

Visualizing Race in (Post)colonial Italian Cinema

Rutgers University
Department of Italian
Italian 560: 674
Spring 2013
Thursdays, 4:30-7:10
84 College Avenue (2nd Floor), Graduate Student Lounge

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Office Hours: M 1-2pm; Th. 1:30-2:30pm, and by appointment.



In a nation-state like Italy which, unlike Britain and France, did not experience the immigration of significant numbers of racially marked people until the 1980s, the racialized body has been relatively under-represented on the Italian screen. And yet, despite its rarity (particularly when compared to other national filmic traditions), racial representation in Italian cinema is as old as Italy's cinematic tradition itself. This course will examine the representation of racialized bodies in a selection of narrative films produced in Italy over the course of the past century. Films are drawn from three historical thresholds that are critical to constructing the Italian racial imagination: 1) Fascist colonial conquest in Libya and East Africa; 2) "decolonization" in the post-WWII era and 3) contemporary responses to immigration. Our readings will be guided by critical works of early film theory on physiognomy and the face, feminist film theoretical works on the body and desire, as well as postcolonial film criticism on race. Some questions that will shape our inquiry are: what are the contours of Italy's tradition of cinematic representations of race? What is unique about Italy's brand of racial representation? How do racialized bodies relate to, complicate, or overlap with the sexualized or classed bodies? What are some of the collective fantasies engendered by Italian films about race? Instruction and readings in English; films in Italian (several without English subtitles).

Films on Reserve at the Media Center (Douglass Campus).

Readings available on Sakai.

Course requirements and grade distribution:

Participation: 25%

Regular attendance and active participation are required. Students who make the most of the seminar time by posing thoughtful questions, engaging directly with the texts assigned, and listening attentively to their classmates will receive excellent participation grades.

Two in-class presentations: 25%

Each student will choose two topics and/or texts from the syllabus to present to the class during the weekly seminar. The presentations are meant to be thought provoking and to generate a group discussion on the week's film and/or readings. Students may choose to do independent research in line with their own research interests, but they must be sure to present any new material to clearly to the group, and they must draw explicit connections to the assigned viewings/readings. During the time allotted to each student for his/her presentation (roughly 30 minutes each), the student is responsible for presenting an interpretation, a reading, and/or additional relevant information, followed by a group discussion (to be led by the presenting student).

Final paper: 50%

Students will write a 15-page final research paper consisting of a close reading of a film or a film-theoretical essay, drawing from at least one text (film or essay) on the syllabus and relating to at least one of the major

topics covered in the course. Students should consult between 3 and 4 secondary sources, and should include a bibliography in MLA format.

Week 1. Thursday, January 24

Introductions

Week 2. Thursday, January 31

Race in (Italian) Colonial Visual Culture

- 1 Alan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive"
- 2 Paul Landau, "Empires of the Visual: Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa"
- 3 Silvana Palma, "The Seen, the Unseen, the Invented: Misrepresentations of African 'Otherness' in the Making of a Colony"
- 4 Karen Pinkus, "Selling the Black Body"
- 5 Rhiannon Noel Welch, "The Missing Limbs of the *Patria*"
- 6 Miguel Mellino, "Italy and Postcolonial Studies: A Difficult Encounter"

(Optional reading):

Mary Ann Doane, "Dark Continents: Epistemologies of Racial and Sexual Difference in Psychoanalysis and Cinema"

Week 3. Thursday, February 7

Film: Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi, *Dal polo all'equatore* (1986)

- 1 Robert Lumley, "Amnesia and Remembering: *Dal polo all'equatore*"
- 2 Béla Balázs, "Visible Man; Type and Physiognomy; The Play of Facial Expressions; The Close-Up; The Face of Things."
- 3 Tobias Nagl, "The Aesthetics of Race in European Film Theory"

Week 4. Thursday, February 14

Film: Giovanni Pastrone, *Cabiria* (1914)

- 1 Giorgio Bertellini, "Whitened Heroes, Auditory Rhetoric, and National Identity in Interwar Italian Cinema"
- 2 Gabriele D'Annunzio, "On the Cinematograph As an Instrument of Liberation and an Art of Transfiguration"

(Optional reading):

Rhiannon Noel Welch, "Biopolitical Loss and Gain in Giovanni Pastrone's *Cabiria*"

(In Italian) Antonia Lant, "Spazio per la razza in *Cabiria*"

Richard Dyer, "The White Man's Muscles"

Tom Gunning, "A Little Light on a Dark Subject"

Week 5. Thursday, February 21

Film: Augusto Genina, *Lo squadrone bianco* (1936)

- 1 Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"
- 2 Jane Gaines, "White Privilege and Looking Relations: Race and Gender in Feminist Film Theory"
- 3 Cecilia Boggio, "Black Shirts/Black Skins: Fascist Italy's Colonial Anxieties and *Lo squadrone bianco*"

