# Staging the Other: Blackface, Stereotypes, and the Cultural Politics of Representation in Theatre and Cinema

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## Abstract

This article examines the origins of blackface in European theatrical traditions, examining its ideological foundations and historical expressions from antiquity to the present. It examines how European performance cultures have historically mobilised blackness as a performative and racialised construct, going beyond the often American-centric interpretation of blackface. The study aims to reveal how the visual and embodied motifs of blackface have been used in popular entertainment, judicial spectacles, and religious rituals to articulate changing but enduring forms of racial othering. The approach emphasises the ways in which these activities influenced the creation of cultural identities, the aesthetics of exoticism, and larger systems of colonial authority. The paper argues that blackface in Europe is a unique and deeply ingrained cultural matrix that necessitates critical historical analysis rather than being a derivation of American minstrelsy. Building on this analysis, the article shows how racial stereotypes in early American film are reinforced on the silver screen. This study provides an understanding of how performance has historically shaped perceptions of race and identity.

**Keywords:** Blackface, European theatre, racial representation, cultural politics, othering, performance studies

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## Introduction

The comic madman has long been an integral part of Western entertainment, but few figures have carried as much ideological weight as the black-faced madman. From Renaissance stages to modern cinema screens, the tradition of blackface, the painting of the face black to suggest dark skin and generally to embody offensive stereotypes, has influenced not only stage humour but also the construction of black race in cultural contexts. American professor Robert Hornback traces the emergence and formation of the custom of portraying blackface in offensive and racist ways throughout history. The roots of the practice can be traced back to medieval European theatre, where black colour, embodied by the mask of Harlequin, became over time a symbol of madness, ignorance and moral depravity (Hornback, 2018, p.24). Notable personalities such as Carlo Goldoni, the famous 18th-century Venetian playwright, could not understand why the mask of Harlequin, the reckless and ridiculous servant in the *commedia dell'arte*, is black, because there was no previous reference to it in Italian theatre (Hornback, 2018, p.36). Hornback links the origin of Harlequin (Hellechino means little devil) to the devils of medieval religious theatre. Harlequin's black mask, Hornback demonstrates, symbolizes the dark skin of the inhabitants of the African. The American author Lynne Lawner associates two Harlequin masks in the collection of the National Library of France in Paris with an Asian and an African (Fig.), believing that "Commedia figures in general—and Harlequin in particular—seem to have incorporated European society's fear of, and fascination with, the "other," the foreign, the marginal, the different, and (in the idiom of the time) the diabolic." (Lawner, 1998, p.18)

## Blackface in European Theatre: Origins and Ideology

In 1452, Pope Nicholas V issues the papal bull *Dum Diversas*, in which King Afonso V of Portugal receives the Catholic Church's approval to fight and subjugate Muslims and pagans in West Africa, "justly desiring that whatsoever concerns the integrity and spread of the faith, for which Christ our God shed his blood, shall flourish in the virtuous souls of the faithful.... [...] and to reduce their persons into perpetual slavery" (Maxwell, 1975, p.53). Together with the decree *Romanus Pontifex* issued three years later, Portugal was authorized by the pope to subjugate and convert to Christianity all the populations encountered from Morocco to the Indies — in practice to obtain slaves by violence or trade (Rodriguez, 1997, p.469).

In 1503 Pope Alexander VI offered identical favours to Spain concerning the territories of the American continents. To support the sugar industry, which was growing during the Renaissance, the Portuguese and Spanish brought labour from Africa. Between 1450 and 1521, over 130,000 Africans were forced to migrate by the Portuguese slave trade system. By 1619 almost 400,000 Africans had been transported to the territories colonized by the Spanish in the Americas.

