

Interventions: Fanon in Italy

(Post)colonial Italian Cinema

Rutgers University
Spring 2015
Department of Italian
Italian 560: 674
84 College Avenue (2nd Floor), Graduate Student Lounge
Wednesdays 4:30-7:10pm

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Belatedness is a recurring feature of Italian modernity: Italy, we often hear, was late to nationhood (it was unified only beginning in 1861); late to industrialization (the so-called economic 'boom' of northern Italy occurred in the 1950's); late to the colonial contest (Eritrea, its 'first-born colony,' was 'born' in 1890). Likewise, postcolonial critique got a late start in Italy, coming to the fore only in the last decade or so. And yet, as scholars of the Italian postcolonial have argued, Italy's belated status, far from conferring a sense of derivativeness, presents an opportunity to check in on some of the paradigms of postcoloniality.

This seminar introduces students to a selection of canonical Italian films through the lens of the (Italian) postcolonial. Films are drawn from three historical thresholds: 1) Fascist colonial conquest in Libya and East Africa; 2) "decolonization" in the post-WWII era and 3) contemporary responses to immigration from across the Mediterranean. 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? What are some of the collective fantasies engendered by Italian films about (post)colonialism and race? Instruction and readings in English; films in Italian (some without English subtitles). This course is open to all graduate students, regardless of their training in film, critical theory, and/or Italian studies.

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

Readings available on Sakai.

Course requirements and grade distribution:

Participation: 20%

Regular attendance and active participation are required. Each week, students will be assigned questions on the readings, upon which they should reflect before each seminar discussion. 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.

Four in-class presentations/responses: 20%

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 connections between the week's film and 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 (20 minutes each), the student is responsible for presenting 1) a *detailed close reading* of a film shot or sequence (we will watch clips together in class); 2) a concise summary of at least one

of the assigned secondary or theoretical readings; 3) some attempt to link the readings to the shot and/or sequence in question; 4) at least one original thought or fresh insight; 5) lead a group discussion by offering questions for further analysis. The goal of this exercise is to hone cinematic close reading skills, and to incite discussion about intersections between film theory and practice. Each student will offer two formal responses to student presentations. Respondents will listen actively to presentations, and will be asked to engage with the presentation in as detailed a manner as possible, offering questions on the presentation and/or further lines of discussion for the group. Respondents are *strongly* encouraged to prepare some material in advance in order to enhance the quality and depth of the response.

Two Think Pieces: 10%

Students will submit two 2-3 page “think pieces” over the course of the semester. The purpose of the think piece is to refine your close-reading and film analysis skills, in preparation for the final research paper. Each think piece should contain: 1) a *detailed close reading* of a film shot or sequence; 2) a concise summary of the primary arguments of the assigned secondary or theoretical readings; 3) some attempt to link the readings to the assigned filmic text, and, when possible, to draw connections to earlier assigned readings or films; 4) at least one original thought or fresh insight.

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 film on the syllabus and relating to at least one of the major topics covered in the course. Students should consult between 4 and 5 secondary sources, and should include a bibliography in MLA format. Papers are due Monday, May 4 by 5pm.

Week 1. Wednesday, January 21

Introductions

Week 2. Wednesday, January 28

Colonialism and 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 David Forgacs, *Italy's Margins: Social Exclusion and Nation Formation since 1861* (selections)

(Strongly recommended):

David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction* (any edition; chapters on mise en scène; cinematography; editing; sound).

(Optional reading):

Loredana Polezzi, “Imperial Reproductions: The Circulation of Colonial Images across Popular Genres and Media in the 1920s and 1930s”

Week 3. Wednesday, February 4

Spectrality and the Italian Postcolonial

- 1 Cristina Lombardi-Diop and Caterina Romeo, "The Italian Postcolonial: A Manifesto"
- 2 Sandra Ponzanesi, "The Postcolonial Turn in Italian Studies: European Perspectives"
- 3 Colin Davis, "Hauntology, Spectres and Phantoms"

(Optional reading):

Miguel Mellino, "Italy and Postcolonial Studies: A Difficult Encounter"

Alessia Ricciardi, *The Ends of Mourning. Psychoanalysis, Literature, Film*

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

Sigmund Freud, "Morning and Melancholia"

Week 4. Wednesday, February 11

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 5. Wednesday, February 18

Film: Giovanni Pastrone, *Cabiria* (1914)

- 1 Giorgio Bertellini, "Whitened Heroes, Auditory Rhetoric, and National Identity in Interwar Italian Cinema"
- 2 Shelleen Greene, "From 'Making Italians' to Envisioning Postcolonial Italy"

