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MEDITERRANEITÀ OLTREMARE:

Assimilation, Appropriation, or Rejection? The Imposition of the Fascist Aesthetic Ideology of Mediterranean-ness Overseas from 1935 to 1940

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Abstract

In the 1920s, fascist ideologues promised Italians a prosperous global empire, one which would expand to include lands of the former Roman Empire and beyond. Imperial expansionism was not only geo-political, but also cultural. In order to justify this cultural expansion into former Roman lands in the Mediterranean basin such as North Africa, the concept of mediterraneità was employed a propaganda tool. It was then applied to regions beyond the basin, such as East Africa and South America, but its logic became increasingly convoluted along the way. In East Africa, it was mainly used as a means of 'civilising' the backwardness of indigenous people. In parts of South America which had been populated with large Italian expatriate communities for decades, terms such as Roman-ness and Latin-ness were implemented to convince these communities and peoples of Iberian descent that they shared a common Latin culture. Indigenous people and those of African decent were conveniently ignored in the equation.

In the case of Africa, the colonies became realised, while in South America, they became desired. This essay first sets the historical context (early 1920s – mid 1930s) and then illustrates through key examples from 1935 – 1940 how the overall strategy of mediterraneità was implemented as part of both hard and soft rhetorical arguments aimed at realised and desired colonies, respectively. It also addresses how these arguments were received by natives of these colonised lands. Were they assimilated, appropriated, or rejected?

Keywords: Migration, Architectural History, Italian Fascism

Italianità (Italian-ness) or mediterraneità (Mediterranean-ness) were the two terms most frequently used to describe the formal qualities of a design identified as distinctly Italian.

Dennis P. Doordan

Architecture was born in the Mediterranean and triumphed in Rome in the eternal monuments created from the genius of our birth: it must, therefore, remain Mediterranean and Italian.

Florestano Di Fausto

Introduction - Mediterranean = mare nostrum

Much is written about Mussolini's attempts at creating a global fascist empire, one based upon, or justified by, the fact that Italians were the rightful heirs of the former Roman Empire. Most accounts focus on specificities pertaining to particular countries and/or colonies. The focus of this essay, however, attempts

to show how an overarching strategy of *mediterraneità* (Mediterranean-ness) was implemented in both *realised* and *desired* colonies. North and East Africa exemplify the former, while parts of South America represent the latter.

Generally speaking, the terms *italianità* (Italian-ness), *mediterraneità* (Mediterranean-ness), *romanità* (Roman-ness), and *latinità* (Latin-ness) were viewed as interchangeable tools of propaganda by Italian fascist ideologues. Employing any of these terms often depended on the context in which the fascist promoters were trying to prove or justify their actions to Italians, other powerful nations, or indigenous peoples in both her *realised* and *desired* colonies. Part of the political rhetoric argued that Italy had the right to (re)conquer former lands of the Roman Empire such as North Africa. In this case, there was a logic, however misguided it was. When applied to East Africa and South America,¹ however, the logic became increasingly convoluted.

Fascists had to adapt their overall strategy in order to transform the *desired* into the *realised*. In the case of *desired*, a soft, veiled rhetoric was employed, appearing on the surface to be more gentile. In reality they were simply being passive-aggressive, hiding the true malevolence of fascism. In the case of *realised* colonies, the strategy was to utilise a harder, more direct rhetoric accompanied by inhumane actions.²

Polemical questions in both the *desired* and *realised* colonies arose: How would people in the colonies, particularly those who did not fit into the ethnic and racial categorisations of a common Roman ancestry, receive the constant onslaught of fascists' propagandising of Italian superiority, particularly in architecture and aesthetics? Would the displacement of Italian cultural capital needed to implement said superiority have to be fused with localisms, resulting in hybridised products in order to mitigate said colonised peoples? If so, would acknowledgement of said localisms be deemed a sign of weakness by fascist

¹ More specifically, the desired colonies, to which I am referring, are Argentina, Uruguay, and (southern) Brazil.

² When analysing the terms of *mediterraneità* and *italianità* in relation to the arts and architecture produced during the fascist period, it is easy to overlook the brutality of the regime's actions by merely focusing on aesthetic qualities. inflicted on said peoples. It is important to remember that the terms had a very dark side.

ideologues? After all, how could any other culture produce anything comparable to the grandness of Roman-ness?