An important Old Testament passage, Ham's curse made by Noah, was to play a crucial role in the slave trade. Ham was cursed by Noah so that his son Canaan would always be a slave. Ancient Jewish literature mentions this curse by referring to Canaan's dark coloured skin as punishment. The interpretation of the curse by Rabbi Hiyya the Great in the 3rd century supported this idea, that black skin is a punishment (Hornback, 2018, p.86). In the mid-16th century, at the same time as the expansion of colonization and of the slave trade, the German humanist Johann Boemus, the author of the first European ethnographic compendium of the early modern period and a specialist in Hebrew studies, wrote that Ham's curse divided humanity in two: the advanced and the barbarians (Hornback, 2018, p.89). The civilized-uncivilized dichotomy dominated European culture, presenting the differences between the colonialists and the colonized as binary oppositions between good and evil, black and white, superior and inferior, self and other. As European colonial expansion intensified, the theatrical mockery of blackface was no longer just a means of comedy, but a tool of cultural domination. At a time when the transatlantic slave trade was in full swing, the comic character of the blackface madman took on a new dimension: no longer was it just an element of farce, but an implicit justification of subjugation. The black-faced madman was not just a funny figure: it was an ideological construct designed to make slavery seem natural, even funny. The minstrel stereotypes that would later dominate American entertainment were already in training (Hornback, 2018, pp.109-138).

## Blackface in American Culture: Minstrelsy and Cinema

Minstrelsy shows, a form of 19th-century American entertainment, contained a mixture of comic skits, songs, dances and variety acts, all built around racial stereotypes that portrayed blacks as lazy, ignorant, superstitious, hypersexual, cowardly and cheerful. White performers who painted their faces black with ashes from a burned cork stopper, a practice called blackface, presented exaggerated caricatures of African Americans, especially slaves on southern plantations. Minstrelsy productions enjoyed enormous success, turning racial mockery into a commodity, integrating the European blackface tradition into a

purely American art form - one that thrived not least because it reinforced white audiences' sense of cultural and racial supremacy. The origins of minstrelsy are often attributed to Thomas Rice, dubbed the "father of minstrelsy", who popularized the Jim Crow character in the 1830s. This character, inspired by Rice's alleged observations about enslaved people, embodied a faltering and dull-witted figure whose name later became synonymous with segregation laws. Here is how the New York Tribune describes Jim Crow's effect on the public:

> "It was at this epoch that Mr. T. D. Rice made his debut in a dramatic sketch entitled „Jim Crow," and from that moment everybody was "doing just so," and continued "doing just so" for months, and even years afterward. Never was there such an excitement in the musical or dramatic world; nothing was talked of, nothing written of, and nothing dreamed of, but "Jim Crow." The most sober citizens began to „wheel about, and turn about, and jump Jim Crow." It seemed as though the entire population had been bitten by the tarantula; in the parlor, in the kitchen, in the shop and in the street, Jim Crow monopolized public attention." (Lott, 2013, p.3)

Half a century later, racial segregation laws, which stipulated that whites and blacks could not use the same public services, would come to be known as Jim Crow laws. Other characters in the African American community were Zip Coon - a character who derided free blacks, a flashy, urban dandy, stylishly dressed, with a demeanour that undermined his attempts to appear dignified - and Mammy - a loyal and subservient older woman, often depicted as content in her subjugation. These caricatures not only entertained, but codified simplistic and degrading stereotypes that reduced African Americans to one-dimensional figures, stripping away individuality and humanity. Minstrelsy was not simply a form of entertainment, but reflected the major political and social conflicts of its era. Emerging at a time of intense debate over slavery, labour struggles and racial tensions, minstrelsy performances helped to justify racial oppression and create the identity of the white underclass. American historian Eric Lott attributes the success of minstrelsy to the need of the white working class to differentiate themselves from African Americans. Minstrel shows were a form of entertainment for the working class, caught between the bourgeoisie and the African American working class. The anxiety generated by class divisions gave rise to a number of fears among the working class about white status. In the neighbourhoods to which they moved, white working-class members

encountered black families, heightening their sense of blending in and undergoing a process of "blackening." Men began to blame the decline in social status on race and gender, countering this erosion by emphasizing their authority as white men: "Blackface minstrelsy […] was founded on this antinomy, reinstituting with ridicule the gap between black and white working class" (Lott, 2013, p.74)

**Resistance and Reclamation**

To protect themselves from unfavourable stereotyping, black actors have used theatre, particularly the African Theatre Company of New York, founded in 1821. The company specialized in Shakespeare, the most prestigious symbol of oratory in the rhetoric-hungry American democracy, with the intention of demonstrating that the black population was no less than the white one (Hornback, 2018, p.215). The central figure of the theatre company was James Hewlett, a remarkable actor and a champion of the African American public image. Company members, led by Hewlett, wanted to make Shakespeare their own, and they were to prove it with impeccable interpretations of the bard's texts. Hewlett was regarded by critics as one of the most impressive actors of his time. A nickname he gave himself, "Shakespeare's proud representative", dogged him for decades. Violently attacked, relentlessly harassed and humiliated on stage by Thomas Rice, Hewlett retired to the Caribbean. The character of Jim Crow was so famous that Hewlett's exquisite performances had no place or visibility in New York.