(Optional reading/viewing):

Robin Pickering-Iazzi, "Ways of Looking in Black and White: Female Spectatorship and the Miscege-national Body in *Sotto la croce del sud*"

(In Italian) *Archivio Luce*: Giornale LUCE B0907 Lavorazioni del film *Lo squadrone Bianco* (1936)

Week 6. Thursday, February 28

Film: Augusto Genina, *Bengasi 41* (1942)

- 1 Ruth Ben-Ghiat, "The Italian Colonial Cinema: Agendas and Audiences"
- 2 Stephen Heath, "On Screen, In Frame: Film and Ideology"
- 3 Barbara Spackman, "Preface," *Fascist Virilities*

(Optional reading/viewing):

Slavoj Žižek, "The Spectre of Ideology"

Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses"

(In Italian) *Archivio Luce*: Documentario LUCE: Conoscere le colonie: Ghat (1933); Giornale LUCE B1061, Tobruk. Il Duce in Libia (1937); and LUCE, Cronache dell'Impero CI005 "Addis Abeba."

Week 7. Thursday, March 7

Film: Carmine Gallone, *Scipione l'Africano* (1937)

- 1 Jacqueline Reich, "Mussolini at the Movies"

- 2 Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction [of Its Technological Reproducibility]"

(Optional reading):

Michel Foucault, "Panopticism"

Michel Foucault, "Governmentality"

Week 8. Thursday, March 14

Film: Roberto Rossellini, *Paisà* (1946)

- 1 Richard Dyer, "The Light of the World"
- 2 Frantz Fanon, "The Fact of Blackness"
- 3 Manthia Diawara, "Black Spectatorship: Problems of Identification and Resistance"

Week 9. Thursday, March 21

Spring Recess

Week 10. Thursday, March 28

Book Presentation: Caterina Romeo and Cristina Lombardi-Diop, eds. *Postcolonial Italy: Challenging National Homogeneity*

Required reading:

- 1 Romeo and Lombardi-Diop, "Introduction. Paradigms of Postcoloniality in Contemporary Italy"
- 2 Robert J.C. Young, "The Italian Postcolonial"
- 3 Cristina Lombardi-Diop, "Postracial/Postcolonial Italy"
- 4 Caterina Romeo, "Racial Evaporations: Representing Blackness in African Italian Postcolonial Literature"
- 5 Áine O'Healy, "Screening Intimacy and Racial Difference in Postcolonial Italy"

Week 11. Thursday, April 4

Film: Michelangelo Antonioni, *L'Eclisse* (1962)

- 1 Karen Pinkus, "Empty Spaces: Decolonization in Italy"
- 2 Robert Stam, "Fanon, Algeria, and the Cinema"
- 3 Homi Bhabha, "The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination, and the Discourse of Colonialism"

Week 12. Thursday, April 11

Film: Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Appunti per un'Orestiade Africana* (1972)

- 1 Robert Stam and Louise Spence, "Colonialism, Racism, and Representation: An Introduction"
- 2 E. Ann Kaplan, "Preface"; "Travel, Travelling Identities, and the Look"

(Optional reading):

Pier Paolo Pasolini, "The Screenplay as a Structure that Wants to Be Another Structure"; "The Cinema of Poetry"

Giovanna Trento, "From Marinetti to Pasolini: Massawa, the Red Sea, and the Construction of 'Mediterranean Africa' in Italian Literature and Cinema"

Rhiannon Noel Welch, "Here and Then, There and Now: Nation-Time and Colonial-Space in Pasolini, Oriani, and Marinetti"

Week 13. Thursday, April 18

Film: Gianni Amelio, *Lamerica* (1994)

- 1 Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man"
- 2 Derek Duncan, "Kledi Kadiu: Managing Postcolonial Celebrity"
- 3 Derek Duncan, "Italy's Postcolonial Cinema and its Histories of Representation"

(Optional reading):

Cristiana Furlan, "Italy and *Lamerica*: The Road of Remembrance"

Week 14. Thursday, April 25

Film: Marco Tullio Giordana, *Quando sei nato non puoi più nasconderti* (2005)

- 1 Elena Benelli, "The Other from Another Shore: Identity at Sea in *Quando sei nato non puoi più nasconderti*"

Week 15. Thursday, May 2

Film: Moshen Melliti, *Io, l'altro* (2006)

- 1 Gloria Pastorino, "Death by Water? Constructing the 'Other' in Melliti's *Io, l'altro*"
- 2 Áine O'Healy, "[Non] è una somala: Deconstructing African Femininity in Italian Film"
- 3 Giovanna Lerner, "From the Other Side of the Mediterranean: Hospitality in Italian Migration Cinema"

(Optional reading):

Jacques Derrida, *On Hospitality*

Rhiannon Noel Welch, "Intimate Truth and (Post)colonial Knowledge in Shirin Ramzanali Fazel's *Lontano da Mogadiscio*."