Italy certainly has a colonial past, albeit one that is often described as rimosso ("repressed" or "displaced")

Mia Fuller

Time Frames

In her book, *Modern's Abroad*, Mia Fuller (2007: 88) outlines three specific time frames in regards to Fascism and its relationship to the arts and architecture: 1) early 1920s into the early 1930s; 2) Early 1930s to 1936; 3) 1936 to the early 1940s. The first period was characterised by the emergence of *Razionalismo*, *Futurismo*, and *Novecento* movements. Each of these movements was competing to be designated as the official aesthetic of the fascist state, while also arguing to be the most appropriate to modernise and unify the cultural national identity of Italy.³ The second time frame was defined by the fascist state increasing its financial commitment to commissions. Pluralistic approaches to design continued, as did debates both home and abroad over the appropriate direction to take aesthetically. The third period was characterized by a tightening of aesthetic expression both home and abroad and increased inhumane and authoritarian policies.

This essay is focussed roughly on the last period, more precisely from 1935 - 1940,⁴ but first some key facts are outlined to contextualize the events of this later period.

This imperial expansionism of Italian culture, which, like a river that never stagnates but is fed by other rivers, gives and takes universally assimilates and is assimilated, is a spiritual attitude characteristic of fascism and its ever intensifying revival of the universal and imperial ancient tradition.

Margherita Sarfatti

³ Previously, these debates were dominated by those promoting medieval revivalisms, Neoclassicism, and the Liberty Style (known more commonly outside of Italy as *Arte Nouveau*).

⁴ As 1935 is a pivotal year, I wish to include this in the main body of text, not merely as a point of reference.

Early 1920s – mid 1930s - Italy and Her Realised Colonies in Africa

Part of the harder, more direct rhetoric employed by fascists in the 1920s was aimed at Italians, telling them to sacrifice immediate material gain for the promise of reaping the rewards of a soon-to-be-realised global fascist Empire. For some Italians, this meant transferring to lands which once fell under the jurisdiction of the Roman Empire and beyond in order to inculcate the local primitive peoples with a superior sense of Roman-ness. Fulfilment of this important mission, Italians were led to believe, would help to bring prosperity to all of Italy.

In order to realise a global fascist Empire, aesthetics and architecture were often linked directly to Roman-ness. Populating the realised colonies with Italian stock meant the transference of their cultural capital would serve to civilise the natives whilst proving to other European colonisers in Africa that Italy was also a powerful country.

Various fascist intelligentsia and cultural promoters, such as Margherita Sarfatti's personal endorsement of *il Novecento*, were campaigning for the displacement of a particular form of Italian cultural capital. Carlo Enrico Rava, one of the founders of *Razionalismo*, went one step further by linking his preferred movement to the concept *mediterraneità* in essays he published in *Domus* in 1931. Rava argued that '... it is in this "Mediterranean spirit" that we should then look for the characteristic *italianità* that is still lacking in our new rational architecture' (Capresi, 2012, p. 59). Rava found potential of this 'spirit' in the local forms of North Africa, but any incorporation of them into *italianità* had to be justified by linking their origins, and therefore their worth, back to Roman-ness.

Also during this period, many designs in the *realised* colonies were defined by an eclectic negotiation of ancient Mediterranean forms - local vernacular ones included - and modern forms. Often, this negotiation had less to do with modern forms and more to do with forms based on revival movements such as neo-Renaissance or neo-Moorish. Were these various eclectic and flexible design approaches simply a matter of aesthetic preference, or could they have veiled a

political motive? Had the fascist regime used such syncretism as soft rhetorical means of appeasing indigenous peoples? In the case of North Africa, Krystyna von Henneberg (1996: 377) pointed out:

Keen to the need to put a benevolent face on Italian rule, many architects developed an uncharacteristically eclectic and flexible approach to questions of design. The militant anti-regionalism of Italian Rationalist and fascist architecture was frequently eclipsed by a more syncretic style that incorporated 'orientalizing' and local elements.