African Americans were not the only ones affected by stereotypes in the 19th century. Immigrants from Europe, especially the Irish, proud members of the American working class, were regarded as foreigners by the continent's native-born population. Americans were trying to create an identity for themselves as inhabitants of the New World, with their own character, history and future, different from that of the immigrants. At the same time, the European immigrants who were coming to the United States in increasing numbers were also having to create an identity that would ensure them a place in the receiving society. When the Irish arrived in America in the nineteenth century, they were surprised to discover that there was already a stereotype of the drunken Irish, and that to Americans they were immigrants, so they had to construct an image that presented them as both Irish and American (Mooney, 2015, pp.2-3). The stereotype of the drunken, violent and ill-mannered Irishman has its roots in British theatre, where characters such as *Teague* and *Paddy* were used to ridicule and marginalize the Irish as early as the 16th century (Mooney, 2015, pp.8-9). These representations, which portrayed the Irish as ignorant, chaotic and incapable of integrating into civilized society, were

often used to justify British colonial rule over Ireland. When Irish immigrants arrived in the United States, they found these stereotypes already ingrained in American popular culture, where they were adapted and perpetuated in performances such as vaudeville and minstrelsy. In America, the Irish stereotype was a tool by which American society tried to manage its anxieties about immigration and diversity. However, the Irish were not passive victims of their savage representation. Many Irish and Irish-American performers took these stereotypes and transformed them, using them as a means of cultural integration and affirmation. For example, Harry Kernell, an Irish-American comedian, replaced the exaggerated image of Paddy with more refined characters that reflected the aspirations of a rising middle class (Mooney, 2015, pp.50-53). This effort to redefine Irish identity on stage was a way of challenging marginalization and reclaiming a place in American society. At the same time, the Irish were involved in perpetuating stereotypes of other ethnic groups, particularly African Americans, through their participation in blackface performances. By being involved in minstrelsy, Irish immigrants were asserting their whiteness and distancing themselves from black communities. But there were performers such as Edward Harrigan, who combined Irish and African-American stereotypes, which helped improve the image of both communities. In vaudeville, the Irish were not the only subjects of ethnic caricatures—Germans, Jews, Italians and African-Americans were also portrayed in exaggerated and degrading stereotypes. The German character named *Dutch* was often portrayed as naïve and foolish, while Jews were portrayed as greedy and cunning. These depictions reflected the ethnic hierarchies of American society. The Irish, though marginalized, by participating in blackface performances and adopting ethnic characters, detached themselves from African Americans and the underclass of other immigrants and aligned themselves with the dominant values of white culture. Ethnic stereotypes in vaudeville were a tool through which immigrant groups or marginalized communities negotiated and reinforced their power relations.

## Cinematic Stereotypes: Racial and Ethnic Caricatures in Hollywood

In February 1915 and March of the same year, *The Birth of a Nation* was released in Los Angeles and New York respectively. Stereotypical characters such as the *mammy*, the subservient maid, and attitudes towards African-Americans already seen in minstrelsy were now appearing in the movies. Reconstruction in the United States meant the abolition of slavery in the South and the attempt to bring the freed African American population, with equal rights, into the mainstream

