"From the Mirror of Narcissus to Mirror Neurons: Cognitive Science and the Hyper-realism of Garrone's *Gomorrah*"

Saturday April 16th, 1:30-3:00 pm
Bingham Davis House, 1st floor Conference Room

This presentation will propose a neuro-scientific approach to the heightened realism of Matteo Garrone's film *Gomorrah*. Research on the workings of "mirror neurons" has shown that certain techniques, above all the use of the steadicam, have been particularly effective in producing an embodied response in the viewer. In the case of Gomorrah, where the majority of the shooting is done by steadicam (wielded by Garrone himself!), the film's heightened realism may well find its explanation at the neurological level. The talk will include close analysis of key scenes throughout Gomorrah, with a brief foray into a second film, Gabriele Salvatore's *I'm Not Scared*, before concluding with some general reflections on the critical possibilities opened up by this exciting new field of research.

Millicent Marcus is Professor of Italian and Film Studies at Yale University. Her specializations include medieval literature, Italian cinema, interrelationships between literature and film, and representations of the Holocaust in post-war Italian culture. She is the author of *An Allegory of Form: Literary Self-Consciousness in the 'Decameron'* (1979), *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism* (1986), *Filmmaking by the Book: Italian Cinema and Literary Adaptation* (1993) and *After Fellini: National Cinema in the Postmodern Age* (2002), and *Italian Film in the Shadow of Auschwitz* (2007). She has also published numerous articles on Italian literature and on film, and is currently studying contemporary Italian cinema within the theoretical framework of "post-realism."