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## **L’Italiano Negro**

In this paper, I will discuss the complicated early 20th century construction process of the multifaceted, and certainly controversial, Italian idea of “whiteness”. In order to capture the wide range of representations and self-representations that converged in the first decades of the 20th century in racialised identity politics, I will analyse the intertwined and continuous re-articulation of the processes of hetero- and auto-referential racialisation that occurred in Italy: I will discuss the racialised representation of the colonial female and male body in the Italian colonies; the representation of Italian Southerners as poor and not-white migrants – supported by the (Western) worldwide spread and scientifically “proved” idea of the black nature of Southern Europeans; and the construction of “Italian-ness” in terms of “Whiteness” (1861-1936) and “Aryan-ness” (1936-1945) by the liberal and then Fascist discourse on race.

I will investigate from both a theoretical point of view and through the analysis of visual artefacts (such as posters, video-propaganda, pictures and advertisements) the set of theory on race that defined colonised/black people as barbarous (that is, not civilised enough) or not-human (of a different species), and Italians as not-so-white (not civilised enough) or, on the contrary, intrinsically white (civilised).