

# The Cinemas of Italian Migration



The Cinemas of Italian Migration:  
European and Transatlantic Narratives

Edited by

Sabine Schrader and Daniel Winkler

**CAMBRIDGE**  
**SCHOLARS**

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P U B L I S H I N G

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# THE MEDITERRANEAN, OR WHERE AFRICA DOES (NOT) MEET ITALY: ANDREA SEGRE'S *A SUD DI LAMPEDUSA* (2006)

ALESSANDRA DI MAIO

## The Mediterranean

For those who, like me, grew up on its shores, let alone on its islands, the Mediterranean is, first of all, a sea—the Sea. *Il mare*, we say in Italian, *la mer*, in French, *el mar* in Spanish, *al-bahr* in Arabic. For all of us, it is a ritual place for socialization, leisure, desire, transgression, and legacy. For each of us, however, it is a different seashore with a different name, community, marina. For me, that place is Mondello, a small, once marshy fisherman village a few miles West of Palermo, transformed through land-reclaiming into a beautiful *fin de siècle* summer resort when Sicily's capital city was one of Europe's most prominent centers of *Belle Époque*. It is a coastline whose cliffs blend into the calcareous mountains rising behind, and an ensemble of dunes that seem to be there to remind us that the largest sand desert in the world, the Sahara, is part of the Mediterranean landscape—its Southern border. Each of us born and raised on these shores has our own Mondello. On the other hand, each of us, independently from the specific original place, feels an identical sense of general belonging to the Sea—Our Sea, or *Mare Nostrum*, the Romans called it. For when you see it from the outside, the Mediterranean may appear a single entity; but seen from the inside, it is multiple, polychromatic, polyphonic. It is a site of *différance*, in the words of one of its most remarkable thinkers, Jacques Derrida. It is our cosmos.

The *différance* of the Mediterranean is chromatically evoked by one of Europe's greatest 19<sup>th</sup> century painters, whose use of color has inspired many film directors worldwide. "The Mediterranean has the color of mackerel", Vincent Van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo, about the sea by whose French shores he lived part of his adult life. "It's changeable. You don't always know if it is green or violet, you can't even say it's blue, because the next moment the changing reflection has taken on a tint of rose or gray" (Van Gogh 1999, 76). If Mediterranean polychromy mesmerized Van Gogh, it was its polyphony to captivate French historian

Fernand Braudel, the author of the monumental eponymous opus on the Basin, who writes: “The Mediterranean speaks with many voices” (Braudel 1995, 13). “My favorite vision of history”, Braudel explains, “is a song for many voices” (Braudel 1995, 1238). And yet, this vision, he clarifies, “has the obvious disadvantage that some [voices] will drown others: reality will not always adapt conveniently into a harmonized setting for solo and chorus” (Braudel 1995, 1238).

The polyphonic quality of the Mediterranean continues to challenge its listeners and speakers alike—and, in view of recent events, one is tempted to say, increasingly so. It has been argued that rather than harmony, the Mediterranean displays a tendency to produce dissonance. This appears even more clearly today, after the media-dubbed ‘Jasmine Revolution’ in Tunisia ignited people of the Maghreb and the Middle East to speak up, and stand up, against the dominant rhetoric and political practices of national regimes. To be sure, both the insurgents’ voices and those of the tyrants belong to the Mediterranean. It is an old story: “Mediterranean oratory has served democracy and demagogy; freedom and tyranny; Mediterranean rhetoric has taken over speech and sermon, forum and temple” (Matvejević 1991, 12). Thus speaks another important voice from the region, that of writer and political activist Predrag Matvejević, who concludes: “The Mediterranean is inseparable from its discourse” (1991, 12). Bosnia-born Matvejević strives to re-compose what he calls the “Mediterranean mosaic” (1991, 12) by seeking a common discourse that at the same time implies and transcends history, geography, ethnicity, even national belonging.

In light of these considerations, one can symbolically suggest that the “changing” color of the Mediterranean and its manifold voices may be composed of tones that may metaphorically correspond to different geological soils, geographic regions, historical phases, and national formations, languages, religions, micro-climates, winds, crops, and items of food. However, they all contribute to the composition of one, plural color: that of the amalgamated intermixture of Mediterranean culture. I have suggested elsewhere that the symbolic color into which all these hues come together giving unity to a common discourse is black. In my argument, which draws from Paul Gilroy’s theory of the Black Atlantic, black is, in particular, the color of the contemporary Mediterranean.<sup>1</sup> The Black Mediterranean is a transnational site of globalization. Black is the color—or rather, non-color—in which all shades merge, that which the sea assumes during the crossings pursued by the million migrants who have ‘burnt’ it in the past three decades.

