that many



writers have described. Even today, students who study abroad without taking advantage of the culture Italy has to offer them are missing out on a true life-changing experience. Those who spend their time in Italy constantly comparing it to their homeland will also not be afforded this experience. This is the case of the authors Nathaniel Hawthorne and Mark Twain who travel to Italy with all but an appreciation for the culture.

### *Goethe's Italy*

The first stop on my journey was Goethe's travel diary, *Italian Journey*. This work fits the pattern of pilgrimage as Goethe traveled south to seek the origin of plant life. Although he fails to make this particular discovery, Goethe discovers other elements of life which become more important. His work sets the stage for a pilgrimage structure and revelatory point of arrival and characterizes the intellectual significance of the Grand Tour's development.

Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe was born in 1749 in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, and studied an array of subjects throughout his life. He practiced law, wrote poems and novels, was a critic of art and literature, and also studied the natural sciences. He traveled throughout Germany, Italy, France, and Switzerland but lived in Weimar, Germany, for the majority of his life where he was a friend of Duke Carl August and where he was given the noble title 'von' by the Emperor Joseph II. Goethe became part of the aristocratic and elite group in Germany and enjoyed fame for his writings later in life. Before his death in 1832 Goethe had completed more than 60 works. (Hoppe). He left for Italy in September of 1786 when he was thirty-seven years old after asking for a leave of absence from the

Duke. Goethe's *Italian Journey* chronicles his travels (Wolfgang von Goethe VII-XIX).

The transition from the Enlightenment to Romanticism is evident in Goethe's book. Goethe went to Italy to cope with an emotional breakdown he was facing in Weimer (Wolfgang von Goethe VII-XIX). While in Italy, Goethe wanted to study architecture, sculpture, painting, and learn to draw. His main reason for travel, however, was to study geology and botany. Throughout his journey, he makes many geological observations about the soil, the stones, and the landscape. In part one of *Italian Journey*, Goethe reveals that his journey is also a spiritual one when he says "My purpose in making this wonderful journey is not to delude myself but to discover myself in the objects I see" (Wolfgang von Goethe 40). Throughout his tour of Italy, Goethe makes notes of the foreigners, cultural differences, and his own preconceptions of the peninsula. One of the first things he notices about Italians is that "Italians always call people by their first names or their nicknames," while he is glad instead to be called "the-Baron-who-lives-opposite-the-Rondanini." This way, he said he would not have to explain himself and his works to people who may have met him by his real name (Wolfgang von Goethe 123). Large Italian families often rely on nicknames because both sons and daughters are named after grandparents and many family members tend to have the same name (Leggio). Goethe was happy to be able to travel under the radar of many people he encountered.

Goethe is often accompanied by other non-natives of Italy. He says that when he was young he had dreamed of going to Italy with an "educated

Englishman, well versed in general history and the history of art” (Wolfgang von Goethe 136). He does explore Italy with such a man named Tischbein, a German artist who lives in Rome. Goethe travels in Rome for four months, during which time he notes that suicide is unheard of in Italy. After having watched a play in which a character commits suicide, he thought the Roman audience would find incomprehensible that one would take his own life (Wolfgang von Goethe 131). Catholicism’s view of suicide as a sin can explain the historically low suicide rate in primarily Roman Catholic Italy. Goethe states that people in Italy are naturally happy and says:

Everything one sees and hears gives evidence that this is a happy country which amply satisfies all the basic human needs and breeds a people who are happy by nature, people who can wait without concern for tomorrow to bring them what they had today and for that reason lead a happy-go-lucky existence, content with momentary satisfaction and moderate pleasures, taking pain and sorrow as they come with cheerful resignation (Wolfgang von Goethe 190).

Goethe goes on to give an example of this carefree way of life in which people take nothing for granted and are not wasteful as he describes children warming themselves on the paving stones that had just been used by a blacksmith (Wolfgang von Goethe 190). Today, my own observations are that Italians are still mindful to not be prodigal, as one can see in many of their energy-saving practices like not owning clothes dryers and obsessively turning off lights. Goethe says:

All I can say about the Italians is this: they are children of Nature, who for all the pomp and circumstance of their religion and art, are not a whit different from what they would be if they were still living in forests and caves” (Wolfgang von Goethe 132).

Goethe explores reasons for foreigners traveling to Italy. He notes, for example, that many foreigners travel to Italy for its artwork. At the same time, he says he was amazed at the lack of respect that many of these people have for the objects they saw (Wolfgang von Goethe 136). Goethe also notices the tendency of tourists to spend money on souvenirs and other frivolous items. For example, he says Etruscan vases are a particular item which travelers will splurge on as they become less cautious with money while abroad (Wolfgang Von Goethe 188).

Goethe refers to a certain sense of audacity which many tourists possess and exhibit during their tour as well. He notes the bravery of foreigners in their desire to climb to the top of Mount Etna (Wolfgang von Goethe 278). In this section, he views foreigners as almost foolish or naïve to believe that this journey will not be an arduous one. He says foreigners should not pretend to know more about an important figure in Italian history, such as Dante, than do Italians. The Italians view was that if they cannot fully comprehend the mind of such a figure, then foreigners were surely not able to do so. Goethe finds many of these types of interactions with Italians exhausting and tries to avoid them as he thinks many Italians in these circles of high society rather ignorant (Wolfgang von Goethe 368).

European travelers, he says, especially Germans, do not have a sense of what exactly they have come to Italy to see because they have forgotten it or never knew it. For these reasons, he calls German travelers “tiresome” and also notes that although they are hopeful Rome will fill some sort of void within themselves they must often reevaluate their response to the city (Wolfgang von Goethe 412). He further mocks Germans during Carnival in Rome because of their reputation for getting drunk (Wolfgang von Goethe 454).

Carnival is a time in Italy for both natives and foreigners to celebrate. However, Goethe says strangers will always draw ridicule by Italians solely for being foreigners during this time. Romans often will parody foreign painters by “running about in the Carnival crowd in long frock-coats, carrying enormous portfolios and gigantic pencils” (Wolfgang von Goethe 454). Carnival is a time when the Italian police are lenient and “social orders seem to be abolished” (Wolfgang von Goethe 446). Men dress as women and women dress as men in costumes of Pulcinella or Quacchero. Italians dress their dogs for Carnival as well (Wolfgang von Goethe 455).

As Goethe travels to southern Italy, he paints a picture of Italians as suspicious and the land as offensive. When deciding whether to visit a family in Sicily, he notes that his acquaintance might be misinterpreted because “Sicilians are very suspicious by nature” (Wolfgang von Goethe 243). While in Sicily, Goethe has to entertain the notables in the town with stories of King Frederick the Second, but he cannot speak of the king’s death or else he will be hated for being a “bearer of ill tidings” (Wolfgang von Goethe 267). He notes the filth of

Palermo's streets and inquires of a shop owner the reason for it. The owner says that those in a position to clean the streets do not bother to spend public funds in that way, and if they decided to do so then "the disgraceful condition of the paving would clearly reveal the embezzlement of the public money" (Wolfgang von Goethe 224-225). This instance of corruption in Italy is but the first in the collection of works I study here.

Goethe notes another example of Italians' suspicious nature by their reliance on guides for tourists. Foreigners in Italy must always tour churches or museums with a guide. Goethe often speaks of his *vetturino*, guide, or Abbé. The Abbé, or clergyman, must sit to the left of Goethe so others will know he is showing Goethe the city and not the other way around (Wolfgang von Goethe 277).

