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MIGRANT MEDIASCAPES

Migration Cinema as a Medium for Intercultural Comprehension in the Italian and German Film Heritage (2011–2026)

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Introduction

The doctoral project investigates the cultural and aesthetic models inherent in Italian and German cinematographic representations of contemporary migrations triggered by the “Arab Spring”. The relevance of the theme is starkly evident in the recent proliferation of artistic and audiovisual representations on migrations, especially in countries like **Italy and Germany** – respectively the first European destination geographically and the largest in terms of reception. These countries serve as entry points to the EU through the “central route” of the Mediterranean.

Materials and Methods

With a transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary theoretical-methodological approach, the project examines audiovisual narratives of otherness through the lenses of disciplines such as Global media studies, Postcolonial studies, Visual anthropology, Film studies, and Visual culture studies. In contrast to the extensive European literature on the subject, the specific contribution of this project is to explore aesthetic and cultural perspectives in examining the agency of films focused on migratory processes and **the symbolic, imaginary, and mythological dimensions** of migration cinema. Borrowing from A. Appadurai, the notion of “**mediascapes**” we highlight the importance of global media landscapes and cultural flows in shaping individual and collective imaginaries, amplified by the pervasiveness of globally distributed media. A **comparative approach** between Italian and German audiovisuals will contribute to a fruitful exchange of perspectives, preventing the risk of self-reference and fostering a cosmopolitan culture.

Expected Results

Among the expected research outcomes are the possibility to construct a **visual grammar** of *topoi*, myths, and narratives in the audiovisual representation of migrations, and the potential identification of a model of **cultural pluralism** that, recognising diversities, promotes intercultural dialogue. The research findings will be expressed through a **website-archive**, enriched with artificial intelligence functions, targeting both the dissemination of innovative digital models for academic research and the promotion of social inclusion among the wider audience. The website will showcase the examined Italian and German **film heritage** in a thematic and open-access database, indexed according to relevant criteria and translated into Italian, English, and German. Filling a gap in Italy, this digital environment aims to enable customisable research and provide a filmographic and bibliographic corpus. Another research outcome will be collaboration with identified stakeholders, specifically the Human Rights Film Festival Berlin and Crocevia di Sguardi (Torino), where events will be organised to **disseminate** research findings and engage in public debate.

Discussion

Europe has a long history of encounters and clashes with other cultures, from colonial conquests to the development of communal democratic institutions. At this historical moment, the European Community has the opportunity to promote **intercultural dialogue** and solidarity practices under the banner of a cosmopolitanism in which visual and audiovisual media can constitute a public space for coexistence and cultural pluralism. The **imagination**, adopting an *alter*-native perspective, and its mobilisation through cinema can represent a valuable resource for understanding both otherness and our belonging to a shared and unitary multiplicity.

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