### The 'burning'

The metaphor of 'burning', indicating crossing, is used in colloquial speech by North Africans, who, since the early 1980s, have traversed the Mediterranean with the hope of finding upon its European shores the potential to work, to participate in democracy, and establish better life conditions for themselves and their families. Besides its literal meaning, the Arabic verb *haraq* ('to burn') is used in Mediterranean Africa, from Morocco to Egypt, in a number of colloquial locutions, always indicating some experience of transgression. In Arabic, to 'burn' a norm, a law, or even a red light (one says *hargt l-feu rouge*), one is in fact breaking rules, trespassing norms, infringing laws. Similarly, *harraga* (literally, 'those who burn') are aware of the *harg*—namely the burning, or crossing, of the Mediterranean—as an act of transgression. In her study of the *harg* phenomenon among the youth of Morocco, anthropologist Stefania Pandolfo explains the complex, often contradictory implications of this transgressive act from an Islamic, eschatological point of view. Independently of the distinct positions taken by her interviewees on the subject, Pandolfo illustrates how all stories of *harg* imply an awareness of a 'burned' life: "a life without name, without legitimacy; a life of enclosure in physical, genealogical and cultural spaces perceived as uninhabitable" (2007, 333). This happens, she explains, because "Migration [...] is increasingly understood as the compelling yet often unrealizable project of an *illegal* crossing to Europe" (2007, 333). Departing to Europe, burning the Mediterranean, "hidden in the bottom of a truck, or by hazardous sea passage" (2007, 333), becomes a synonym for "taking the risk (*kanriski*)", or "gambling one's life (*ghadi mghamar b-haytu*)". These are only two of the most common expressions that make up the discourse of the *harg* in Morocco and throughout the Maghreb (2007, 336); a discourse articulated through what Pandolfo describes as a "language of addiction" and in terms of rage, oppression, and even despair (2007, 352). Pandolfo suggests, however, that although these expressions connote "the potentiality of a destructive outcome" (2007, 336), in fact the experience of the *harg* also entails "the search for a horizon in the practices of self-creation and experimentation drawing on an imaginary of the elsewhere and of exile" (2007, 333).

In other words, pursuing the metaphor of burning, one can infer that its symbolic fire results in incineration—namely, the end of a previous life, or, in the terms of French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1980), of a territorialized identity. Yet ashes also bring forth a rebirth, a regeneration, assuring the possibility of a new life in the deterritorialized

space of diaspora; a space that, according to Matvejević (1998), connects exile—leaving behind home—and asylum—namely, seeking refuge in the new home. The place in which this metamorphosis takes place is, indeed, the Mediterranean. By ‘burning’ it, the migrant meets a symbolic death by fire; in its waters, however, he (or she) undergoes a sea-change that will grant him (or her) a new life.

This may appear reminiscent of the myths and legends common to the entire Basin, for example, that of the Phoenix, the sacred firebird repeatedly reborn from its own ashes; or that of sea-god Proteus assuming multiple semblances; or the several others that Ovid assembles in *The Metamorphosis*. Unfortunately, however, death is not always only symbolic in this ‘burning’ process. Many are the casualties that occur along the multiple routes of these crossings, as attested every day in the news.

Sicily, the largest island in the Mediterranean, has partially replaced the mafia-bound fame that has fed the world’s imaginary with that of an immigrant land since it has become one of the principal hubs for mass migration to Europe. Boatloads of *harraga* continuously land on its Southern shores, especially on the little island of Lampedusa, Sicily’s, and Italy’s, southernmost point. When they depart from the African coast, these boats are crammed. However, upon arrival in Lampedusa, or any of the crossings’ multiple destinations, it is too often the case that they are less crowded, if not, in the worst case scenario, completely empty. After a lull in 2010, in February 2011 the migratory route Zarzis-Lampedusa has resumed its incessant traffic, since numerous North Africans, initially mainly from Tunisia, have fled the uprisings. Soon after the rebels’ insurrection, there was a reprise of landings from Libya. One may advance several hypotheses on why these people arrive in droves primarily to Lampedusa rather than, for example, to Pantelleria, another island that politically belongs to Italy and is as close to the North African coasts, or to the coasts of other European nations. Certainly, one may bring into play natural conditions (marine currents, easier routes, smoother landing conditions), but political conditions play an important role as well. A comment by sociologist Saskia Sassen (1999, 155) on the nature of migration gestures towards a partial response: “Migrations do not simply happen. They are produced. And migrations do not involve just any possible combinations of countries. They are patterned.” In Lampedusa’s case, the two countries that have mainly been responsible for the ‘burning’ are Italy and Libya,<sup>2</sup> trade partners since the colonial era, in fact, one can trace their historical ties as far back to the Roman Empire. Since the inception of the new century, these two countries—Italy mainly under former Prime Minister Berlusconi, Libya under the rule of Colonel

