

## Postcolonial Italy: Between Assimilation and Integration

### Guest editors:

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The symposium *Postcolonial Italy: Between Assimilation and Integration*, held at Flinders University on 23-24 November 2016, was part of the ACIS funded project *There ain't no black in the Tricolore* and this special issue we are so proud to present is its final component. The event attracted established and early-career academics from Australia and overseas. The articles included in this issue reflect the variety of subjects discussed and attest to the relevance that postcolonial paradigms still have today within Italian Studies. We began the conference with the lecture “Getting Changed - Cambio d’abito” by writer, intellectual and cultural mediator Kaha Mohamed Aden. Her address illustrated the role of women during the different moments of Somali history and it resonated very well with the evening community event, the free screening of the documentary, starring the writer herself, *La quarta via* (Brioni, Chiscuzzu, Guida 2012). Kaha kindly agreed to an interview for this special issue, during which we had the opportunity to discuss the thorny subject of clannism within Somali culture, as well as her new projects. The second key-note presentation was titled *Come un acrobata sull’acqua: fiumi e fili nella diaspora somala*, and was presented by writer, poet and researcher Ubah Cristina Ali Farah. Ubah generously offered a collection of her poetry, some of which was unpublished, that speaks specifically to the topic of this issue and that comes with an original commentary that gracefully binds them together. Both Kaha Mohamed Aden and Ubah Cristina Ali Farah were ACIS Visiting Honorary Research Associates and their presence was possible thanks to the Australasian Centre for Italian Studies (ACIS), as was also the presence of so many postgraduate students who were able to attend thanks to ACIS scholarships.

This special issue is testament to the collegial atmosphere the symposium enjoyed, where many of the presentations were “works in progress” and have been enriched by the many conversations had at the conference. We hope you will enjoy the selected articles as much as we enjoyed discussing the conference papers and taking them to fruition. In this endeavour we were very much helped and would like to express our gratitude to FULGOR’s editors for offering us this opportunity and for their precious collaboration through the entire process. The underlying theme of the volume is the connection between postcolonial studies and the ongoing social changes in contemporary Italy and it has been tackled from very different points of view. We begin with Amaryllis Gacioppo’s *Walking Home: Redefining Cultural Identity through Flâneuserie in Igiaba Scego’s Roma negata*, in which the author uses *flâneuserie* as a methodology for interrogating both the concept of homeland and the sense of belonging created by the postcolonial subject. In their *Black Babies/White Sovereignities: Tammurriata nera as a Perverse Mechanism of US and Italian Colonialisms*, Stefania Capogreco and Marcello Messina argue that a full acknowledgment of Italian postcolonial responsibility is only possible

once we depose problematic, xenophobic and narrow definitions of a unified Italian identity and deal with the complex racial problematics involved in imagining an expanded horizon of *Italianness*. In the subsequent article, *Racial Expectations on Italy's National Identity*, Clara Casagrande keeps the focus on problematising racial assumptions in relation to *Italianness* and examines Fred Kuwornu's documentary *18 Ius Soli: Il diritto di essere italiani*, in order to investigate the controversial situation of individuals born in the Italian territory without Italian heritage who are thus denied access to citizenship. Still dealing with negated citizenship is *Essere italosomali. I figli dimenticati della decolonizzazione*, in which Grazia Lapenna analyses the "in-betweenness" of the Italian-Somali community, a minority group of a few hundred individuals living in Italy but born in Somalia to Somali mothers and Italian fathers when the country was a Trust Territory under Italian administration. *Bianco e Nero* explores the movie's missed opportunity to start a new decolonised and decolonising era of the Italian Cinema through the analysis of two key symbols, the Barbie doll and the Trevi Fountain. To conclude our journey into postcolonial Italy, Aurora Perego's *SVEGLIATITALIA: è l'ora di essere civili* examines to what extent the representation of white, abled, young, beautiful LGBT subjects, together with the reference to the notion of 'civilisation', is entangled in the (re)production of white "Italianness". What all the articles have in common is the urge to deal with unresolved issues from Italy's colonial past in order to overcome the problems of the current postcolonial present and be able to finally move forward towards a decolonising future.

Our warmest thanks to Prof. David Moss, then ACIS Chair, for being an inspiring mentor and for his untiring support every step of the way. Special thanks to Prof. Diana Glenn, at the time Dean of Humanities and Creative Arts at Flinders University, for promoting the project at large and generously providing the means to implement it. We are also grateful to the Dante Alighieri Society of South Australia and Radio Italia Uno Adelaide that sponsored the community event, and to the Flinders University's professional staff who ensured proceedings went smoothly. Dr Stefano Bona, Ms Daniela Scarcella, Dr Chris Hogarth and Associate Professor Natalie Edwards also assisted in making this symposium possible, by kindly opening their homes to host delegates and keynotes. The editors wish to express their sincere gratitude to the peer reviewers who willingly gave their time and expertise during the preparation of this issue.

Those days of 2016 seem so distant now as many things have changed since, but the strong bonds created then still stand, and many fruitful collaborations stemmed from those conversations and discussions. Let us add and knot one more thread to our tapestry with the polished, peer-reviewed versions of some of the fascinating papers that initiated this fertile dialogue.

*Buona lettura!*