Not everyone, however, was convinced that pluralistic approaches and/or their resulting hybridised forms, particularly when derived from eclectic revivalisms, were of any merit. For example, important Italian architects such as Rava and fellow rationalist Luigi Piccinato thought neo-Moorish buildings in North Africa were inappropriate (Fuller, 2007, p. 118). Many architects felt there was a need to find a unified colonial architectural language, which in turn could benefit the regime by leaving a strong impression on colonised peoples and neighbouring European powers alike (Fuller, 2007, p. 15). Yet, would the implementation of a singular approach abandon or incorporate localisms? The answer, in the opinion of von Henneberg (1996: 378), was more complex: *'Eclectic or neo-Moorish structures proved difficult to reconcile with an official architectural discourse based on unity and order. Diversity, after all, had been clearly identified with liberal rule, and with weakness'*.

Early 1920s – mid 1930s - The Desired Colonies in South America

The fascist regime utilised the concept of *mediterraneità*, more precisely Roman-ness and/or Latin-ness, in both its cultural and political rhetoric pertaining to South America. Unlike in the *realised* colonies, Italians had already been living in these *desired* colonies for decades. The goal, therefore, was to first gain the support of *Italians citizens who happened to be living abroad*⁵ and then to

⁵ This was the viewpoint of the fascist regime who refused to acknowledge the expatriates and their offspring as Argentines or Brazilians who happened to be of Italian descent. Those displaced to South America, tended to view themselves as the latter.

convince them and people of Iberian ancestry that they shared a common Roman heritage - Roman-ness and/or Latin-ness.⁶

In order to promote the transference of Italian cultural capital into the region, private impresarios, cultural institutions, and government agencies sponsored cultural events. Each event served as a soft, persuasive rhetorical means of espousing the virtues *italianità*, hidden under the guise of a shared Roman-ness.

Italian art, architecture, literature, and language⁷ were promoted in said events with each containing a varying degree of political propaganda. Some of the key events included: Filippo Marinetti's lecture tour to promote *Futurismo* in 1926 in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Córdoba, Rosario, Buenos Aires and Montevideo;⁸ Margherita Sarfatti's 1930 *Novecento* Art Exhibit in Buenos Aires and Montevideo; Pietro Maria Bardi's 1933 *Architettura d'oggi* Exhibit in Buenos Aires which featured the architectural works of Razionalismo.

Contemporaneously, the soft rhetorical argument of Roman-ness was advanced in Argentina to the point of linking the country historically to *italianità*. '*Between 1922 and 1931, the fascist regime wanted to convince the Argentines that their history, or part of it at least, was a direct outcome of Italian historical agency*' (Finchelstein, 2010, p. 87). Dating back to even before the time of Garibaldi, Italians had played key roles in the development of Argentina and the fascists wanted to embellish this fact. In addition to offering their own interpretation of Argentine history to the general populace, the fascists realised that they also had to court potentially like-minded politicians. '*Throughout the 1930s an Argentine group of politically conservative nacionalistas met with Mussolini personally*' (Finchelstein, 2010, p. 111). Included in the group was the upcoming politician, Manuel Fresco. Yet why limit the effort solely to Argentina? In 1934,

⁶ In this instance, the terms Mediterranean-ness and Italian-ness were most likely avoided as the former could have been easily interpreted differently by both the Portuguese and/or Spanish creoles; the latter would have exposed the fascists' overtly offensive belief in Italian superiority.

⁷ Literature and language were also important parts of the soft rhetorical campaign, but they are not the main focus of this essay. The following literary cultural events took place: Mussolini confidant, Franco Ciarlantini's 1927 book fair in Argentina; Piero Parini's 1931 lecture tour, aimed at spreading the Italian language and nationalism throughout Argentina; and noted Italian author, Massimo Bontempelli's 1934 tours in South America.

⁸ Except in the case of Rio, the cities chosen for the tour were ones which had large Italian expatriate populations, '*Italians who happened to be living abroad*' in the eyes of the Italian fascists.

Mussolini attempted to broaden his sphere of influence in the region. Professor Finchelstein pointed out: '*... Mussolini wrote to his South American embassies that the time was "favorable" to expand fascist propaganda in their respective countries*' (2010: 94).

1935 – 1940 - Italy and Her Realised Colonies in Africa

Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 brought extensive changes for the Italian people both home and abroad. The fascist regime fought back widespread international condemnation and sanctions by becoming increasingly more repressive (Denison, Ren, & Gebremedhin, 2006, p. 63).⁹ As a result of the war in Ethiopia, '*(a)ll of Italian political life, architecture included, turned to greater uniformity*' (Fuller, 2007, p. 88). Pluralistic design approaches were now succumbing to the stranglehold of fascism as the regime tightened its grip on the creative process.