Italian women differ from region to region in Goethe's eyes. He notes that the women from Milan and the women from Rome are different in their natural behavior, common sense and good manners (Wolfgang von Goethe 401). At one point he prefers a Milanese woman over a Roman woman, describing the Roman as having dark-brown hair, a pale-brown complexion, brown eyes, being serious and reserved and the Milanese as having light-brown hair, a clear delicate skin, blue eyes, outgoing, and less nose. The differences between Northern and Southern Italy also come out in this description. Once he takes interest in a woman, a man must not give attention to another, he says. The mother of a girl whom Goethe had taken interest in said to him that, as a "respected foreigner,"

Once he had shown interest in her daughter, it was not *comme il faut* to pay attentions to another, for, during a *villeggiatura*, it was an understood convention that persons who had formed a mild attachment should abide by it in public and carry on an innocent and graceful exchange of courtesies (Wolfgang von Goethe 406).

The cuisine and drink in Italy so often noted by those on the Grand Tour are also mentioned by Goethe. While in Naples, he drinks wine from Syracuse, in Sicily, with dinner (Wolfgang von Goethe 194). Once in Sicily, Goethe realizes he has made no mention at all of the food in Italy. He specifically mentions that the vegetables, especially lettuce, are delicious. He also says the oil and wine are good and that the fish is excellent and has “a most delicate flavour” (Wolfgang von Goethe 240).

Italy allows Goethe to discover parts of himself he did not know previously. His self-reliance and his interactions with strangers facilitate the creation of a new era for Goethe. He says:

A new era is beginning for me. My spiritual horizons have been so extended by all my looking and learning that now I have to knuckle down to some definite piece of work. Human individuality is a strange thing: it is only during the last year, when I have had to depend solely on myself and at the same time be in daily contact with complete strangers, that I have really come to know my own (Wolfgang von Goethe 404).

Because of this, Goethe's experience in Italy is a life-changing one and sets the stage for an ongoing tradition of expectations and transformation for non-Italians in Italy.

### *Italy According to Stendhal*

The next stop on our itinerary is a work by Stendhal. Marie-Henry Beyle, most commonly known by his pen name Stendhal, wrote his travel book *Rome, Naples and Florence* in 1817. This was his first use of the name Stendhal. He was born in Grenoble, France, in 1783 and died in 1842. Stendhal moved to Paris in 1799 to study to be a playwright, but after arriving there he was appointed a lieutenant in the French military forces and was stationed in Italy through a family connection. While in Italy he traveled to Piedmont, Lombardy, and Milan. Stendhal was appointed a general of Napoleon's army in France in 1806 where he got a firsthand experience of the war. After the fall of the French empire, Stendhal moved to Italy and took up residence in Milan. He published his first books in Milan in 1814. In 1821 he was forced to leave Italy because of compromising political friendships, but then in 1830 took up residence in Civitavecchia (near Rome) as the French consul ("Stendhal").

We can see Stendhal's romantic realism in his travel book, *Rome, Naples and Florence*. Romantic writers valued the imagination and often thought fiction was truer than truth. In his book, Stendhal goes to Italy for its culture and focuses on the opera, ballet, and the theatre. Like Goethe, Stendhal finds himself on a path of self-discovery while in Italy. *Rome, Naples, and Florence* pays less attention to art than does Goethe's *Italian Journey*. Stendhal often recounts the history of the



places he travels to and the effects that the French, Austrian and British have had on these places. Love, truth, and passion are important themes in Stendhal's descriptions of Italy. Unafraid of generalizing, he describes Italians as people who live more by their hearts than by their heads and says that the Italians are more genuine than the English (Stendhal 148) or the French (Stendhal 250). He calls the Italian heritage one of "Beauty and the art of Love" (Stendhal 198) and says the deepest passion in Italy is vengeance (Stendhal 195), a theme that appears in later works I look at as well.

A foreigner must display many characteristics in order to assimilate into Italian society, Stendhal says. One of these is to speak the language of the country (Stendhal 198). In order to truly understand its people, a foreigner must know the dialect of a region (Stendhal 32). Also, it is better to be silent than witty among Italians (Stendhal 197). Italians live by the ideal centered on the pleasure of leisure called *dolce far niente* which means, literally, the sweetness of doing nothing (Stendhal 199).

Many instances in Stendhal's novel recount features of Italy that remain true to the observer today. For instance, in his description of the Cascine Park in Florence he notes that there are always hundreds of visitors and that Florence itself "is nothing better than a vast museum full of foreign tourists" (Stendhal 317). Today, the Cascine Park remains a popular tourist spot because of the open fields and gardens and has also become the center of an area where many Chinese and Filipino immigrants have settled. He also notes that neighboring cities in Italy dislike each other. Stendhal says "each city detests its neighbors, and it [is]

mortally detested in return,” noting that Florence and Siena in particular used to dislike each other (Stendhal 122). Today, I found that it is Pisa to which the Florentines have an aversion.

Stendhal also focuses on the women he encounters in his travels and discusses the influence they have on tourists in comparison to women in other lands. In Italy, society grants women “consideration, liberty and happiness” in relation to their level of beauty and he notes that equality between the sexes is a source of happiness (Stendhal 431). The women of Italy, especially of Lombardy, are sensual and susceptible to passion. The peasant women of Tuscany however, seem to be wary of the “irrationality of love,” while at the same time they have an unusual beauty which emanates from their eyes. These women, Stendhal says, have the highest of moral values (Stendhal 314). He says one must never stare at another man’s woman in Italy (Stendhal 71). In regard to looking at women, Stendhal recounts advice he received from a friend:

‘In Rome and in Bologna, never cast open glances at a pretty woman unless you should have spent the previous week in cultivating a firm friendship with her lover: then pretend that any attentions you have accord to *her* are due exclusively to your esteem for *him*’ (Stendhal 202).

Love and intimacy in Italy are themes Stendhal knew first-hand. He falls in love with a Milanese woman whose rejection of him seems to haunt him for the rest of his life. This woman, Angela Pietragrua, convinced Stendhal to take this tour of Italy during which he kept the diary that became *Rome, Naples, and Florence* (Stendhal xvi). He notes that the word “amore” is not spoken often

(Stendhal 45) and, rather than through literature, Italians express love through music (Stendhal 143). Having spent much time at the opera house Stendhal asserts that music is the art which “speaks most nearly to his heart” (Stendhal 337).

The notion of Italy as a place of ultimate truth is contested with the idea of presentation. Stendhal’s descriptions demonstrate the importance of appearances for Italians. For example, most large towns in Italy have a main street known as the Corso. The Corso is similar to the piazza in Italy where people go to see and to be seen. Stendhal notes that, in these days, “to win the hearts of the Milanese, a foreigner must hire the finest carriage in town and parade his mistress up and down the Corso” (Stendhal 105). The importance of appearances relates not only to people but to also the architecture of Italy. Stendhal says “there is nothing in the world which affords an Italian greater pleasure than the architecture of his house” (Stendhal 337). Style and good looks elicit respect, and he asserts that Italians have an “innate sense of beauty” (Stendhal 36). In Italy, this notion of the “bella figura” remains important today.

The Italy Stendhal portrays is a paradoxical one. On one hand, Italy, especially Milan, is sophisticated and cultured, but, on the other, it shows signs of ignorance. Although Stendhal notes that the smartest and most enlightened of Italians are in Milan publishing ten times more books a year than in Florence (Stendhal 145), he also says that Italians read little and that which they do read they read with mistrust, relying on their own experiences rather than that of others

(Stendhal 130). Stendhal notes the obedience, politeness, and meticulousness of the Florentines but is still partial to Milan (Stendhal 311).

Stendhal's experience in Italy is life-changing because he feels a new sense of belonging in Italy. This sense of belonging is so strong that it makes no difference to Stendhal that Italian culture is not his own. Stendhal says his heart is in Milan, but Italy in general is his true home. Although he realizes that Italy is not perfect, it represents a kind of utopia for Stendhal (Stendhal xvi-xxi).

