

Special Issue: 'Italy's Souths and Islands in Film, Media and Visual Cultures (2000–22)'

Proposal submission by **15 September 2022**

Italy's 'Souths' (including the southern regions of the peninsula and the islands, Sicily and Sardinia) as social, historical and cultural realities have been variously refracted, represented and re-constructed in national and global media cultures. Internal and external gazes have been producing types, tropes and stereotypes, whether by conflating differences in a singular Southern commonplace or by sketching regional *chronotopes* (Bakhtin 1981) and heterotopias (Foucault 1984). Since Italy's Unification, geographical and historical circumstances have been generating public and academic debates on the political, social, economic, and cultural realities and the representations of the multifaceted assemblage of *il Meridione/il Mezzogiorno* and its 'Southern Question' (Gramsci 1926; Barbagallo 2013).

Such articulations and ensuing debates have found space into traditional and emerging forms over the past two decades, marked by the mainstreaming of the internet, social networks and novel forms of digitized, post-cinematic and screen media, as well as global crises and transformations and the rise of momentous equity movements. This calls for further theorization and analyses of the notions of the Italian Souths in global cinema and media ecologies. Focusing on continuities as well as transformations of themes of Italian Southern-ness over the past two decades, this Special Issue calls for interventions on media forms and modes that include cinema, commercials, documentaries, fiction, advertising, web series, social networks and media platforms, digital games and streaming.

Addressing manifold mediated expressions in relation to their underpinning social and cultural realities, the issue seeks to address gazes and voices both *on* and *from* these Souths as well as diverse epistemic frameworks, geographies of knowledge, genealogies of power, and maps of language (Urban et al. 2012) that emerge in media production and consumption and among audiences and communities, including distinct areas of scholarship. We hope to open up a multidisciplinary field of discussion (including film, cinema, screen media, visual cultures, Italian, historical, and media and cultural studies), welcoming contributions on local, national and global narratives and images of 'Italian Southern-ness', and fostering interconnections between the communities of *Italianx* and *Italianistx*.

This Special Issue aims to assess with nuance and attention for contextuality and complexity both the starkly simplistic and the more multifaceted or ambiguous representations of Italy's Souths in their relation with their social realities (Cassano 2010) and more broadly with Italy-as-South in relation to Europe, 'the West' and the Mediterranean



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(Chakrabarty 2000; Chambers 2008; Bouchard and Ferme 2016), via an interdisciplinary investigation on their narratives in recent and emerging media forms.

This brings up a series of complex open questions:

- What do the category of the 'South' and its mediations imply and for whom?
- Where do we draw a line to define Italy's Souths?
- Does the Italian South exude any defining aesthetic and perceptive qualities?
- How does Southern-ness relate to nationalism and *italianità* in the media?
- Does the notion of 'the South' essentialize diverse regional experiences or encapsulate/represent a politically and transversally fruitful category?
- What has been the role of film commissions (Zagarrio 2012) in challenging or reaffirming traditional or global commonplaces?
- How should we approach Italy's Souths from the perspective of subaltern, global, postcolonial, subaltern and Mediterraneanism studies (Gramsci 1926; Said 1978, 1993; Spivak 1988; Herzfeld 1987; Appadurai 1996)?
- How can we apply theorizations about Southern Thought (Cassano 2000), Southernism (Bertellini 2010), the 'cursed' South (Teti 2011), Mediterraneanism (Tedesco 2017) and Southern landscape (Giordano 2022) to diverse processes and objects?
- What role should the South play in queering, decolonizing and re-imagining the nation, addressing its historical racialization and traditional associations with patriarchy?
- How does the South change, as seen from different perspectives, e.g. areas of migration from which 'Italy' is variously seen and constructed?
- How do diverse experiences from the fields of Italian studies from across the globe frame views and judgements about the South's issues and representations?

Such complexities call for research that will complicate the 'good/bad' dichotomies and blend theory and empirical analysis, paying attention to the persistence of traditional and newly evolving representations of the South, including: its representation as 'naturally' made for tourist consumption and associations with folklore (De Martino 1961, 1973) and 'authenticity' as well as with the bugbears of indolence, corruption and criminality; its images as a land plagued by unemployment and backwardness, including in films like *Benvenuti al Sud* (Miniero 2010); the South as persistently backward and denied of coevalness, e.g. in commercials like *Calabria, Terra mia* (Muccino 2020); and the persistence of regionalisms, often through irony, humour or sarcasm, in the media, including on YouTube, in memes and in TikTok videos addressing 'differences between North and South Italy'.

Contributions may focus on issues that include, but are not limited to:

- Southern landscapes, geographies, cultures and characters on screen;
- The Souths as *topoi* in diverse cinematic/media genres (Summerfield 2020);



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- Italy's *questione meridionale* ('Southern Question'), film commissions and accented media;
- Local, national and global tensions in representing and consuming Italy's Souths;
- Mediatized social, cultural and political narratives and public histories of Southern Italy;
- Approaches to Southern cinema and media production and consumption;
- Representational and aesthetic regimes of film and mediatized Southern-ness;
- The Souths' enduring folklorization and issues related to its heritagization;
- Heritage/literary/cinematic tourism and the *touristisation* of the Souths;
- Southern peripheries as consumable paradises for '1-Euro' house bargains;
- Ironic, humorous and farcical representations of the Souths;
- The Souths as lands of Otherness and wilderness in horror, fantasy and drama;
- The sublime, picturesque and 'magic' South and the South-as-mythology (Carbone 2022);
- The South, Southerners and the Nation in digital games, web series and social media;
- Narratives of crime-ridden Souths and Southern Italian mafias on screen and in scholarship;
- Images of Southern migration and migrants and the *terrone* cliché;
- Speaking from/on behalf of the South: insiderists and non-Southern *auteurs*/directors;
- The South-as-Mediterranean, as-Europe, and in relation to the Global Souths;
- Hyphenated Southern Italian identities in cinema and the media;
- Southern-ness racializations and relations to Whiteness, Blackness and BIPOC+ issues;
- LGBTQI+ identities from Italy's Souths and intersectional approaches to the Souths;
- Postcolonial, independent and militant Southern cinema.

Please submit a 500-word proposal with a detailed bibliography and filmography/media references. Also, please send a 150-word biographical note to the guest editors Marco Benoît Carbone and Giovanna Summerfield at italiansouths@gmail.com by 15 September 2022.

Proposals of articles should be entirely original and unpublished, should not be under consideration by any other publisher, should not have been published previously even in part by any other publication, and should not appear in blogs or other online sites. Proposals of English translations or edited versions of previously published works will not be considered.



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