(In Italian) Moshen Melliti, *Pantarella. Canto lungo la strada*.

Works Cited in Syllabus

Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses." Slavoj Žižek, ed. *Mapping Ideology* (New York: Verso, 1994) 100-140.

Béla Balázs, "Type and Physiognomy; The Play of Facial Expressions; The Close-Up; The Face of Things." *Visible Man* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010) 27-51.

Giorgio Bertellini, "Whitened Heroes, Auditory Rhetoric, and National Identity in Interwar Italian Cinema." Patrizia Palumbo, ed. *A Place in the Sun. Africa in Italian Colonial Culture from Post-Unification to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003) 255-278.

Ruth Ben-Ghiat, "The Italian Colonial Cinema: Agendas and Audiences." Ruth Ben-Ghiat and Mia Fuller, eds. *Italian Colonialism*. (New York: Palgrave, 2005) 179-192.

Elena Benelli, "The Other from Another Shore: Identity at Sea in *Quando sei nato non puoi più nasconderti*." Grace Russo Bullaro, ed. *From Terrone to Extracomunitario: New Manifestations of Racism in Contemporary Italian Cinema* (Leicester: Troubador, 2010) 219-239.

Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, eds. *Film Theory and Criticism* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 665-685.

"The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, Second Version"

Homi Bhabha, "The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination, and the Discourse of Colonialism"; "Of Mimicry and Man." *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994) 66-92.

Cecilia Boggio, "Black Shirts/Black Skins: Fascist Italy's Colonial Anxieties and *Lo squadrone bianco*." Patrizia Palumbo, ed. *A Place in the Sun. Africa in Italian Colonial Culture from Post-Unification to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003) 279-298.

Gabriele D'Annunzio, "On the Cinematograph As an Instrument of Liberation and an Art of Transfiguration." Early cinema reader edited by Richard Abel (forthcoming with Routledge Press).

Jacques Derrida, *On Hospitality*. (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2000).

Manthia Diawara, "Black Spectatorship: Problems of Identification and Resistance." Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, eds. *Film Theory and Criticism* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 767-776.

Mary Ann Doane, "Dark Continents: Epistemologies of Racial and Sexual Difference in Psychoanalysis and Cinema." *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 1991) 209-248.

- Derek Duncan, "Kledi Kadiu: Managing Postcolonial Celebrity." J. Andall and D. Duncan, eds. *National Belongings: Hybridity in Italian Colonial and Postcolonial Cultures* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010) 195-214.
- "Italy's Postcolonial Cinema and its Histories of Representation." *Italian Studies* 63:2 (2008) 195-211.
- Richard Dyer, "The Light of the World"; "The White Man's Muscles." *White* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997) 82-144; 145-183.
- Frantz Fanon, "The Fact of Blackness." *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967) 109-140.
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- Tom Gunning, "A Little Light on a Dark Subject." *Critical Quarterly* 45: 4 (December 2003) 50-69.
- Stephen Heath, *Questions of Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981).
- Áine O'Healy, "[Non] è una somala: Deconstructing African Femininity in Italian Film." *The Italianist* 29 (2009) 175-198.
- E. Ann Kaplan, "Preface"; "Travel, Travelling Identities, and the Look." *Looking for the Other: Feminism, Film, and The Imperial Gaze* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997) xi-26.
- Antonia Lant, "Spazio per la razza in *Cabiria*." Paolo Bertetto and Gianni Rondolino, eds. *Cabiria e il suo tempo*. (Turin: Museo Nazionale del Cinema; Il Castoro, 1998) 212-222.
- Paul Landau, "Empires of the Visual: Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa." Paul Landau and Deobrah Kaspin, eds. *Images and Empires: Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).
- Giovanna Lerner, "From the Other Side of the Mediterranean: Hospitality in Italian Migration Cinema." *California Italian Studies* 1:1 (2010) 1-19.
- Robert Lumley, "Amnesia and Remembering: *Dal polo all'equatore*." *Italian Studies*, Vol. 64 No. 1, Spring, 2009, 134-143.
- Miguel Mellino, "Italy and Postcolonial Studies: A Difficult Encounter." *Interventions. International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*. 8:3 (2006) 461-471.
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- Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, eds. *Film Theory and Criticism* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 711-722.
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- Robert Stam, "Fanon, Algeria, and the Cinema." *Multiculturalism, Postcoloniality, and Transnational Media* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003) 18-36.
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- Giovanna Trento, "From Marinetti to Pasolini: Massawa, the Red Sea, and the Construction of 'Mediterranean Africa' in Italian Literature and Cinema." *Northeast African Studies* 12 (2012) 273-307.
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