### *The Romantic Perspective of Hawthorne*

Impressions of Italy have come not only from authors' travel diaries but also from their creative works. *The Marble Faun* by Nathaniel Hawthorne introduces readers to a dark, menacing side of Italy. Hawthorne's style of romanticism in *The Marble Faun* is evident in his character's human development, experimentation, and expression (Penrose).

Nathaniel Hawthorne was an American born in 1804 in Salem, Massachusetts. He died in 1864. Hawthorne spent much time abroad going to London in 1853 as a U.S. consul and moving to Italy with his wife for a year and a half in 1858. He kept a travel diary during this time and published *The Marble Faun* in 1860 during an era of dark romanticism. Its title comes from the Roman sculpture named the Faun of Praxiteles which he saw in a visit to a museum.

Although Hawthorne was fond of Rome, the Italy that he depicts in *The Marble Faun* is a much darker Italy than that seen by Goethe and Stendhal. In his novel, Hawthorne uses his characters and their setting to bring out menacing, mysterious characteristics of Italy. Although throughout the novel Hawthorne

portrays Italy as a dirty and despicable country, he held Italy in high regard as an unearthly, omnipotent, and paradisiacal place. Hawthorne's personal journey in Italy re-awakened his literary capacities (Huzzard 199-124). At the time Hawthorne was in Italy, Rome was controlled by Garibaldi.

The majority of Hawthorne's novel takes place in Rome. Two main characters, Hilda and Kenyon, are American artists abroad in Rome. Hawthorne describes Hilda as a young American girl who is an example of the "freedom of life which it is possible for a female artist to enjoy at Rome," able to do what she likes in the "corrupted atmosphere of the city" (Hawthorne 44). The other two main characters are Miriam and Donatello who ultimately fall. Donatello (the only Italian among the four) resembles the sculpture of the Faun of Praxiteles and, because of this resemblance, Miriam calls him Faun. Donatello begins as a light-hearted and happy person to whom Miriam once remarks, "You are of a cheerfuller race, my friend, and know nothing of this disease of sadness" (Hawthorne 33). After Donatello's distressing reaction in the catacombs, Hawthorne remarks that, as a people, Italians "have an infinite repugnance to graves and skulls, and to all that ghastliness which the Gothic mind loves to associate with the idea of death" (Hawthorne 22). However, this good-natured idea of Italy and Italians disappears within the first fifty pages of the novel when readers begin to see the other side of Italy. Both Donatello and Miriam have a revelatory experience in Italy, but, in this work, the experience for both is a negative one.

Nathaniel Hawthorne depicts Rome as a corrupt, dismal, and immoral city. The streets of Rome are dirty and scary, and Rome and all of Italy abound with vagrants, he adds (Hawthorne 68). He calls beggars the “present possessors of Italy” (Hawthorne 240). Hawthorne also makes many comparisons of the homes in Rome to the homes in America. Being from Massachusetts, Hawthorne says the homes in Italy do not have the same sort of hospitality that New England homes have with their neat lawns and big welcoming porches. “Everything, however sunny and luxuriant may be the scene around, is especially disheartening in the immediate neighborhood of an Italian home” (Hawthorne 232). He also says that these “cheerless houses” have “uncarpeted brick-floors, as dismal as the pavement of a tomb” (Hawthorne 292). We also find descriptions of homes that “frown inhospitably upon the traveler” in Mark Twain’s *The Innocents Abroad*.

Known for corruption even in the 1800s, Italy, according to Hawthorne, is a perfidious and tainted nation. He calls Rome a “populous and corrupt city” where money and prayers go hand in hand (Hawthorne 241-201). In this “dreary city,” police do little: “the Roman police have very little efficacy, except in the interest of the despotism of which it is a tool” (Hawthorne 317-318). His disapproval of the “dead and half-rotten city” and its inhabitants becomes even more evident when he says:

Here is a population, high and low, that had no genuine belief in virtue; and if they recognized any act as criminal they might throw off all care, remorse, and memory of it, by kneeling a little while at the confessional,

and rising unburthened, active, elastic, and cited by fresh appetite for the next ensuing sin (Hawthorne 320).

Hawthorne finds, in Italy, under the façade of piety, that:

religion jostles along side by side with business and sport, after a fashion of its own; and people are accustomed to kneel down and pray, or see others praying, between two fits of merriment, or between two sins (Hawthorne 120).

Art is also an important theme in Hawthorne's work; however, Hawthorne is not impressed with what so many others before him have gone to study. He finds "a deficiency of earnestness and absolute truth" in Italian artwork (Hawthorne 264). Although his character Donatello resembles a white marble faun statue, something pure and solid, Hawthorne reminds his readers that fauns are mythical spirits, thus suggesting that Donatello is not entirely human. In the end, in fact, Hawthorne has Donatello's spirit fall to evil.

The novel focuses mainly on Donatello's downfall after he has fallen in love with Miriam. A dark and spirit-like figure stalks Miriam until Donatello murders him. Hilda witnesses the crime which causes her deeply religious Puritan soul to become darkened. The once lighthearted and happy Donatello becomes depressed after having murdered Miriam's stalker. Until Hilda goes to confession to tell the priest what she has seen, she is extremely troubled. The knowledge of Donatello's crime leaves Hilda "sick at heart of Italian trickery which has uprooted whatever faith in man's integrity" (Hawthorne 254).

Hawthorne describes Carnival in Italy as do Stendhal and Goethe.

Carnival is extremely important in Italy and many areas of the country celebrate the holiday with entertainment, parades and day long parties. It is celebrated 40 days before Easter, just prior to the beginning of Lent. Traditionally, anything goes at Carnival. It is often a time that tourists like to enjoy as well. In *The Marble Faun*, during Carnival in Rome, Hawthorne writes:

Everybody seemed lawless; nobody was rude. If any reveler overstept the mark, it was sure to be no Roman, but an Englishman or an American; and even the rough play of this Gothic race was still softened by the insensible influence of a moral atmosphere more delicate, in some respects, than we breathe at home (Hawthorne 343).

*The Marble Faun* is a particularly valuable work in this itinerary of literary texts because it gives us the dark side of Italian culture. It eludes stereotypes of cheerful, robust, love-besotted, musical, and well-fed peasants in a constantly sunny land. Hawthorne's characters' Italian visit is a shocking and testing ordeal. Their vision of Italy is one of mystery, decadence, and at times even threat. In *The Marble Faun*, American tourists find themselves face to face with unexpected and dangerous menaces they have never before experienced and certainly did not expect to find in Italy.

*The Realist Perspectives of Henry James and Mark Twain*

Henry James was born in New York in 1843 and died in 1916. He moved to England in 1876. James spent a considerable amount of time abroad in Italy, which he used as setting for many of his short works of literature. James also



lived for a period of time in France. The writings James did abroad from 1872 to 1909 are contained in *Italian Hours*. Stories he based in Italy include *The Aspern Papers*, *Daily Miller*, *Roderick Hudson*, and *Princess Casamassima*. We see themes of seduction, deception, passion, mystery, and discovery in the works that James set in Italy.

Henry James portrays Italy and foreigners in a much different way than does Hawthorne. Being a realist, James bases his characters on everyday people as he explores the relationships between characters and their ability to choose their own destinies. He often uses the characters in his works “to exploit the conflict between European and American standards of conduct” (Huzzard 121). An important focus on class typifies his realist works, for example, *Daily Miller* and *The Aspern Papers* (Penrose).

*The Aspern Papers* is a novel about inheritance, but also about how the evidence of past lives can legitimately belong to someone who had nothing to do with those lives. James sets this work in Italy, more specifically Venice, because the evidence of the past is so clear in this city. In *The Aspern Papers*, the main character, a young man, is trying to get a hold of secret papers involving a love affair between the dead American poet Jeffrey Aspern and an older woman living in Venice, Juliana Bordereau. Juliana lives with her niece, Miss Tina, in a large, old Venetian palace. The main character, who narrates the story, says this about Juliana and her niece:

She herself had been established in Venice some fifteen years and had done a great deal of good there; but the circle of her benevolence had

never embraced the two shy, mysterious and, as was somehow supposed, scarcely respectable Americans- they were believed to have lost in their long exile all national quality, besides being as their name implied of some remoter French affiliation- who asked no favours and desired no attention (James 470).