of society. The movie portrays life in the pre-Reconstruction South in an idyllic, dreamy way, nostalgic for a time when life was peaceful and beautiful. Slavery is romanticized through scenes of contented slaves picking cotton to spirited music, a theme picked up later in 1939 in the opening credits of *Gone with the Wind*. The enslaved African Americans are content, singing, devoted to their masters, rejecting freedom, while the freed behave like brutes, are insolent and murderous. Reconstruction is portrayed as something noxious that has destroyed the idyllic landscape of the South, which African Americans did not want, as evidenced by a 'mammy' who helps her white master escape the authorities. The 'mammy' character has become a ubiquitous cinematic representation of women of colour in all genres of Hollywood film. The movie also exploits white fears of interracial sexual liaisons by showing a Caucasian woman leaping from a height to avoid the advances of Gus, an African American man, who was (of course) played by a white actor in blackface. It was already a bad period for the African American population when the movie was released. Jim Crow segregation was on the rise, lynchings of African Americans were at an all-time high, and murder and violence against blacks were taking place across the South. The movie's success was phenomenal, but so were its negative effects. In less than a year, the film was seen by 3 million people (Guerrero, 1993, p.13). Glorifying the criminal Ku Klux Klan, which had been suppressed along with the Reconstruction, as a moral salvation army, the film spurred the group's reformation, which in four years had reached a record 5 million members. In cinema, *The Birth of a Nation* sparked a movement of films known as the *plantation genre*, stories set in the South, fantasies of a non-existent history in which black slaves were happy to be enslaved, often shown singing and dancing for joy around their white masters. Until *The Birth of a Nation*, films limited themselves to presenting stereotypes, often comical, of African Americans, but the innovative film techniques used to create ideological discourse and manipulate audience reactions reinvigorated the strongest racial resentments (Urwand, 2018, pp.45-64). Portrayals of African Americans in the following decades shifted from submissive to timidly respectable, and stereotypes dominated until the 1970s, when a wave of black filmmakers contributed to the process of self-defining identity. In the 1940s and 1950s even the FBI, reviewing film productions, considered black characters subversive (Noakes, 2003, pp.728-749). In the 1960s Hollywood set out to sell films to African American audiences as well, so a series of productions with black actors in most of the roles, called *blaxploitation* by critics, were released, which also merely promoted stereotypes (Guerrero, 1993, pp.69-112). In the 1970s a wave of

independent films by black artists challenged Hollywood's control over black images and

> "have […] contributed to creating an emergent, decolonizing, antiracist cinema that in its images, sounds, aesthetics, and modes of production has attempted to reconstruct the world on the screen from black points of view cast in liberating images and new paradigms." (Guerrero, 1993, p.137)

In the mid-1990s, stereotypes were still visible in cinema, and the presence of black actors in films was still uneven (Sarah et al., 2002, pp.299-334).

**Stereotypes Beyond Race: Gender and Ethnic Caricatures**

From its earliest decades, Hollywood has been a place of diversity, where European immigrants sought to integrate socially and culturally, while the film industry fed on their particularities, using them to shape and impose stereotypical characters. In the 1920s, Russian immigrants were one of the most important ethnic groups of extras. Made up of ex-servicemen, aristocrats and intellectuals fleeing the Bolshevik revolution, Russians were always present in small parts, often playing noblemen and soldiers, and were admired by filmmakers for their class and sophistication (Yangirov, 2006, pp.31-36). In the 19th century, the largest group of immigrants to America were German speakers—it was also the official language in the Habsburg Empire (consisting of Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, parts of Yugoslavia, Romania and Poland), Prussia and the German provinces. Between 1816 and 1914, an estimated 5.5 million Germans emigrated to the USA, and at the turn of the century, the city with the most German inhabitants after Berlin was New York. German-language newspapers and theatres promoted German culture, while remaining open to other German-speaking emigrants or Jews, putting on Yiddish-language shows for them (Yangirov, 2006, p.38). When Hollywood developed and came into direct competition with the German film industry, German emigrants already settled in the United States were used in films, and others brought from Europe. Italians were more resistant to learning English, so studios produced movies in their native language. Neapolitan theatrical traditions entered the American theatre and from there they made into cinema, creating an image of the stereotypical 'Italian', a character who gesticulates a lot and speaks with an accent (Muscio, 2006, pp.45-52). Italian actors were generally used in for gangster roles or passionate lovers. Nurturing a fascination with British literature and history, Hollywood took a keen interest in British actors (Street, 2006, pp.61-70). The