(Optional reading):

(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 6. Wednesday, February 25

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"

(Optional reading/viewing):

Ruth Ben-Ghiat, "The Italian Colonial Cinema: Agendas and Audiences"

Cecilia Boggio, "Black Shirts/Black Skins: Fascist Italy's Colonial Anxieties and *Lo squadrone bianco*"

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 7. Wednesday, March 4

Lecture: Enrico Cesaretti (University of Virginia)

Week 8. Wednesday, March 11

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

- 1 Stephen Heath, "On Screen, In Frame: Film and Ideology"

- 2 Barbara Spackman, "Preface," *Fascist Virilities*

(Optional reading/viewing):

Slavoj Zizek, "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 9. Wednesday, March 18

Spring Recess

Week 10. Wednesday, March 25

Written Assignment: 2-3 Page 'Think Piece' on this week's materials.

Film 1: Corrado D'Errico, *Il cammino degli eroi* (1936)

Film 2: 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"

Ruth Ben-Ghiat, "Envisioning Modernity: Desire and Discipline in the Italian Fascist Film"

Week 11. Wednesday, April 1

Film: Roberto Rossellini, *Paisà* (1946)

- 1 Richard Dyer, "The Light of the World"
- 2 Frantz Fanon, "The Fact of Blackness"
- 3 Gilberto Perez, "The Documentary Image"

Week 12. Wednesday, April 8

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 13. Wednesday, April 15

Written Assignment: 2-3 Page 'Think Piece' on this week's materials.

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"

Week 14. Wednesday, April 22

Film: Gianni Amelio, *Lamerica* (1994)

- 1 Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man"
- 2 Derek Duncan, "Italy's Postcolonial Cinema and its Histories of Representation"

- 3 Luca Caminati, "The Return of History: Gianni Amelio's *Lamerica*, Memory, and National Identity"

Week 15. Wednesday, April 29

Film 1: Marco Tullio Giordana, *Quando sei nato non puoi più nasconderti* (2005)

Film 2: Moshen Melliti, *Io, l'altro* (2006)

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

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*

Moshen Melliti, *Pantanella. Canto lungo la strada.*

Papers due in Prof. Welch's departmental mailbox: Monday, May 4 by 5pm.

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.
--. "Envisioning Modernity: Desire and Discipline in the Italian Fascist Film" *Critical Inquiry*. 23:1 (Autumn, 1996) 109-144.

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.
- David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction* (New York: McGraw Hill).
- Luca Caminati, "The Return of History: Gianni Amelio's *Lamerica*, Memory, and National Identity." *Italica* 83:3/4 (2006) 596-608.
- 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).
- Colin Davis, "Hauntology, Spectres and Phantoms." *French Studies* (July 2005) 59 (3): 373-379.
- Jacques Derrida, *On Hospitality*. (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2000).
- 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, "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.
- Michel Foucault, "Governmentality." Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, eds. *The Foucault Effect. Studies in Governmentality*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) 87-104.
- "Panopticism." *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Vintage, 1995) 195-230.
- Sigmund Freud, "Morning and Melancholia."
- Jane Gaines, "White Privilege and Looking Relations: Race and Gender in Feminist Film Theory," in *Screen* 29 (4), 1988: 12-27.
- 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.
- Cristina Lombardi-Diop and Caterina Romeo, "The Italian Postcolonial: A Manifesto." *Italian Studies* 69:3 (2014) 425-433.
- 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.
- Moshen Melliti, *Pantarella. Canto lungo la strada*. Rome: Edizioni Lavoro, 1992.
- 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.
- Tobias Nagl, "The Aesthetics of Race in European Film Theory." Trifonova Temenuga, ed. *European Film Theory* (AFI/Routledge, 2008) 17-31.
- Silvana Palma, "The Seen, the Unseen, the Invented: Misrepresentations of African 'Otherness' in the Making of a Colony." *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 45: 177 (2005) 39-69.
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- Gilberto Perez, "The Documentary Image." *The Material Ghost. Films and Their Medium* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998) 29-50.
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- Loredana Polezzi, "Imperial Reproductions: The Circulation of Colonial Images across Popular Genres and Media in the 1920s and 1930s" *Modern Italy*: 8.1 (Spring 2003), 31-47.
- Jacqueline Reich, "Mussolini at the Movies: Fascism, Film, and Culture." Jacqueline Reich and Piero Garofalo, eds. *Re-Viewing Fascism: Italian Cinema, 1922-1943* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002) 3-29.
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- Alessia Ricciardi, *The Ends of Mourning. Psychoanalysis, Literature, Film*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2003.

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