The young man decides to pay an exorbitantly large amount of money to Juliana in order to be a boarder at her home and somehow get to these secret documents. During this time, her niece falls in love with this young man as he becomes close to her for his own calculated benefit. He tells Miss Tina he wants the notes because “they would be of such immense interest to the public, such immeasurable importance as a contribution to Jeffrey Aspern’s history” (James 523). The niece compromises her independence when she falls for the man’s tricks; later, however, when she ultimately discovers the man’s true intentions and her aunt burns the papers, Juliana asserts her own agency once and for all (James 469-564).

In both *The Aspern Papers* and *Daisy Miller*, James asserts the view that Americans are foolish for not appreciating and respecting the superiority of Europe to America. For example, the title character of *Daisy Miller* is a sociable, flirtatious, and care-free American girl from Schenectady, New York, whose actions and behavior are scrutinized harshly by all non-Americans she encounters abroad. Daisy is a headstrong, stubborn young woman who refuses to allow gentlemen to dictate to her. She goes against all convention in Europe and ultimately dies of fever in Rome. Her charming character and personality

illustrate the “vigor and innocence of life in the western world” (James 88), by which he means America. Many readers received the story as a “disloyal criticism of American manners and an outrage on American girlhood” (James 87).

Daisy is traveling with her mother and younger brother in Switzerland and Italy. During the summer in Switzerland she meets a 27-year-old American man, Winterbourne, who is studying in Geneva. Although Winterbourne knows his American cousins were “tremendous flirts,” he is surprised by Daisy’s flirtatiousness and American style (James 103). Winterbourne recounts that:

Some people had told him that, after all, American girls were exceedingly innocent; and others told him that, after all, they were not. He was inclined to think Miss Daily Miller was a flirt- a pretty American flirt. He had never, as yet, had any relations with young ladies of this category...he wondered what were the regular conditions and limitations of one’s intercourse with a pretty American flirt. It presently became apparent that he was on the way to learn (James 98).

But Winterbourne’s aunt, who he was visiting in Vevey, Switzerland, is not as keen about the American girl and refused to make her acquaintance. She calls Daisy and her family uncultivated, dreadful, and vulgar people after she sees them in Rome the following January (James 116).

Daisy’s passes the time in Italy with what Winterbourne’s aunt calls, “third-rate Italians” (James 115). Her behavior causes much talk as she goes about alone with gentlemen and brings them to people’s houses (James 116). On Winterbourne’s second visit to see his aunt in Rome, he calls upon Daisy and

realizes that she had made quite an impression on many Italian men. Her apparent disregard for Winterbourne's visit causes him to remember that:

a cynical compatriot had once told him that American women- the pretty ones, and this gave a largeness to the axiom- were at once the most exacting in the world and the least endowed with a sense of indebtedness (James 119).

Daisy brings Winterbourne on a stroll with herself and a man named Mr. Giovanelli who speaks English well and is known for his attraction to American girls. Winterbourne now realizes that, if Daisy were a nice girl, she would recognize that Mr. Giovanelli was not a gentleman at all but a "low-lived foreigner" (James 123). When Winterbourne advises Daisy to leave with him in order to save her reputation, she rankles, saying that it does not matter to her whether others find her behavior improper. Mrs. Walker, a woman of their societal rank whom both Winterbourne and Daisy know, later tells Winterbourne what Daisy has been doing:

"Everything that is not done here. Flirting with any man she could pick up; sitting in corners with mysterious Italians; dancing all the evening with the same partners; receiving visitors at eleven o'clock at night" (James 127).

Although Winterbourne defends Daisy's actions as resulting from her ignorance, Mrs. Walker tells Winterbourne that Daisy has gone too far and that he must try to get through to her. When Winterbourne subsequently tells Daisy that the "purely American custom" of flirting does not exist in Italy and that she must deal with natives according to their customs, not hers, Daisy says she sees no reason why

she should change her habits for them. She thus flies in the face of the Italian custom that holds it inappropriate for any unmarried young woman to go anywhere with a man without her mother as chaperone (James 131).

This work is central to our literary journey because it presents the difficulty foreigners experience when faced with Italian cultural norms. It also reveals how Italians perceived Americans, young women in particular, in James' day (– and in our own!).

Another American who traveled abroad as a “tourist” is Mark Twain. Twain differs from James in that he believes Americans are foolish for thinking that they should think of Europe and Europeans as superior to their descendants in the New World. Twain travels abroad with other Americans on a ship “Quaker City” in 1867. Along the way, they stop in Mediterranean places such as the islands of the Azores, the city of Tangier, France, Italy, and Greece. They also travel through the Holy Land and to Russia and Lebanon. In spite of such variety, Twain dedicates over one-fifth of his book to his time in Italy. His travel journal, *The Innocents Abroad*, begun only as a set of travel letters, was published in 1869. The San Francisco newspaper *Daily Alta California*, assigned Twain to write these letters while abroad and send them back for publication (“Reporting the Holy Land Excursion”).

Mark Twain's book, which is full of humor, sold many copies. He is ruthless at times at criticizing foreign peoples and the way they live. Like Henry James, Twain was also a realist. Characteristics of realism, such as depictions of everyday activities and experiences, are evident. The title of Twain's work, *The*

*Innocents Abroad*, offers a forgiving portrayal of many Americans who travel abroad. Twain, though he realizes he is just as ignorant as many of his fellow travelers, often criticizes the denseness of many of the Americans with whom he travels. By calling the work *The Innocents Abroad* (instead of, say, *The Ignorants Abroad*), Twain excuses the, in fact quite ignorant and even at times arrogant, behavior of many of these voyagers. The innocents in the work, the travelers, simply do not know any better.

He remains critical, nonetheless, of such Americans, and uses sarcasm to drive his criticism home. For example, when one of his fellow travelers, Dan, yells at an Italian to bring him soap, and, seeing that the Italian does not understand him, starts speaking slower and louder, another traveler says to him:

“Dan, how often have we told you that these foreigners cannot understand English? Why will you not depend on us? Why will you not tell *us* what you want, and let us ask for it in the language of the country? It would save us a great deal of the humiliation your reprehensible ignorance causes us. I will address this person in his mother tongue: ‘Here, cospetto! Corpo di Bacco! Sacramento! Solferino! Soap you son of a gun!’ Dan, if you would let *us* talk for you, you would never expose your ignorant vulgarity” (Twain 134-135).

Twain constantly complains of the hygiene practices among Europeans. Finding the lack of soap abroad to be especially upsetting, he began to carry it with him (Twain 134).

In another instance, while out to dinner, Twain evokes once again the stereotypical characterization that many foreigners make of Americans. He says, “We were troubled a little at dinner today by the conduct of an American, who talked very loudly and coarsely and laughed boisterously where all others were so quiet and well behaved” (Twain 74). Noting that the American was drinking, Twain later says that one would never see a drunken Italian (Twain 134). In this way, Twain denounces the practice of traveling abroad because he believes it can never be enjoyable when Europeans consider Americans to be innately foolish individuals. My own time in Italy has shown me that the description Twain uses to characterize this man is similar to the way many Italians describe Americans today.