Gaddafi—have joined forces to ‘produce’, using Sassen’s term, and control the ‘burning’ of hundreds of thousand migrants by common consent.

Many are the men and women who have not survived the ‘patterned’ experience of the ‘burning’, independently of the route undertaken. Countless are those who ended up on the Mediterranean sea-bed, or, even before boarding the boats, as carcasses in the ‘sea of sand’ that is the Sahara. The Mediterranean passage is often twofold: People who do not live on the North African shores must find a way to reach them, which means they must traverse, first of all, the Sahara. And it is not only people from the Maghrebi hinterland who must cross the desert. A great percentage of ‘burners’ comes from Sub Saharan Africa, from West African nations such as Senegal, Ghana, and Nigeria, as well as from the Horn once colonized by the Italians (Somalia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea). The Italian award-winning documentary *A Sud di Lampedusa (South of Lampedusa, 2006)* directed by Andre Segre, in collaboration with Ferruccio Pastore and Stefano Liberti (who later turned it into a book), shows this very effectively.

### Andrea Segre’s African Trilogy

Together with Segre’s more recent *Come un uomo sulla terra (Like a Man on Earth, 2008)* and *Il sangue verde (The Green Blood, 2010)*, *A Sud di Lampedusa* makes up what I refer to as Segre’s African trilogy, portraying the three major steps of African migration into Italy: the crossing of the Sahara, followed by eventual deportation from Libya in *A Sud di Lampedusa*, a pined-for destination that cannot be reached; the sea journey and final landing in the island, followed by transitional detention in what the Italian State oximoronically called Center of Temporary Permanence, in *Come un uomo sulla terra*, partially shot in Rome, the final destination. In *Il sangue verde*, the riots taking place in January 2010 in Rosarno, a small town in the Southern Italian Calabria region with a large population of undocumented migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, mainly employed in underpaid, undeclared agricultural labor. My argument is that all three stages of migration—departure, arrival, and settling—are part of the complex ‘burning’ process.

If *A Sud di Lampedusa*, built upon a number of interviews to migrant workers from West Africa treading the Niger-Libya route, portrays the endurance of departure, *Come un uomo sulla terra* represents the following stage of the crossing, the sea journey from Africa to Italy. Remarkably, the protagonists in the second documentary are young men and women from the Horn of Africa, once colonized by Mussolini, eager to fulfill his

imperial intent to conquer a ‘place in the sun’. The protagonists of *Come un uomo sulla terra*, in other words, are Italy’s postcolonial subjects, flesh and bone offspring of a historical process begun with colonialism. They gather at Asinitas, a school in Rome where they meet every day to learn Italian, which soon becomes a hub for their community. There, sitting around a kitchen table, these young people from Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia tell their stories—that of the crossing and the ensuing common adventure of settling in Italy. Among the protagonists is Dagmawi Yimer, who is also a co-director of the documentary.

The third film of the trilogy,<sup>3</sup> *Il sangue verde*, portrays the daily life of the African Italian community of Rosarno during the widely publicized riots of January 2010. These riots exposed the unjust and squalid conditions that thousands of African laborers, exploited by an economy controlled by the local criminal organization, ‘Ndrangheta, endured on a daily basis. For a few weeks, these undocumented migrants—mostly citrus pickers—caught the attention of the Italian public, who responded to protests with fear and violence. The media showed that they were soon ‘evacuated’ from Rosarno (TV footage is an important visual intertext in the documentary); as a consequence, the ‘problem’ was considered solved. Yet the faces and the voices of the African Italians captured by Segre tell a different story. By filming their stories from their own points of view, Segre reveals a non-official, non-hegemonic record of the events. In order to make sense of what happened, the director seems to suggest with *Il sangue verde*, that one must hear the full story, not only the dominant version. In particular, one must pay special attention to the accounts of the subaltern of Rosarno, a Southern town whose history, overlooked and marginalized in the national discourse, has been marked by rural poverty and ‘Ndrangheta-induced degradation affecting both the migrant and native communities. The last documentary of the trilogy, in brief, seems to prove that the final stage of the burning ‘process’, namely the settling in the ‘welcoming’ country, may prove as problematic as the initial two, departure, and arrival.

