

Introduction

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The aim of this special issue is to contribute to the ongoing rethinking of subalternity, a category that has changed due to neoliberalism and globalization. Early subaltern studies focused on Antonio Gramsci's discussion of power relations between hegemonic positions and popular masses, using his perspective to read (post)colonial patterns of control and agency.

In more recent years, subaltern studies have addressed not only the political and social ramifications of hegemony, but issues of media representation and cultural discourses as well. At the very heart of the contemporary discussion of subalternity, regarding both subjects and the communities they relate to, is the possibility to read contemporaneity by interlacing multiple approaches, from disciplines that are usually considered very distant from one another.

The following essays account for the importance of this multidisciplinary perspective, thus addressing media representation paradigms from the perspectives of visual culture, history, philosophy, postcolonialism, and so on. They are centered on the contemporary subaltern, especially the migrant one — characterized by diaspora and condemned to invisibility by hegemonic power — and the postcolonial subaltern — who has now the possibility to express her/himself in unexpected ways. The scattering and pervasiveness of media devices and gazes are discussed in depth in these essays, which delve into the dialectic between subaltern cultures and agency embodied in the subjects of representation.

The memory of diaspora and migration is one topic that reverberates in a number of essays. Ulrike Mothes analyses films by Thomas Brück and Bentely Brown, in which the filmmakers address their experience of discontinuity. By using home movies from childhoods spent abroad and combining them with a reflexive voice-over, they highlight their hybrid cultural identity. Michaela Quadraro draws on artwork by Piper, Ribka, Walcott, Julien and Kempadoo that deals with migration, diaspora and transculturality. She criticizes those historical accounts and archival practices that ignore the multiplicity of diasporic experiences in our world. Farah Polato takes interest in the memory of the Italian colonization and experiences of the African diaspora in Italy. Based on

a variety of films, she points out the many refractions of the diasporic subject, and how s/he articulates her/himself within a plurality of spaces. Renato Loriga reminds us that the (colonial) past can be represented also in radical different ways. Starting with a postcolonial critique of time, he shows how Raya Martin's film *Autobystoria* repossesses time and enables a negotiation of Filipino identity through subversive disarticulation.

Maja Figge and Sudeep Dasgupta discuss the visibility of subaltern subjects. Figge examines cell phone videos by refugees who document their passage across the Mediterranean Sea in the context of postcolonial visibility. She interprets the act of filming and of uploading on YouTube as political practice that intervenes on the one hand in the visual regime of border control, and on the other hand in the visual modes of representing migration. Dasgupta focuses on the un-integrated presence of subalterns in the film *A Bigger Splash*. Depicting the relationality of the film's protagonists and the figure of the migrant, he considers their intermittent adjacencies as a sensorial and a political provocation. Anu Thapa similarly addresses relationality. She shows that in today's popular Hindi cinema the figure of the subaltern is used to contrast a cosmopolitan protagonist. Questioning the conflation and monolithic notions of the subaltern and the popular, she suggests that these representations allow for negotiating and reformulating identity.

The second part of this issue firstly contains Lorenzo Marmo's review of the anthology *Networking the Globe: New Technologies and the Postcolonial*, in addition to an overview of the exhibition *The Mapping Journey Project*, by Simona Arillotta. Secondly, it proposes two PhD projects that are currently underway: Claudia Minchilli's focuses on the digital subaltern, as it examines transnational, online practices of migrant women; Wouter Oomen explores humanitarian communication campaigns and the discourse of common humanity that they employ.

The plurality of artistic products and media experiences addressed by the two sections of this issue mirrors the impossibility to grasp univocally the many meanings that the world 'subaltern' has assumed in the last years, when faced with ongoing changes in global cultures and economies. We hope that our selection will contribute to this wide debate, which is nevertheless still in need of further exploration.