One of the potentially last fine examples of a pluralistic approach to design may be found in the *realised* colony of Tripoli, Libya. The eclectic negotiation of ancient Mediterranean and modern forms found Artisanal Market, Souk al-Mushir was designed by one of the most prolific architects in the North African colony,¹⁰ Florestano di Fausto. His new centre was both '*Cubist and rational in its conception, the market-place satisfied the claim of Italian authorities both to modernize and support local traditions*' (von Henneberg, 1996, p. 386).¹¹

This probable end reflected a greater change which started to take place the following year in the *realised* colonies. According to Fuller (2007: 134), '*... architects' attention shifted from North to East Africa in 1936 ... the question of colonial-architectural syncretism faded out all together...*' Von Henneberg's description of the Artisanal Market in syncretic terms was possible in North

⁹ In the *realised* colony of Ethiopia, Italians introduced anti-miscegenation laws in order to enforce the separation of the races, which in turn, led to much misery and anguish for Eritreans.

¹⁰ Florestano di Fausto had been responsible for many important works previously in the *realised* colonies in the Aegean Islands.

¹¹ Interesting, von Henneberg also pointed out that the fascists and architecture press in Italy ignored the building.

Africa where *local traditions* represented the '*Mediterranean spirit*' which Rava had previously usurped in order to rhetorically justify *italianità*. '*The militant anti-regionalism of Italian Rationalist architecture*' that von Henneberg was also discussing as preferable by many in North Africa was now more attainable in East Africa. From a fascist ideologue's point of view, the latter was a cultural tabula rasa in regards to built form due to the nomadic nature of its society. These least civilised peoples and their built history left little or no localisms, no regionalisms, to appropriate.

Part of this shift to East Africa, resulted in Asmara experiencing unprecedented growth from 1935 – 1941 with buildings more characteristic of more humble or simplified versions of *Razionalismo* and *Novecento* principles. Over previous decades in Asmara, many neo-revivalist works had been built, but during this period, they were more modern in character.

In the midst of the massive building campaign under way in Asmara, in 1937 Italian attitudes in urban planning acknowledged the need for flexibility whilst designing for the various conditions related to climate and races of peoples who, as the delegates thought, had different habits and levels of civilisation (von Henneberg, 1996, p. 382). In other words, the blackness of Asmara and its lack of ancient Roman structures had to be treated differently, not necessarily with respect for the locals. Localisms post-rationalised as related to *mediterraneità* were not part of this argument. Instead, Roman-ness in this instance must now be implemented as a means civilising the natives.

Harsh, restrictive fascist policies, such as the ones mandating the separation of the races, influenced the layout of the modern city of Asmara. The works in this part of the city that were once intended for Italians only, have now been appropriated by the very people who were originally excluded from inhabiting them. The legacy left behind from decades of Italian rule is a mixed one. '*For many Asmarini the cultural capital attached to the Italian past provides them with a claim to a long-standing cosmopolitanism*' (Fuller, 2011, p.14). Yet for the many who can remember the atrocious actions carried out by the fascists, painful memories endure.

1935 – 1940 - The Desired Colonies in South America

In 1935 in South America, renowned Italian architect Alberto Satoris continued to utilise lecture tours as a soft rhetoric means of promoting architecture, more specifically *Razionalismo* and its connection to *mediterraneità*. At venues such as the First Argentine Congress on Urbanism, The Scientific Society, and the Faculty of Architecture in Buenos Aires, he unashamedly attempted 'to raise awareness of the accomplishments of fascism in the field of urbanism' (Ballent and Crispiani, 1995, p. 60). His lectures titles also clearly linked fascism and architecture: *Architecture and the State*, and *The Architecture of the State as 'Inherent to the Fascist Concept of the City'* (Liernur, 2001, p. 172).

The fascist ideologues promoting the transference of Italian cultural capital in the *desired* colonies must have thought their efforts were finally coming to fruition. Mussolini's continuous meetings throughout the 1930s with Argentine *nacionalistas*, his regime's close diplomatic ties with Brazil,¹² his instructions to his South American embassies to expand fascist propaganda in 1934, Bardi's 1933 Exhibition of Italian architecture, and the constant bombardment of soft cultural rhetoric aimed at Italian expatriates in the region, must have all contributed to this perceived breakthrough.