theatrical tradition gave the British a special place in the American film industry, casting them in demanding roles. At the same time, Americans generally considered the British to be snobbish, which is why cinema portrayed them in the same way, casting them as pretentious aristocrats (Spicer, 2006, pp.141-150). In addition, men were offered parts of villains with a strange, sinister side, such as Hannibal Lecter in *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), played by Anthony Hopkins, or Patrick Bateman in *American Psycho* (2000), played by Christian Bale. Tom Hardy (*Bronson* - 2008), Ralph Fiennes (*Schindler's List* - 1993), Malcolm McDowell (*A Clockwork Orange* - 1971), Daniel Day-Lewis (*There Will Be Blood* - 2007), Gary Oldman (*Leon: The Professional* - 1994), Cillian Murphy (*Red Eye* - 2005) complete the list of psychopaths and mental derailed played by British actors. At the same time the 'wounded man', seen in Ralph Fiennes' tormented roles, capitalizes on the supposed emotional depth of British actors. Beyond the villain roles, Britons are also cast as the 'repressed Englishman', illustrated by Hugh Grant's clumsy charm, or the 'wise old man', represented by Ian McKellen or Patrick Stewart (Spicer, 2006, pp.143-146). Hollywood consistently casts British actors in roles requiring intelligence, aristocratic behaviour or moral ambiguity, reinforcing cultural stereotypes while giving them a unique presence in the American cinema.

Ironically, most of the European Jews who fled the Nazi regime, as they were all German speakers, ended up playing German officers or leaders of the Third Reich in Hollywood. During World War II, Americans produced around 180 anti-Nazi movies, and German-speaking actors starred in 90% of them. A series of letters and interviews with Jewish émigrés, who played just about everything in the Nazi palette, from soldiers and doctors to Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, show that the actors had no negative feelings about the characters they played (Garncarz, 2006, pp.103-113). The most important thing for the Jewish actors was that the role had artistic value so as to emphasize their talent. Frustration arose only when they were given the same Nazi soldier part in which they played nothing different or had no psychological depth to portray.

Another ironic situation is that of Spanish actors who have built successful Hollywood careers playing Latino characters. This stereotypical category encompassed exotic, sensual and temperamental women, with musical rhythms in their blood and close to their local traditions, or seductive men, Latin lovers.[1] Although the term Latino should be representative of the populations of the Mediterranean area of Europe, in Hollywood it has a completely different meaning,

[1] For a history of Latino actors, see Rodriguez, 2004

referring to the inhabitants of Latin America. However, it is not the aboriginal peoples of Peru, Bolivia or Mexico that are of interest to American cinema, but "Castro's Cuba, the Colombia of drug-dealers, the Central America of the Revolution and the Contras, a Mexico of a still primitive and savage gusto" (Sanchez-Biosca, 2006, p.135). This is how, in order to become Hollywood stars, European actors originating from what was once the Spanish Empire, the colonizer of the Americas, renounce their own European identity to embody the stereotypes of peoples who were part of the old Spanish colonies. Antonio Banderas in *Desperado* and *Zorro* plays Mexicans, and a Cuban in *Original Sin*; Penélope Cruz in *Bandidas* and *Spanglish* plays Mexicans; in his first Hollywood role, which earned him the first Oscar nomination for a Spaniard, Javier Bardem plays Cuban poet Reinaldo Arenas. American professor Charles Ramirez Berg studies the Latino image in American cinema and, by investigating the most common stereotypical Latino character, *el bandido* (the bandit), he applies a series of functions that this stereotype performs in communication. These information categories could be applied to any stereotype as a basis for research. They are *racial*—because the dark skin shows the bandit from the start as an Other from the white standard, *national*—the bandit is not American, *narrative*—seen in decades of film productions as a danger, the way to balance is to eliminate him, *behavioral*—the character will behave as a cunning, despicable criminal, *psychological*—his behavior defines him as an unstable, sadistic, alcoholic and sexually obsessed misfit, *moral*—the bandit is immoral or amoral, opposing the values of American society or standing outside them, and *ideological*—his existence threatens the dominant American ideology (Berg, 2002, pp.39-41). I would add that, ideologically, the American population with roots in the Caribbean, Central and South America has been positioned—through processes of othering—into a category of outsiders, or worse, "aliens," a term used as early as 1937 by the California legislature to designate immigrants.

Asian Americans have experienced a similar kind of othering, the roles that members of their community were given were small parts or extras, with an emphasis on the exoticism built by what Edward Said called Orientalism (Said, 1978). The Chinese-born American actress Anna May Wong, a global celebrity in the 1920s and 1930s with more than sixty film roles, was one of the voices that opposed stereotypical representations of Asians. Dissatisfied with the roles she was offered in Hollywood, Wong went to Europe, where she relaunched her career, landing more attractive and less stereotypical roles. On her return to the US, Wong suffered the biggest disappointment of her career, losing the lead role in *The Good Earth,* a movie set in China. The main parts were played by Paul Muni and Luise

Rainer, both from European immigrant families, who had their faces painted yellow - a process called yellowface - to show they were Chinese. Wong continued to fight stereotypes by traveling to China and filming the customs and places where her family came from, using the footage she called "my film" to show the American public a different image of Asia—her own image (Lim, 2019, pp.152-180).

