

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910305551403321
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Titolo	Out of Place : Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity // Ian Baucom
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Princeton, NJ : , : Princeton University Press, , [1999] ©1999
ISBN	1-282-75369-X 9786612753695 1-4008-2303-X
Edizione	[Core Textbook]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (260 p.)
Disciplina	820.9/358
Soggetti	English literature - History and criticism - 20th century National characteristics, English, in literature - History and criticism - 19th century Commonwealth literature (English) - History and criticism English literature Group identity in literature Decolonization in literature Imperialism in literature Colonies in literature Race in literature
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- CONTENTS -- ACKNOWLEDGMENTS -- INTRODUCTION. Locating English Identity -- CHAPTER ONE. The House of Memory: John Ruskin and the Architecture of Englishness -- CHAPTER TWO. "British to the Backbone": On Imperial Subject-Fashioning -- CHAPTER THREE. The Path from War to Friendship: E. M. Forster's Mutiny Pilgrimage -- CHAPTER FOUR. Put a Little English on It: C.L.R. James and England's Field of Play -- CHAPTER FIVE. Among the Ruins: Topographies of Postimperial Melancholy -- CHAPTER SIX. The Riot of Englishness: Migrancy, Nomadism, and the Redemption of the Nation -- Afterword: Something Rich and Strange -- Notes -- Index

In a 1968 speech on British immigration policy, Enoch Powell insisted that although a black man may be a British citizen, he can never be an Englishman. This book explains why such a claim was possible to advance and impossible to defend. Ian Baucom reveals how "Englishness" emerged against the institutions and experiences of the British Empire, rendering English culture subject to local determinations and global negotiations. In his view, the Empire was less a place where England exerted control than where it lost command of its own identity. Analyzing imperial crisis zones--including the Indian Mutiny of 1857, the Morant Bay uprising of 1865, the Amritsar massacre of 1919, and the Brixton riots of 1981--Baucom asks if the building of the empire completely refashioned England's narratives of national identity. To answer this question, he draws on a surprising range of sources: Victorian and imperial architectural theory, colonial tourist manuals, lexicographic treatises, domestic and imperial cricket culture, country house fetishism, and the writings of Ruskin, Kipling, Ford Maddox Ford, Forster, Rhys, C.L.R. James, Naipaul, and Rushdie--and representations of urban riot on television, in novels, and in parliamentary sessions. Emphasizing the English preoccupation with place, he discusses some crucial locations of Englishness that replaced the rural sites of Wordsworthian tradition: the Morant Bay courthouse, Bombay's Gothic railway station, the battle grounds of the 1857 uprising in India, colonial cricket fields, and, last but not least, urban riot zones.
