

CALL FOR PAPERS

Migrations, Citizenships, Inclusion.

Narratives of Plural Italy, between Imaginary and Diversity Politics

XXVI International Conference of Film Studies

Rome, May 6-8, 2021

Department of Philosophy, Communication, and Performing Arts - University of Roma Tre

Confirmed Keynote Speakers:

Áine O’Healy (Loyola Marymount University), Igiaba Scego (writer and journalist),
Jennifer Smith (Head of Inclusion, BFI)

The global pandemic crisis triggered by COVID-19, on the threshold of 2020, also had a tremendous impact on creative industries, whose supply chains are kept on track, in Italy as elsewhere, thanks to mostly intermittent workers, with a weak social protection. While claiming an urgent recovery plan for the whole sector, we stand for a widening and broader diversity in the gamut of interested parties. In this way, it would be possible to respond to a global demand for participation, coming from groups that are scarcely present in senior positions and are associated with a strongly limited narrative. XXVI International Conference of Film Studies *Migrations, Citizenships, Inclusion* aims to meet this demand and return it in terms of analysis and operating proposals.

We solicit contributions addressing the specificities of “made in Italy” between film and media, with reference to migration, citizenship and inclusion. We would like to expand this conversation, in order to: a) include, using a common framework, artistic platforms, and diversity politics, and to b) confront them with modeling audio/visual products and experiences from other countries, in Europe and in the global arena.

The double scope of this conference, as an ideal closure of the interdisciplinary project *Imagineries of Global Migration: Identity, Citizenship, Interculturality* (Call for Ideas 2019-21), is to explore the order of narratives in film and media on migrations, citizenship and transculturality, and the space of viability for talents with a migrant background in Italian creative industries.

Narratives on and from migrant and post-migrant subjects in film and media represent a consolidated global field of practices and discourses, offer a wide range of perspectives, address the

diasporic circuits sometimes exploited by creatives, or scrutinize the subtexts these audio/visual productions convey across the border on the «color of the nation».

The study of audio/visual narratives on migration, citizenship and transculturality spread in the early 2000s, starting from commentaries that emerged in the contexts of militant criticism and Italian Studies and produced over the years mostly first mappings and case studies in film and media scholarship. Only recently, in contributions focused on transcultural encounter and oriented to cultural and postcolonial studies, we have started to find analyses of (not only) audio/visual narratives, recovering the traces of a minoritizing, and even racializing, long-lasting imagery.

Meanwhile, in contributions more directly associated to the Film and Media Studies scholarship, we have had a remarkable amount of comparative mappings, on a European scale, in which audio/visual practices on migrations, from and to Italy, and of transcultural encounter, were confronted with experiences made in countries experiencing a far more developed conversation on these issues, such as United Kingdom and France.

Far more episodic were overviews concerning creatives with migrant backgrounds aimed to: a) profile authors/authoresses in their artistic career; b) analyze how they position themselves in relation to main productive or artistic trends on a local, European or global scale; c) investigate weaknesses, oppositions and gaps limiting the level of inclusion in Italian creative industries.

We experience a relative stagnation in film and media narratives on migrations, citizenship and transculturality, associated mostly with uplifting stories of first arrival and reception. This stagnation appears conditioned by a political elite strongly polarized on these issues, as well as by a news system that is oriented to be a sounding board for the discontent of the social media audience rather than a body that gives tools for reading the present. In addition, the context of UE-based and local migration politics justify and support proactively securitarian, sovereignist and necropolitic logics that have transformed the Mediterranean Sea into the most tragic liquid frontier along the global arena.

In response to this rather daunting scenario, made even more gloomy during the global pandemic, here and there we can see timid signs of liveliness and openness toward claiming more inclusive narratives, and a niche for stories more in tune with the real country, especially in *cinéma du réel* production, in TV series and formats for the web.

In civil society and movements, we can see an emerging activism among young generations, in immigrant organizations, and grassroots unions fighting for new rights and protections. We can feel it as well: a claiming of formal and symbolic citizenship that has been postponed far too long; a transfeminist protagonism that knows no bounds; a diffused associationism requiring new spaces in representation and agency for LGBT*QIA+ subjectivities, for persons with disabilities, and for

communities subject to discrimination only for being Roma, Sinti and Travellers; to fight for large layers of the population watching their fundamental rights be undermined, from healthcare to education.