Throughout *The Innocents Abroad*, Twain makes an ongoing comparison of the old with the new, clearly favoring the new (America) over the old (Europe). In Twain’s eyes, the world needs something new and that something is the United States. All that the travelers see on their expedition is old. America, however, is new, according to Twain, who prefers its modernity to the traditional lifestyles of Europe. His section on Venice exemplifies this disapproval of the old as he treats the canalled city as dirty, decaying, and shabby (Twain 490). Twain deepens the significance of his old/new contrast when looking at works by Leonardo da Vinci and noting that artists often copy famous paintings:

And as usual, I could not help noticing how superior the copies were to the original, that is, to my inexperienced eye. Wherever you find a Raphael, a Rubens, a Michelangelo, a Carracci, or a da Vinci (and we see them every

day), you find artists copying them, and the copies are always the handsomest. Maybe the originals were handsome when they were new, but they are not now (Twain 137).

The only time Twain approves of Italian art is when he says the newness of the statues at a cemetery in Genoa is beautiful (Twain 123).

Twain is briefly approving of architecture in Italy for its utilitarian aspects. He describes the buildings of Genoa, for example, as extremely sturdy, saying “walls that are as thick as an ordinary American doorway is high cannot crumble” (Twain 121). At the same time, however, he also describes these solid homes as a “dungeon” and a “forbidding shell,” thus revealing the incongruity of his impressions (Twain 120). (We note that, in this, Twain resembles Nathaniel Hawthorne, who describes Italian homes as inhospitable and unwelcoming [Hawthorne 325].)

Twain also notes the beauty of Italian women. He finds the fair-skinned, blue-eyed, and dark-haired women of Genoa extremely charming and fashionable. He says:

There may be prettier women in Europe, but I doubt it. The population of Genoa is 120,000; two-thirds of these are women, I think, and at least two-thirds of the women are beautiful. They are as dressy and as tasteful and as graceful as they could possibly be without being angels (Twain 116).

Yet, for Twain, not all women of Italy are beautiful, unattractive female beards are common, he notes (Twain 142).



Twain devotes much time to describing the grandeur of the churches in Italy. Because of their great number and their splendor, Twain says churches are Italy's specialty (Twain 118-119). He says that while in Italy, guides tell him everything basically in every city was made by Michelangelo, and he jokes that Michelangelo created Italy altogether. He says every guide in Italy speaks of Michelangelo, and rather than be moved by all that Michelangelo achieved in his lifetime, Twain says he was glad when he learned that Michelangelo was, in fact, dead (Twain 208). Twain mocks the guides by calling each and every one of them Ferguson (Twain 274). Even at this time, he is noting the exaggeration and extent to which guides boast about their country.

From Rome southward Twain sees the Italians as ignorant and superstitious. In Rome he says:

What can I discover? Nothing. Nothing whatsoever. One charm of travel dies here. But if I were only a Roman! If, added to my own, I could be gifted with modern Roman sloth, modern Roman superstition, and modern Roman boundlessness of ignorance (Twain 191).

After Rome the Quaker City sails to Naples where their ship is quarantined because the Neapolitans did not want to contract cholera. Twain, however, thinks they should not worry because they are already filthy and he angers at the suspicious attitude of the Italian police (Twain 222-228). Earlier, Twain goes so far as to say that the people in one small Italian town are so ignorant that all they do is sleep and eat and have no idea the world turns round. He says these people

were not wise or respectable and wonders how they can “consent to be so degraded and happy” (Twain 149).

Twain satirizes tourists who, as a group, “cared nothing much about Europe,” and learn from guidebooks what they should learn by seeing and experiencing things (Twain 471). In his last letter to the editor of the newspaper, Twain summarizes his voyage on the Quaker City. He says passengers who had not traveled before made a scene everywhere they went because of their uncultivated instincts. As travel was a novelty to most of them, they wanted people to know they were from America (Twain 469). Twain makes note of their behavior but also justifies it when he says:

The people stared at us everywhere, and we stared at them. We generally made them feel rather small, too, before we got done with them, because we bore down on them with America’s greatness until we crushed them. And yet we took kindly to the manners and customs, and especially to the fashions of the various people we visited (Twain 470).

Twain spends much of his time abroad comparing foreign sites to places in America. Famously, he often compares bodies of water to his favorite lake, Lake Tahoe. While at Lake Como, he says:

That is all very well, except the “clear” part of the lake. It certainly is clearer than a great many lakes, but how dull its waters are compared with the wonderful transparence of Lake Tahoe! (Twain 146-147).

Twain makes references to places like Nevada, New Jersey, New York City, and Salt Lake City in order to give his American readers something with which to

compare what he writes about on his travels. He makes note of the fact that the state of Pennsylvania is bigger than King Solomon's entire empire (Twain 433). Most of the comparisons Twain makes show the superiority of the American counterpart. Such comparisons seem to hinder his experience abroad, especially in Italy. In other works described here, characters revelatory experiences occur because everything around them is unusual and they are forced to see the world from a new perspective. Twain cannot break away from his conviction that all things American, or "new," are superior. Thus his experience abroad appears more superficial than that of Stendhal, Goethe, for example, or Forster's or James' characters'.

Twain's book is important in this analysis because it gives us possible reasons why Americans are stereotyped by foreigners in the way that they are. For example, the perception of Americans as disrespectful and ignorant people may derive from Twain's own unfamiliarity with the Renaissance, which he had previously thought was a man's name (Twain 172). Or it may come from the little appreciation for the foreign fashions Americans' see abroad yet their hypocritical enthusiasm to acquire them for bragging rights at home (Twain 167). The stereotypes may also come from Americans' complete disregard for the rules, which they do not think apply to them, such as the American who climbs an Egyptian sphinx and tries to chip a piece of the granite as a souvenir (Twain 458). Twain pokes fun at the pretentiousness of the Americans he travels with and their façade of being cultured and worldly. Although he is also to blame, he notes that

it is “not pleasant to see an American thrusting his nationality in foreign lands” (Twain 168).

The letters Twain wrote for the *Daily Alta California* newspaper and their subsequent publication in book form may well have influenced American opinions of European life across the Atlantic. The value system Twain establishes in *The Innocents Abroad* is radically different from that of the other authors because he goes against the whole ideology of the Grand Tour. Americans who had often been persuaded to make the journey after reading works about travel during this time may see now have seen the journey as an unimportant one after Twain’s work. His criticism of the entire system makes it obvious to readers that traveling abroad is simply a waste of time.

#### *Italy as a Place for Lovers*

The next stop on our literary tour is E.M Forster. *A Room with a View* is Forster’s third novel and was released in 1908. Forster wrote five novels, three biographical studies, numerous short stories and essays, and a guide book, much of which dealt with the attitude of English tourists as in *A Room with a View*. During his early life, Forster was surrounded by strong-willed women, and many of the characters in his works portray such women. After graduating from King’s College, Cambridge, Forster traveled to Italy on vacations with his mother. A modest, mysterious man, Forster was loyal to but also critical of his friends if they were insensitive. He came from a comfortable middle class world and enjoyed writing but did not consider himself a great novelist. He died in 1970 after 70 years of active writing (Jhabvala).

*A Room with a View* follows the pattern we have noticed from early pilgrimage to 20<sup>th</sup> century novels here, as its main character, Lucy Honeychurch, discovers an inner truth after traveling to Italy. While visiting Florence, Lucy begins to “burgeon under the sun and beauty of the blazing sun and blue skies” (Jhabvala), even though she is being chaperoned by her much older cousin. Aware of her privileged place in society, Lucy realizes that she is encountering a cultural phenomenon that is new to her. The book looks at the Edwardian lifestyle at home and abroad and the atmosphere of intelligent English society. Early in the novel Forster writes:

Over such trivialities as these many a valuable hour may slip away, and the traveler who has gone to Italy to study the tactile values of Giotto, or the corruption of the Papacy, may return remembering nothing but the blue sky and the men and women who live under it (Forester 14).