**Women in Cinema: Between Archetype and Autonomy**

The representation of women in American cinema has undergone important changes over time, but, says British theorist Laura Mulvey, it has always been seen from the male perspective, what she calls the *male gaze* (Mulvey, 1975, pp.6-18).[2] In the 1920s, female characters were divided into two main archetypes, vamps and virgins, and then in the 1930s, with the advent of sound, the characters became more complex, strong and independent, embodied by actresses such as Katharine Hepburn, Bette Davis and Joan Crawford—although they were often punished at the end of the movies, reinforcing the norms of society. During the Great Depression between 1929 and 1933, Hollywood adopted the Production Code or Hays Code, which imposed strict ethical guidelines on films, reinforcing traditional morality and eliminating sexual traits from the portrayal of women, thus limiting the types of female characters allowed on screen. Even under the strictures of the Hays Code, the 1930s can be considered a golden age for women in cinema, with actresses such as Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich portraying complex, multi-dimensional characters. The 1940s saw the emergence of the strong woman and the femme fatale as the dominant character types in Hollywood. The former was independent, smart and resourceful, able to compete with men, fearless, while the latter, the femme fatale, sensual and cunning, used beauty and seduction to control men, often leading them to their doom. The first type had emerged because of the changes in society brought about by the war, forcing women to manage without their men away at the front, while the second reflected the fear of men returning from war who found independent, working women who had jobs. The 1950s reduced the representation of women to housewives, a type of character that spread values such as the nucleus of the family and domestic life, and sex symbols, reduced to looks and sexual attributes of the body. While the United States provided less and less opportunities for complex and independent female characters, European cinema offered a more nuanced and complex portrayal of women than

[2] For the trajectory of women's representation in American cinema over the decades see Haskell, 1974

Hollywood. Directors such as Sweden's Ingmar Bergman, Italy's Federico Fellini and France's Jean-Luc Godard explored female sexuality, identity and autonomy in ways rarely seen in American films. The European approach, which treated women as fully realized individuals, contrasted with Hollywood's tendency to reduce them to stereotypes (Haskell, 1974, pp.277-322). Over the decades, new stereotypes have emerged, such as the heroine in action films, often scantily dressed and sexualized, the career woman or the insecure woman in romantic comedies. Women are still failing to shape their own representation in movies. A 2022 study analyses nearly two hundred thousand sentences from Hollywood films from 1940 to 2019 in search of patterns that accompany characters of different genders. Male roles are associated with themes as diverse as murder or violence, while female characters are generally associated with romantic life and relationships (Kumar et al, 2022).

## Conclusion

Blackface is a long-standing and flexible cultural technique that European societies have used to create and perform racial difference, as we can observe in the genealogy of the practice. The figure of the blackened face has performed both symbolic and ideological roles, frequently delineating the line between the racist other and the civilized self, from medieval celebrations and Renaissance pageants to Enlightenment theatre and beyond. This study shows how performance has continuously impacted colonial imaginaries and power systems, exposing blackface's embeddedness in European cultural history rather than seeing it as a uniquely American phenomena. In revisiting these performance practices, we are compelled to confront the aesthetic and political legacies of racial representation that continue to resonate in modern cultural production.

The practice of performing difference is perceived as a constant cultural behaviour through which societies build and maintain the image of the Other. Whether they are racial, centuries-old, ethnic, national or gender stereotypes, views about groups are deeply ideological, capable or even designed to influence attitudes and behaviour. Stereotypes both reflect societal attitudes and influence them. The link works both ways: an attitude is observed through existing stereotypes, but it is also reinforced by their repetition. Stereotypes feed on performance. They need to be acted, drawn, interpreted, enunciated, transmitted and spread. The actor, as entertainer, as performer, is a possible caricaturist who puts his appearance and performance at the service of exaggerating what is different, what transforms the subject of the performance into a recognizable other. As we see, the effects of

repeating a stereotype can be tragic. The actor may favour or disfavour their own group or another group they choose to represent performatively. They may accept the stereotype or resist it, but between compliance and resistance, ignorance should not be an option.

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