On the other hand, there has been a hive of initiatives testifying – from the persons concerned along with critics – about the emergence of a new growing global awareness related to issues of privilege and inequality in creative industries. Consider the activism of French actresses of African descent (see the book *Noire n'est pas mon métier*), the Diversity Standards of British Film Institute, the more and more frequent experiences of non-traditional casting, or the recent Representation and Inclusion Standards adopted by Academy Awards in September 2020. It's time for decision makers in Italian cultural politics to affirm the global sensibility and confront these questions of inequality of opportunity, rather than condoning a stagnant state of things.

We are seeking a variety of applications to present on the themes of the conference that may include:

- Modes of Representation: mainstream narratives reinforcing the dichotomy Us vs. Others and a stagnant imaginary concerning Italianness and Europeanness, and narratives that, on the contrary, acting on a platform of more or less explicit *artivism*, try to subvert the dominant discursive order around migration, citizenship and transculturality;
- Esthetic Forms and New Languages: audio/visual live and reproduced expressive practices, mostly associated to pseudo-naturalistic, sensationalist or parodic registers, prevailing in narratives concerning migration, citizenship and transculturality, and those experiences that, emerging among the interstitial spaces of the market, work to change the horizon of artistic and exhibiting practices;
- Documentary Narratives: modes of representation concerning migrants and foreign-born Italians in *cinéma du réel*, as seen between cultural stereotypes and attempts at dialogue, approaches that reflect the widespread polarization around the issues of transculturality and experiences promoting instead social interaction, the participatory use of media, and self-representation;
- Made in Italy, Transnationalism, Anti/models: traditions, modeling experiences and case studies revealing the presence of interrelations and exchange, cultural specificities and resistances, development perspectives that are useful to compare on a Europe-wide and global scale;
- Authors/Authoresses and Performers: profiles of migrant and post-migrant authorship and actoriality/stardom that left their mark on the audio/visual Italian scene, investigated – for example – in their relations with professional training places and esthetic and productive reference modes; their most recognizable marks, on productive, symbolic and stylistic plans; the plurality of their modes of positioning in terms of identity, culture and politics;

- Degree of Multilingualism: the existing practices of verbal communication displayed in audio/visual texts that highlight the existence of a multilayered multilingualism, envisioning a hiatus between the convoluted language of Italian laws and regulations, the mixture of dialects and idiolects associated to a defined area and the parental language and norms, which then trigger a plurality of dynamics of affiliation in migrant and post-migrant subjectivities;
- Diversity Politics in Creative Industries: the existing national initiatives in governance, the management of broadcasting public service, and the self-regulation of the private sector that promotes diversity politics both on and off screen, as well as the programs to support the creativity of persons of foreign origins, which sometimes rely on monitoring aimed at checking the degree of pluralism and inclusion in creative industries and the impact of the initiatives promoted;
- Bad Practices still in use in Italian film and media: frequent instances of blackface in popular TV shows and films; the routine casting of foreign-born white Italians (or professional actors/actresses imported from abroad) in the role of migrants and post-migrants; a failure to use creatives of foreign origin when telling stories concerning migration, citizenship and transculturality; the tendency to ask creatives with a migrant background to deal only and exclusively of migration; the habit of relegating performers of foreign or «mixed» origins in secondary and ethnically connoted roles; the relations existing between the strong survival of those bad practices and the periodic rekindling of the crusade against a presumed «political correct dictatorship» or «cancel culture».

Please send your 300-350 words abstracts for individual proposals with 3-5 keywords, a short biography, and your contacts to Prof. Leonardo De Franceschi and prof. Ivelise Perniola at romatreconf2021@uniroma3.it by the **31st of March, 2021**.

The acceptance of proposals will be confirmed by the 12th of April, 2021.

Fee for applicants attending: 20 euros.

We welcome 20-minute papers. The languages of the conference are English and Italian.

Organization: Department of Philosophy, Communication, and Performing Arts - University of Roma Tre

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