### *A Sud di Lampedusa*

This contribution focuses on Segre’s first film of the trilogy, *A Sud di Lampedusa*, hoping to demonstrate what is hinted at in the title of this paper: If, on the one hand, the Mediterranean has always facilitated relationships between Africa and Europe, promoting trade and cultural exchanges across the centuries even in the face of war, on the other hand, the two continents remain often at odds. Filmed mainly in the Sahara

desert in May 2006, this thirty-minute documentary, which has received critical attention worldwide, shows the viewer the hidden face of migration from Africa to Europe, a face that remains largely invisible in the media and the EU political discourse on migratory policies. What the audience sees of the crossing on television is only the middle step: the landing of desperate men and women, whose names are never provided, in the small island of Lampedusa. Until recently, in Italian imagination, Lampedusa was a beautiful, not even particularly fashionable touristic attraction (radical chic, rather), with idyllic, uncontaminated white beaches, turquoise water, and little else to recommend it. It is only in these past years that Lampedusa has become central to the Italian, and European, discourse on migration, making international news as a prime transit site in the 'burning'. However in Segre's documentary, despite the evocative title, Lampedusa never appears. In the film, Lampedusa remains merely a mirage, a hopeful destination, an expected yet unrealized arrival point.<sup>4</sup> As the Italian saying goes, it is the island that is not there (*l'isola che non c'è*). In the documentary, the action takes place, as the title suggests, south of Lampedusa.

The film follows the route of a group of people leaving West Africa directed to the Libyan *sahel*—the coastline—with the intention of crossing the sea to Europe. *A Sud di Lampedusa*, essentially, is a documentary—the first Italian documentary—on the Mediterranean 'burning' seen from the perspectives of the 'burners', interviewed by the director and his team. Made up of three parts, it opens with a three-minute preamble showing at first a close-up of one of the protagonists describing Libya's 'deportation camps'. Spectators are caught by surprise. Why is this man sitting at a desk talking about deportation camps when the film is supposed to be about the crossing of the Mediterranean Sea? Who is deported and where? And above all, why? The description of the camps is dreadful. At the beginning of the scene, it is not even clear where they might be. The man begins by saying, "They write in Arabic 'Deportation Camps'. But they are not deportations camps, they are really terrible prisons, which in any other part of the world would be used for criminals who have committed the worst crimes—maybe killing." The audience is still unaware of what exactly the man is referring to when he continues his description, "Each room can contain about fifty people, and they're very small. There is no central AC, no ceiling fan". Only at the end of the scene the man reveals what he is talking about, "Even the toilets—the ones from the prisons I've seen on television are cleaner. But in Libya it's not like that". Thus, the theme of the documentary appears clear not even one minute into the film: The 'burning' process, in which Libya plays an important role, is accom-

panied by blatant violations of human rights. When another young man sitting at another desk appears at the end of the documentary, one minute from the end, re-emphasizing the reasons for migration already explained by many protagonists, the audience realizes the framing narrative follows a symbolic circularity: The story ends where it began, namely *south* of Lampedusa. Northern–Europe–remains inaccessible.

After the first man's commentary sets the theme, the action moves immediately to the field. The two remaining minutes of the preamble show the gathering of all people who have decided to migrate North. They arrive in the city of Niamey, Niger, from several West African countries—Mali, Togo, Senegal, Nigeria. A sequence juxtaposing moments of diversion, such as watching television in the common room that also serves as a bedroom, and moments of prayers shows that several among them are Muslims. If the majority of the people are men, there are also women in the group. A young woman carrying a baby and wearing a blue headscarf, reminiscent of an archetypal nativity image, takes a seat in the big bus that will take the group to Agadez, the city commonly considered the gate to the Ténéré (a Berber name for that area of the Sahara), from where the caravan will begin its journey through the desert. The atmosphere is calm in this pre-departure phase, filmed at night. Movements are slow. The only audible sound serving as a background to this nocturne scene is that of the bus engine running while everybody is getting on board, as if living and leaving have become equivalent. The camera finally shifts onto the image of a hand-drawn map marking the principal steps of the route to be trodden, closing up on a hand that draws a truck—a device that closes the preamble and punctuates the entire documentary. This seems to invite the audience to follow the expedition step by step while reminding them of the human element, symbolized by the hand, present in every journey.

