

CALL FOR PAPERS

Corporeal Restrictions, Embodied Freedoms: Italian Interventions on the Body

April 26–28, 2018

JOHN D. CALANDRA ITALIAN AMERICAN INSTITUTE

Queens College, City University of New York

25 West 43rd Street, 17th floor (between 5th and 6th Avenues), Manhattan

The 1935 song “Faccetta Nera,” a paean to the Fascist imperialist enterprise in Africa, addresses the “little black face” that is the anonymous Abyssinian woman, an object of Italian colonial desire. This jaunty march with its suggestive miscegenation proclaims a gendered liberation of African women with the line “our law is slavery of love” (*la legge nostra è schiavitù d’amore*). The song was made famous by tenor Carlo Buti and eventually became a staple of *fiesta* band repertoires among the diaspora. In contemporary Italy black women are routinely taunted and humiliated with this Fascist-era tune.

The song is but one example of the myriad ways in which the body figures in discourses and cultural productions concerning Italy’s histories and identities, within and well beyond the country’s geopolitical boundaries. This interdisciplinary conference recognizes the body in its literal, metaphorical, and hybrid constitutions as found in the modern nation-state of Italy, the larger Italian diaspora, and among former colonies. It builds on the array of seminal work on body politics mainly developed in women’s and gender studies—French feminist theories of *jouissance*, Donna Haraway’s cyborgs, Judith Butler’s gender trouble, post-colonial conceptions of subaltern racialized bodies, and contemporary trans theories—where corporeal imaginaries construct and reposition identity and agency. Italy, and by extension *italianità*, with its complex position within a Western hegemony—connected to colonialism, transnational migration, and larger discourses of power—is a particularly interesting locus for focusing a series of critical interventions around the body.

SUGGESTED PAPER TOPICS INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- The racialized body
- The gendered body
- Queering the body
- Intersectionality and body politics
- The loving body, e.g., sexuality, couplings
- Migration and bodies in movement
- The sick and healing body
- Disabilities
- The inanimate body, e.g., cadavers, sculpture, puppetry
- The sacred body, e.g., incorruptibles, relics

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- Sports and the athletic body
- Bodylore
- The written, the drawn, the sung, the performed, and the filmed body
- The body adorned, e.g., clothing, hair, makeup, tattoos

The official language of the conference is English. All presentations are to last no longer than twenty minutes, including audio and visual illustrations. Thursday evening is dedicated to welcoming comments and reception; sessions and panels will take place all day Friday and Saturday.

NOTA BENE: There are no available funds for travel, accommodations, or meals. There is no conference registration fee. The conference does not make arrangements with local hotels, so participants are responsible for booking their own accommodations.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: SEPTEMBER 15, 2017.

Abstracts for scholarly papers (up to 500 words, plus a note on technical requirements) and a brief, narrative biography should be emailed as attached documents by **September 15, 2017**, to calandra@qc.edu, where other inquires may also be addressed. We encourage the submission of organized panels (of no more than three presenters). Submission for a panel must be made by a single individual on behalf of the group and must include all the paper titles, abstract narratives, and individual biographies and emails.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION SEE OUR WEB SITE: WWW.QC.EDU/CALANDRA

The John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, Queens College, is a university-wide research institute of the City University of New York, dedicated to the history and culture of Italians in the United States.