The main targets had always been two-fold – direct political engagement with local creole elites *and* soft rhetoric trying to convince those of Italian lineage living abroad to embrace the fascist vision. In 1935, in Brazil, Marcello Piacentini, the regime's most powerful architect, was starting to benefit from this dual targeting strategy. In the case of the former, he was invited by the Brazil government to design a public work in Rio de Janeiro; while in the case of the latter, he received a private commission by an Italian immigrant/entrepreneur, Ermelino Matarazzo in São Paulo. Contemporaneously, from 1936 – 1940, the dual strategy seemed to converge positively in Argentina. Those years marked the political reign of the previously mentioned *nacionalista*, Manuel Fresco, as governor of the Province of Buenos Aires. Fresco had commissioned his friend,

¹² Brazilian President Vargas was an admirer of il Duce.

Francisco Salamone, an architect/engineer of Italian origins, to design projects in the province.

In the midst of the convergence of politics and architecture in South America, the soft rhetoric became aimed at cajoling those of Iberian ancestry into believing that they were linked to Italians through a common heritage of Roman-ness and/or Latin-ness. In a bold statement in 1937, Emilio De Bono, a founder of fascism who previously had governed in Libya from 1925 – 29, declared:

The Latin republics of America are living expressions of Roman-ness ... in the new continent ... If a Roman citizen of the time of Augustus were to be reborn in Uruguay, Paraguay, Argentina, or Brazil ... this Roman citizenship would feel the same beating of heart, the same geniality of mind, the reblossoming of intelligence, as in the lands of the Empire ... Fascist Italy, elevated to the rank of imperial Italy, is sending today her caring and inaugural salute to her sisters of America ... (Finchelstein, 2010, pp. 105-106)¹³

Gentile phrases were abound in De Bono's statement, but strikingly omitted were any references to those of native or African origins who populated these Latin republics. Yet would such soft rhetoric persuade the governments and people of Brazil and Argentina to embrace their fascist imperial Italian sisters?

It would appear to be so in the case of Piacentini who was originally appointed by the Brazilian government to design the campus of the Cidade Universitária do Rio de Janeiro. His designs for the buildings on the campus, a process that spanned from 1935 - 1938 (Tognon, 1999, p. 175), were formally and spatially reminiscent of those he had previously designed throughout Italy. Regardless of location, all his designs expressed a pure *italianità* version of Mediterranean-ness in the form of his signature stripped-down classicism. Carioca architects, such as Lucio Costa, were not accepting of Piacentini's proposal and wanted Le Corbusier's inclusion in the project.

¹³ Excerpts originally taken from La Rázon (Argentina), 24 May, 1937.

At the time, Brazil was having similar debates in architecture which tried to reconcile modernisation, localisms, and national identity, *brasillidade*. Costa acknowledged *'that the new architecture was international, but emphasised its Latin roots, which would make it more acceptable for Brazil...'* (Quezado Dexkker, 2001, p. 17). In this case, the specificity of terms such as Latin-ness and/or Mediterranean-ness varied depending on the nation concerned. Costa's interpretation of the term Latin-ness was not directly related to the fascist's promotion of *italianità*. Mediterranean-ness for many Brazilians was defined by *brasillidade* and, although it had its origins in Roman-ness, it was more aligned with the historic period of Portuguese Colonialism. These differences in defining terms fuelled the national debates which led in part to the fascist architect not receiving the commission for the campus.

Perhaps Piacentini, and by extension fascism, would have more success in São Paulo which had a very large Italian 'colony'.¹⁴ Piacentini's design of the Edifício Conde Matarazzo, 1935 -1939 (Tognon, 1999, p. 182), was an example of pure *"italianità"*, as it appropriated few localisms, and thus appeared more like an Italian building strangely misplaced. Despite its odd displacement, the building today has been transformed into the Prefeitura for São Paulo. Matarazzo retained Piacentini services to reconfigure his villa, 1939 – 1941 (Tognon, 1999, p. 189), and to design the Universidade Commercial Matarazzo which he began in 1938 (Tognon, 1999, p. 193). There was, however, no real breakthrough for fascism to take hold.