The film, as mentioned, is divided into three parts, each with a specific title. The first, “Partenza” (Departure), documents the initial steps of the crossing, when Africans from different Sub-Saharan regions meet up in Agadez to begin the journey. Since the mid-nineties, Agadez has become somewhat of a cosmopolitan city because of its role as a departure point for the Sahara crossing. “We didn’t know the other Sub-Saharians”, one of the interviewees says, “until the Togolese, the Cameroonians, the Nigerians came”. Some *passseurs*—people who guide the caravans and facilitate the crossing—are also interviewed. Their attempt at self-redemption is poignant. From their words, it is difficult to say whether they simply exploit the situation or are in fact casualties of it. “Here in Agadez, we live with the foreigners”, one of them explains; “We help them to flee to Europe or the Arab countries. We feel obliged to do it—we know the desert”.

He concludes, explaining what the Western news often forgets to mention when reporting the migrants' crossing of the Mediterranean, "If they've left their homes it's because of problems such as unemployment, poverty. They are looking for food for their wives, for their children, for the old people they have left at home".

Migration is not tourism. If these Africans, adopting Pandolfo's terms, "take the risk" (333), "gamble their lives" (336), it is because they believe 'burning' the Mediterranean is the only way to support their families and find hope in a better future. When the journey begins, it is clear to everybody that the first step is Libya, whose borders, according to one of the protagonists of the documentary, were "opened" by Gaddafi to "all Africans" in 1998. As the man interviewed puts it, "Gaddafi put his hand on his heart and asked all Africans to come, because, he said, Libya belongs to everyone. So everyone rushed", he concludes, with an ironic grin, his face in a slant close-up, "until... the pogrom."

After a few images, the same man explains from experience what Saskia Sassen explains scholarly: Migration does not take place accidentally; it is well organized. "C'est structuré", he repeats three times. It is structured. The men who drive their fellow people to Agadez and deliver them to the *passseurs* who will guide them through the desert, like the men who put the migrants up for a few francs every night while they are waiting for their ride, are all essential parts of the intricate, patterned chessboard that is illegal migration. Part one closes with the camera following a truck crammed with people who are finally going to cross the desert in inhuman conditions; for as one of the burners from Nigeria says, "A truck is for goods, not for human beings". Nevertheless, they are happy to leave: They wave goodbye, and one of them even makes a victorious gesture from the top of the lorry. The only background sound is the blowing of the wind, even after the camera zooms on the hand-drawn map reappearing in the final scene. The 'burners' are in the mere company of each other and of the Harmattan wind.

Although the second part of the documentary titled "Viaggio" (The Journey) opens with a further interview, the camera soon redirects itself to the truck crossing the desert. Visually, the crossing of the Sahara sea-of-sand prefigures the sea-crossing that is to come once the coasts of Libya are reached. In particular, the truck, overflowing with men, women, and children of different nationalities, foreshadows the boat that will take the undocumented passengers across the Sea—those decrepit boats for which Italians have coined a new idiom, *carrette del mare* (sea-carts). Considering the state of these boats and the conditions of the passengers, it comes as no surprise that some 'burners' do not make it through the

Sahara, and those who do cannot reach in any case their final destination—Europe. However, the earlier stages of the trip look hopeful, energized by the notes of the late high-life musician Fela Kuti, Nigeria's worldwide renowned music icon. Fela's beat marks the movements of the steady-cam, suggesting dynamism, energy, and hope for a better future. The truck arrives in the oasis of Dirkou, a town on the important route of the Trans-Saharan trade linking Libya to the Niger-Chad region. During an interview, the mayor of Dirkou complains that traditional seasonal migration to Libya has considerably diminished since the country has signed a deal with Italy. The aim of the deal, from the Italian side, is to prevent migrants from arriving in droves.