This is precisely what happens to his main character. Lucy Honeychurch has been sent to Italy with her cousin/chaperone to study, to become cultured and refined. [At the end of the novel, Lucy rejects the upper class British attitude through her marriage to George Emerson and is able to truly find herself.] Lucy first meets the distinctly unaristocratic Emersons, father and son, while at the Pension Bertolini in Florence when the elder Emerson kindly offers Lucy and Charlotte the room with a view he and his son have been assigned. The Emersons are eccentric and of a class lower than that of Ms. Honeychurch, but Forster associates them with passion and freedom, and thus with what Italy offers. When Lucy witnesses a murder in the Piazza Signoria, handsome, young, George Emerson is there to

comfort her and lend support as she faints. Thus begins Lucy's transformation. In the movie adaptation of the novel Lucy remarks "Italians are so kind, so loveable, and yet so violent at the same time" (Jhabvala). After the murder, the souvenirs Lucy had recently bought are stained with blood. One of these souvenirs is a photo of Botticelli's Birth of Venus of which her cousin Charlotte disapproved because of the nudity depicted (Forster 40). This detail emphasizes the freedom that Lucy is beginning to feel because of some very unexpected effects of her visit to Italy.

The Emersons treat Italians as equals, in contrast to the way Charlotte Honeychurch and her group of travelers relate to them. The Emersons go to Italy not just for its art and landscape, but also for its human culture, its way of life, and its people (Doll). Charlotte sees the Italians almost as a threat and does not allow Lucy to go out alone in Florence (Forester 38). In one scene, the group is traveling into the countryside by a carriage driven by an Italian. The driver brings his lover with him and, while driving, the two of them flirt and kiss, distracting the driver from the road. Their English tour guide, the Reverend Cuthbert Eager, denounces the driver and forces his mistress to leave the carriage immediately. Mr. Emerson responds by telling Mr. Eager to leave them alone and then asks Mr. Eager:

"Do we find happiness so often that we should turn it off the box when it happens to sit there? To be driven by lovers- a king might envy us, and if we part them it's more like sacrilege than anything I know" (Forester 62).

This passage reflects the stifled attitude the English have toward the expression of love and passion to which the Italians are accustomed. After the girl leaves the carriage, Mr. Eager cries “Victory at last!” and is met with disapproval by Mr. Emerson who says, “It is not victory, it is defeat. You have parted two people who were happy” (Forester 63). Mr. Emerson represents the idea of true love that we see discovered so often in the novels here. While picnicking in the Tuscan fields, Lucy and George Emerson come across one another, and George plants a kiss on Lucy before she can speak. Charlotte, who sees the kiss, immediately decides that Lucy must flee for Rome and then home to England. Charlotte’s prudishness and character typifies the cautious and distrustful attitude that many English travelers have in *A Room with a View*.

The British traveler must always carry his Baedeker for fear of becoming lost in a foreign city. The characters’ reliance on this travel guide symbolizes their dependence on others who have made the trip before them. Mr. Eager, a Florentine resident, tells Lucy:

“If you will not think me rude, we residents sometimes pity you poor tourists not a little—handed about like a parcel of goods from Venice to Florence, from Florence to Rome, living herded together in pensions or hotels, quite unconscious of anything that is outside Baedeker” (Forester 60).

The sensuous Miss Lavish, who considers herself a student of human nature, agrees, saying “The narrowness and superficiality of the Anglo-Saxon tourist is nothing less than a menace” (Forester 60). Reverend Beebe travels to Italy for

holiday and, like other Britishers abroad, fails to understand the Italian people, seeing them as almost a threat. He says:

“The Italians are a most unpleasant people. They pry everywhere, they see everything, and they know what we want before we know it ourselves. We are at their mercy. They read our thoughts, they foretell our desires. From the cab-driver down to Giotto, they turn us inside out, and I resent it. Yet in their hearts of hearts they are- how superficial! They have no conception of the intellectual life.” (Forster 33)

Lucy returns to England, rejecting the passion Italy revealed to her. She becomes engaged to the superficial, uninteresting Cecil Vyse. Cecil has had a restrained experience abroad and now, dreams of his and Lucy’s children being brought up “among honest country folk for freshness” and sent to Italy “for subtlety.” (Forster 122) It is not until she has spent time with Cecil back at home that Lucy realizes she has returned to England with new eyes. Italy had offered Lucy “her own soul.” (Forster 110) This new “view” on life that Italy has given her allows Lucy to see the sensual beauty in everyday life. She begins to see more beauty even in England and starts to appreciate the easy-going and light-hearted atmosphere that she had discovered in Italy and in the Emersons. Forster writes:

She liked music, but how much better tennis seemed. How much better to run about in comfortable clothes than to sit at the piano and feel girt under the arms. Once more music appeared to her the employment of a child.  
(Forster 155-156)



Lucy finally accepts the inner truth she learned in Italy– her passionate love for George Emerson– and abandons her class decorum to marry him, happily for them both.

*Passion and Truth Emerging*

*Roman Fever* by Edith Wharton is our next stop on this literary tour. This wealthy, American woman wrote over forty books and stories during her lifetime. Wharton was married three times and often in her works explores the theme of women who live to please men, women's sexuality, and women's often constricted emotions. Born in 1862, Wharton traveled at a young age with her family both to Florence and Rome. She later traveled to Italy through Tuscany and Lombardy each spring with her husband's family. Henry James was a good friend who critiqued much of her work and often traveled with her. After having an affair and divorcing her first husband in 1913, Wharton lived permanently in France, where she died in 1937 (Campbell).

In Edith Wharton's *Roman Fever*, as in Forster's *A Room with a View*, Italy is once again the site of revelation. *Roman Fever* is set in Rome in the 1920's, where the friendship, jealousy, and rivalry of its two main characters, Mrs. Slade and Mrs. Ansley, all begin. Like the characters in her story, Wharton was a part of New York's high society who enjoyed traveling abroad and also being a good wife and mother, though infidelity posed problems for her. An important theme in the book, in fact, is infidelity, which Wharton dealt with in her personal life.

Italy acts as a liberating catalyst for these two women, no longer young, to express to each other how they have felt for many years. In the second part of the story Wharton says:

It seemed as though, to both, there was a relief in laying down their somewhat futile activities in the presence of the vast Memento Mori which faced them. Mrs. Slade sat quite still, her eyes fixed on the golden slope of the Palace of the Caesars, and after a while Mrs. Ansley ceased to fidget with her bag, and she too sank into meditation. Like many intimate friends, the two ladies had never before had occasion to be silent together, and Mrs. Ansley was slightly embarrassed by what seemed, after so many years, a new stage in their intimacy, and one which she did not yet know how to deal. (Wharton 15)

The story consists of a single conversation, during which the two women's long-held secrets come to light as they sit on a terrace overlooking the ruins of the Colosseum in Rome. Alida Slade had been engaged to Delphin with whom Grace Ansley fell in love. Alida's jealousy took over one night, and she wrote a letter to Grace signing Delphin's name and telling Grace to meet him at the Colosseum at night. Alida's hope was that, out in the night-time chill, Grace might catch Roman fever. Although Grace is now surprised to find that Alida had written the note years earlier, Alida is even more surprised to learn that Grace had answered Delphin's letter, met him that night, and conceived their daughter, Barbara. Alida is jealous not only of Grace and Delphin's affair, but also of Barbara, who she sees as much more outgoing and brilliant than she herself (Wharton 14).

Alida also notes the differences in what Rome means for different generations. The two talk about how their mothers used to scare them with a story when they were young. Mrs. Slade says:

“I always used to think that our mothers had a much more difficult job than our grandmothers. When Roman fever stalked the streets it must have been comparatively easy to gather in the girls at the danger hour; but when you and I were young, with such beauty calling us, and the spice of disobedience thrown in, and no worse risk than catching cold during the cool hour after sunset, the mothers used to be put to it to keep us in- didn’t they?” (Wharton 16)

As the two continue to knit and talk about Italian matches for their daughters, they reminisce about their youthful fear of catching Roman fever. Their older female relatives would frighten them with stories of the cold which many times lovers would face just to see one another (Wharton 18-19).