Would De Bono's persuasive rhetoric be more convincing in neighbouring Argentina? Many intellectuals felt that decades of heavy Italian immigration had been undermining the essential Hispanic character of the nation. Mediterranean-ness to this group of creoles was aligned more specifically to *hispanidad*, which represented an attempt at reclaiming the Hispanic roots of the country. Instead of Mediterranean-ness being seen as an overarching concept connecting creoles of Spanish descent with Italians, this group's preference of identifying with *hispanidad* drew a line between the two groups. At the same time, this group of

¹⁴ In Italian, the word for 'colony' can also applied to a large group (of Italians) living abroad. It does not necessarily mean that said group is under the jurisdiction of the Italian government.

creoles was denouncing the *cosmopolitanism* that was being promoted by other European (Italian inclusive) and North American influences in the country (Finchelstein, 2010, p. 145).

Architectural design in Argentina reflected pluralistic approaches – from those advocating the appropriation of elements from a Hispanic colonial past to the various proponents of cosmopolitanism. Fresco himself employed architects with varying approaches. Commissioning Salamone for a series of public works projects, however, would appear on the surface to demonstrate Mussolini's success in cajoling Fresco. This appeared evident in Argentine scholar Ramón Gutiérrez account of Salamone's works: '*the conservative governor Manuel Fresco populated the province of Buenos Aires with town halls that, in the rationalist language recalled the medieval palazzi comunali with towers as much as the designs of Mussolini's fascism*' (Belluci, 1983, p. 575).¹⁵ It is true that many of Salamone's works contained quasi-fascist formal and spatial content, but according to Argentine professor René Longoni, the architect was not a fascist, but someone who was politically shrewd in his ability to gain commissions through Fresco. Salamone, like many Argentines - especially those of Italian origin - did not necessarily embrace fascism or his Italian-ness wholeheartedly. Instead, he appropriated various architectonic elements, like most Latin Americans did at the time, when they suited his needs. Once again, what appeared to be a breakthrough in the eyes of Italian fascists, in reality led nowhere.

Conclusion

Mediterraneità (Mediterranean-ness) and all its variants were used by Italian fascists as means of propaganda aimed at convincing various groups of people that she had the right to reinvent herself as the modern day version of the Roman Empire. The strategy was to employ both *hard* and *soft* forms of rhetorical arguments and actions to try and achieve this imperial expansionism

¹⁵ Originally taken from Ramón Gutiérrez, *Arquitectura y Urbanismo en Iberoamerica*, 1983, p. 575.

in both her *realised* and *desired* colonies, such as North and East Africa and parts of South America, respectively. The arts and architecture played key roles in the fascist propaganda machine, particularly with many projects designed from 1935 -1940. Yet how did the people in the colonies receive the constant onslaught of fascists' propagandising of Italian superiority in architecture and aesthetics? What is the legacy, if any, resulted in the transference of Italian cultural capital to her *realised* and *desired* colonies?

In the case of the former *realised* colony of Libya, which was the inspiration for Rava's concept of *mediterraneità*, it experienced a deliberate dismantling and categorical rejection of said concept under the four decades of the rule of Colonel Gaddafi.

In the desired colony of Brazil, the results were mixed. Brazilians in Rio at the time rejected the works of Piacentini, but the Italian architect's design for a private commission in the late 1930s was built and today has been adapted into the city hall in one of the world's most populated cities. Do contemporary *paulistas* even know who built their city hall?

It is interesting to note that the transference of Italian cultural capital was viewed at least in two cases as containing the gravitas of *cosmopolitanism*. In one case, it appeared negatively as posing a danger to *hispanidad* in the *desired* colony of Argentina in the 1930s. In the other case, in the former *realised* colonial city of Asmara, present day *Asmarini* have appropriated it as a means of differentiating themselves from their less-worldly African neighbours (Fuller, 2011, p.15). Rejection or acceptance of *cosmopolitanism* was based on its ability to threaten or enhance one's cultural identity.

The traces of displaced Italian cultural capital into either *realised* and *desired* colonies did not translate into the prosperity that a global fascist empire was supposed to bring. Contemporary prosperity, however, may be found in the form of displaced Italian cultural capital in aesthetics. Its success in the world is still due in part to *soft* forms of rhetorical arguments, except this time the source is not fascism but capitalist marketing machines. Rampant desire for Italian cultural capital in the form of designer products in developing markets such as

China, embrace the contemporary rhetoric of consumerism, thus ensuring that the transference of Italian cultural capital, devoid of political propaganda, will live on into the twenty-first century. Italian cosmopolitanism lives on in the contemporary *desired* consumer colonies! *Viva italianità!*

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