In the story, the physical illness called Roman fever takes on another meaning. It can signify, metaphorically, the dark side of Italy, the passion that took hold of Grace and jeopardized her friendship with Alida. In Rome, Grace had betrayed her friend by visiting her fiancé at the Coliseum. In Rome, Alida had sent Grace out in the middle of the night so that she might fall ill.

Passion had overtaken both Grace and Alida just as it had done to Donatello in *The Marble Faun*. *Roman Fever* casts a gaze forward, as well, to Harold Pinter’s play, *Betrayal*, which also deals with adultery, jealousy, and passion. Most importantly, in each of these works Italy is where the truth comes

out; here, between these two women. Wharton depicts Italy as a location of truth both erotic and decadent. *Roman Fever* hints at the dark side of truth, and thus joins the itinerary that includes *The Marble Faun*, *A Room with a View*, and *Betrayal*.

#### *Love and Lust Let Loose*

The English playwright, Harold Pinter, wrote over two dozen plays. Born in London in 1930, Pinter traveled to Italy as an adult. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2005 and died in 2008 (Wardrop). His play, *Betrayal*, from 1978, is based on his own personal infidelity. Pinter was married to Antonia Fraser but had an affair with Joan Bakewell and another American woman during the marriage. Pinter and Fraser had both been married to other people when they met (Cooke). In 1983, *Betrayal* was made into an Oscar-nominated film.

*Betrayal* would not exist without the well-established literary tradition that views Italy as a place where pilgrim visitors discover intimate and erotic truths. The play is structured in reverse chronology, beginning in 1977 and ending in 1968, and takes place in London and the Venetian lagoon. We see that Robert and Emma are married with two children. Robert's best friend, Jerry, was best man at Robert and Emma's wedding, and the two men are publishers who have known each other for a great deal of time. Jerry is married to Judith, and they also have two children. Jerry and Emma have a seven-year-long affair and take a flat together in order to have a place to meet. During the fifth year of this affair, Emma confesses it to her husband (Robert) but does not tell Jerry that she has done so. Jerry thus does not know that Robert knows, and the affair continues for

two more years. Meanwhile, Robert has been cheating on Emma, and Emma finds out only at the end of the play.

How does this chronologically convoluted tale of adulteries possibly depend on the literary tradition I've been describing here? Pinter's genius— and his keen awareness of this very tradition— has him set every revelation of the characters' extra-marital affairs in Italy or at a place that serves as a stand-in for Italy. This can be seen in scene three, in 1975, for example, when Emma and Robert have decided to end their affair at their flat and are discussing what they are to do with all the furnishings. They stand looking around in their flat, commenting that it is not a home and never was a home. Emma notices the tablecloth she bought in Venice for the flat and says it has now become useless. "It's ridiculous," she claims, making reference to their situation. The tablecloth, being from Italy, signals this as the moment of truth between Jerry and Emma when Emma says:

"It's a waste. Nobody comes here. I just can't bear to think about it, actually. Just...empty. All day and night. Day after day and night after night. I mean the crockery and the curtains and the bedspread and everything. And the tablecloth I brought from Venice" (Pinter 196).

Later in the play (and earlier in its fictional time), while Emma and Robert are on vacation in Venice in 1973, the truth is again revealed. They had gone to Venice six months after their marriage and still had fond memories of their visit to the island of Torcello in the lagoon. Emma is reading a book she says she enjoys that had been, unbeknownst to her, published by Jerry. Robert tells her he

declined to publish that very book because the subject was betrayal. Emma disagrees and tells him that she cannot agree because she had yet to finish reading it. Robert continues to ramble and tells Emma that there was a note for her at the front desk and that the Italians at American Express tried to give it to him to give to her because they assumed, because Emma and Robert have the same last name, that they were married. Robert says he was “amazed” that these “free and easy” Italians suggested he take Emma’s letter:

“I mean, just because my name is Downs and your name is Downs doesn’t mean that we’re the Mr. and Mrs. Downs that they, in their laughing Mediterranean way, assume we are. We could be, and in fact are vastly more likely to be, total strangers. So let’s say I, whom they laughingly assume to be your husband, had taken the letter, having declared myself to be your husband but in truth being a total stranger, and opened it, and read it, out of nothing more than idle curiosity, and then thrown it in a canal, you would never have received it and would have been deprived of your legal right to open your own mail, and all because of Venetian *je m’en foutisme*.” (Pinter 218)

Robert tells Emma this elaborate story because the letter is from Jerry and it has made him suspicious. Robert reminds Emma that the first time he took her to Venice she fell in love with it. After having suspected her affair with Jerry, he asks Emma:

“How many times have we been to Torcello? Twice. I remember how you loved it, the first time I took you there. You fell in love with it. That was

about ten years ago, wasn't it? About...six months after we were married.

Yes. Do you remember? I wonder if you'll like it as much tomorrow.”

(Pinter 220)

Now, Emma realizes that Robert knows about the affair and tells Robert she and Jerry have been having an affair for five years and that they have a flat together. Thus, the first time Emma tells the truth and admits to her husband that she has been cheating on him occurs in Venice (Pinter 218-223).

Another instance of truth about the affair comes at an Italian restaurant in London the week after Robert and Emma have returned from Venice. Jerry and Robert are having lunch, and Jerry asks Robert how the Venetian vacation was. Robert tells Jerry that while he and Emma vacationed he took a trip to Torcello alone and that it was the “highpoint” of the whole trip (Pinter 247). Thus, Jerry learns the truth. Emma had lied to him, saying they had not gone to Torcello because of a speedboat strike, but Robert now tells him he did in fact take a speedboat there by himself and spent his time reading Yeats. Robert tells Jerry he was truly happy in Torcello and that he wished he could have stayed there. The tension between the two men builds as Robert becomes increasingly disturbed knowing that Jerry has most likely already heard about their trip to Venice from Emma. Although Robert does not outwardly tell Jerry that he knows of his and Emma's affair, Jerry seems to pick up on the awkwardness of the conversation (Pinter 246-252).

*Further Literary Analysis*

These works are only a handful of the numerous writings that have defined perceptions and expectations for foreigners in Italy. Other works include *Death in Venice* by Horace Mann and *Pictures from Italy* by Charles Dickens.

### **AMERICANS ABROAD TODAY AND THE AMANDA KNOX TRIAL**

As I myself have observed, studying abroad can be a life-changing experience for students. Being forced to live on one's own in a foreign country is a growth-inducing challenge. We will stop our literary itinerary here in order to consider a real-life event as it relates to Americans' expectations in Italy and Italians' reactions to American students in their midst. Consider, if you will, it against the backdrop of the literary tradition I have examined so far. After all, literature may reflect life, but it also conditions it.

Although many students' experiences differ, unfortunately the stereotypical behavior of Americans abroad in Italy has been anything but refined. We can see this dramatically in the recent murder trial of the American student in Perugia, Amanda Knox. When judges handed down Amanda Knox's sentence in December of 2009, it seemed as though the Italian justice system had had enough of students seemingly disrespecting their country with offensive behavior.

Amanda Knox received no special treatment because of her powerful country of origin. The Italian media had a field day with this case, while at the same time hardly any mention of it appeared in the American media until the end of the trial drew near. Not only did the Italian media get a chance to let their antagonistic feelings about Americans studying in their midst come out in full during the



course of the trial, but many European journalists made damning judgments about Amanda Knox as well.

Amanda Knox went to study during her own Grand Tour for a year in Perugia, Italy in 2007. As do many American students in Italy, she likely expected “a tranquil semester or so abroad that has become the modern equivalent of the Grand Tour” (Fisher). She went to study languages and to become cultured, as had many students (and tourists and pilgrims) before her. A Seattle native, Amanda was a student at the University of Washington. In Perugia, she shared a flat with a British student named Meredith Kercher. On November 1, 2007, police found Meredith Kercher dead, her body bloody from a knife wound across her neck. Prosecutors put Knox, her Italian boyfriend, Raffaele Sollecito, Kercher, and an African man, Rudy Guede, at the crime scene. The Italian police said the four had become involved in a sex game which ended in Kercher's death. However, after finding traces of what they say was Knox's DNA on the murder weapon and Sollecito's DNA on a piece of Kercher's bra clasp, all evidence pointing to Knox as being involved in the murder has been sketchy. Prosecutors say Knox and Sollecito were at the crime scene. 22-year-old Amanda Knox now faces a 26-year prison sentence while her Italian ex-boyfriend, Raffaele Sollecito, is facing 25 years in prison. Rudy Guede was tried before both Knox and Sollecito and got 30 years (Oloffson). A week before Kercher's murder, Rudy Guede had been arrested in Milan “after having broken into a nursery school, carrying a knife and items stolen from a Perugia law office” (Burleigh). However, prosecutors point to a statement Amanda made to the Italian police when they

asked her to explain the situation if she had, hypothetically, been at the flat that night. Knox incriminated herself when she said it was her boss, a bar owner, that killed Kercher and that she “thought she might have been inside the house listening to her friend's final screams” (Burleigh). Later, Knox said she made events up because Italian police physically and verbally abused her. At this point in her questioning, four days after the murder, she had not been aware that she was a suspect in the case (Burleigh). The family of Amanda Knox is appealing the verdict and will likely bring up the issue of negative media coverage as influencing the jury’s decision to convict Knox.

Supporters of Amanda, her family, and her defense team have been quick to point out the shoddy investigation of the case and the lack of evidence against Knox. They also say contamination of evidence was an important factor, especially in the DNA found on the knife and bra clasp that was too small to be verifiable. Prosecutor for the Kercher family, Giuliano Mignini, said in court that more than 10 preliminary judges and magistrates, all presumably Italian, were in agreement with his theory that Knox was the killer as he tried to convince jurors that the defense did not hold up. Mignini has been criticized by the defense for misconduct and intimidation. Because of the importance of honor and reputation in Italy, it would not look good for the Italian authorities to back down and “admit that their original theory of the case was bogus.” (Henneberger) A writer for the *New York Times*, Timothy Egan, wrote a commentary on the case, titled “An Innocent Abroad,” in which he discusses the fact that had this case taken place in the United States, “any fair-minded jury would have thrown it out months ago.”

(Egan) The “innocent” in this case, is Amanda Knox. This writer said that his daughter, also from Seattle, was studying abroad in Italy at the same time. He writes, “after the tabloid fallout, any female exchange student from Seattle was suddenly cast in a dark light.” (Egan)

The Italian and British media made Amanda out to be a sex-crazed, cold-blooded murderer. They even used nicknames for her like “Foxy Knoxy” and “angel-faced killer.” TIME magazine reported that the name “Foxy Knoxy” was given to Amanda for her skills on the soccer field when she was younger.

(Oloffson) The United Kingdom’s *Daily Mail* also published negative reports on Knox’s character. In an article posted in November of 2007, journalist Sharon Churcher asserts that the reason Knox murdered Kercher was because of the competitive nature she had with women starting after her mother’s remarriage to a man 12 years her senior. The article references Knox’s former romances and even mentions her having sex with a man on a train identified only by his first name.

(Churcher) One journalist from TIME who is also writing a book on the case, Nina Burleigh, wrote, in two different articles for the magazine, that:

“Family and friends insist she’s just a granola-crunching athlete and honor student from Seattle who has, through bad luck, become the poster child for the perils that await American girls caught up in the dark side of Italy.”

And,

“For Americans since Nathaniel Hawthorne, Perugia has been a disorienting place, with steep, winding alleys leading to brick dead ends or unexpected sky and mountain vistas.” (Burleigh)

This dark side Nina Burleigh talks about is a theme that has been previously well explored by travelers to Italy, as we have seen above here.

Because of all the negative attention Amanda Knox received in the European press, some say Knox did not get a fair trial. After Knox's arrest, Italian reporters scraped up all they could on Knox, posting drunken videos and information from her MySpace page. The jury was not screened for bias and was not sequestered. Its members thus were exposed to prejudiced media reports throughout the trial. Senator Maria Cantwell from Amanda's home state of Washington has been in touch with Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi about the possibility that Amanda had a prejudiced jury and was harmed by anti-Americanism. Nina Burleigh says media headlines like 'Sex Game Gone Wrong' and 'Drug Fueled Sex Game' in the foreign press played an important role in shaping public opinion (Vargas and James). A reporter in Rome, Barbie Latza Nadeau, is also writing a book on the case titled *Angel Face: The Real Story of Student Killer Amanda Knox*, which will be released at a date coinciding with Amanda's filed conviction appeal filed in April of 2010. (Boog) Because the author is obviously biased against Knox, I have no doubt that the themes seen in *The Marble Faun* of murder, passion, and darkness will again appear. The release of this book will only complicate opinions during Knox's appeal process.

Before I went abroad to study in Florence I had not heard of the murder. I also did not hear about it while I was in Florence. I was only made aware of the case after returning to the States, where I followed the media reports. What I was aware of, however, during my own stay in Italy, was the reputation American

students had abroad. This reputation was anything but squeaky clean. According to Italians, Americans drink too much, party too much, eat too much, and are too loud. For international diplomacy relations, this reputation does not bode well. After many years of disrespectful students coming to study, or party, it makes sense that the American student abroad does not deserve special treatment. National Public Radio did a story about the damaged American student reputation, especially for women in Florence. Who is to blame? It may be the 80% of females who study abroad and go out every night, half-dressed– according to local standards, to drink until drunk. These students make a nuisance and treat their time abroad as an extended spring break. (Poggioli) The stereotype of the American party girl abroad makes some, even myself at times, embarrassed to be American.

This stereotype is not a new one. As previously mentioned, the American girl abroad has been characterized in both literature and American popular culture. Most notably, in Henry James *Daisy Miller*, the stereotype of the American girl as a flirt was fixed in place. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as American films and TV series began to be exported to European countries, this stereotype became even more defined. Films such as “Gentlemen Prefer Blondes,” “Roman Holiday,” and even recent films like “Love Actually” have shown American women as loose, fun-loving, highly sexual, carefree party girls. (Javetski and Escobar) For many Italians, the only perceptions and ideas they have of Americans is from this type of media. The media companies and entertainment industry in the U.S., including Hollywood films, make a huge amount of their

profit from sales overseas. U.S. productions have dominated cinemas and television sets since the 1950s. Today Italians see images of American girls in reality shows on MTV and VH1 that portray them as teenage mothers, drunk college students, or loud, ignorant members of American society. (Javetski and Escobar)

## **A POSTCARD HOME**

### *Conclusion*

After this real-life excursus, we end our travels with a post card to home...

*Dear Mom,*

*Looking back at my literary tour through Italy, I realize I have learned a great deal about the place from what others have written and thought about it before me. It was fascinating to me to learn that, before my time, others, too, great writers, in fact, felt that the main charm of Europe was the comfort it offered. An Italian-style separation between work and play allows people to truly live their lives the way they would like. The raw passion felt among these people was also something I envied. Truth, good and bad, always came to light and genuineness was the norm. My study of these wonderful works has given me a deeper understanding of the way Italians view me and my fellow Americans in their country. My respect for the Italian culture and its people has grown tremendously after my having taken this second journey. Now, if only I could go back...*

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