However, as anticipated, this energy does not lead to a happy ending. The third part of the film is called “Espulsioni” (Deportations). One would expect this third and final part to be titled “Arrival”, but there is no arrival at the end of the film, no happy ending, no tale of redemption. The people who make it to Libya are locked up by the local authorities in ‘deportation camps’, such as that of Sabha. These migrants end up staying in Libyan deportation camps for months or even years. Their only crime is their desire to go to Europe, looking for better life conditions. Sometimes, not even to Europe is the final destination: Some of them would happily settle for North Africa, wealthier than many Sub-Saharan regions. However, after having served as cheap—or rather, free—labor, these ‘burners’ are returned to the sender—their homeland—according to the agreement on forced expulsion signed by the Italian and the Libyan governments. Lampedusa remains a mirage. One of the interviewees says: “I really think that spending eight months in jail for having done nothing at all, just because you want to go to Europe... No, I’m not going to do it”. What many do not know is that, had they crossed the Sea, had they gotten there, chances are they would be closed up in another detention center: the once-called, with an oxymoron, ‘Center of Temporary Permanence’, now renamed ‘Identification and Expulsion Center’; another island, a metaphorical one this time, on the island of crystal waters, where human rights are not even an option.

Segre's brilliant documentary asks questions and elicits responses in the audience: Who are these migrants? Where are they from? What are they willing to sacrifice for a supposedly better life? And especially: What is the final gain? A dramatic tension results from the contrast between the desire to answer these questions and the impossibility, and on the directors' part even unwillingness, to do so peremptorily. The director does not intend to provide an accomplished, sociologically based, finely polished picture of African migration to Europe. He does not wish to

explain pedantically the political and economic situations from which these migrants are trying to escape; nor is he willing in the least to invade the depths of their private space, which, in fact, he seems to secretly share with his protagonists. Although he barely shows his face in a couple of scenes, his voice can be heard and only when his questions seem necessary to better understand their answers. What he does, instead, is enter the dimension of the journey with them, letting the viewers perceive empathically the weight, as it were, the physical and mental burden that they are carrying within themselves, in what by necessity becomes an ineluctably in-transit life—a life perennially ‘on hold’. Segre is not interested in explanations. He is tantalized by the crossing: first of the Sahara, then of the Mediterranean Sea, which, however, does not, cannot reach an end.

The route followed by the African migrants of the third millennium is as old as the Old World: As Fabrizio Gatti explains in his important volume *Bilal. Il mio viaggio da infiltrato nel mercato dei nuovi schiavi* (2007), which covers a similar journey as that of *A Sud di Lampedusa*, it was trodden by the African slaves brought to Europe in ancient times and has continued to be trodden for centuries. Things have not changed in the new millennium. Lampedusas multiply—and, as we all know, not only in the Mediterranean Sea.

As Segre’s documentary shows, migrants ‘burn’ the Mediterranean from Africa to Europe, its opposite-door neighbor. “Europe was conceived on the Mediterranean”, Matvejević (1991, 10) suggests. In his life-long attempt to write a non-Eurocentric history of the Mediterranean, Braudel points out that ‘Europe would not be Europe without Africa’, without the Mediterranean that connects it to the Black continent. One cannot speak of the Mediterranean without considering the influence that Africa has had on Europe, on its formation and growth. Across the centuries, Africa and Europe have traded spices, gold, slaves, gas, oil, and, of course, arts, religions, and narratives. This trade has perpetuated unbalanced power relations, producing what Derrida would refer to as violent hierarchies—one might suggest Europe vs. Africa is one of them. The role played by the Mediterranean has been crucial to this exchange. Its intense maritime traffic has brought forth development and wealth—mostly to Europe. Today, unfortunately, this enriching circulation of produces, artifacts, ideas, traditions, and people has partly degenerated into human trafficking. Among those who arrive in Europe as economic migrants, seasonal workers, or refugees, protected—or supposedly protected—by international law, there are many whose fundamental human rights are denied—like those African women, for instance, forced into prostitution by organized criminal networks, which are, for example, the subject of an episode of Matteo

## The Mediterranean or Where Africa Does (Not) Meet Italy

Garrone's first long feature *Terra di mezzo* (1996). Migration, for those who control it, is a lucrative affair—at the expense of Africa, mainly. *South of Lampedusa* shows this to the audience. More than that, it shows viewers that in order to reassess a balance between the two old continents, it is necessary, and urgent, that Europe meets Africa.

### Notes

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<sup>1</sup> See Di Maio (2011).

<sup>2</sup> See *Trattato di amicizia, partenariato e cooperazione* tra Italia e Libia, August 30, 2008; later transformed into PDL n. 2041, Camera dei Deputati (XVI legislatura), December 30, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Recently, a fourth film has been released by Andrea Segre, *Mare chiuso* (2012).

<sup>4</sup> As it occasionally happens, a few years later, it became a privileged site for political campaigns. Italy's former Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi, visited the island in March 2011, a few weeks after the reprise of landings due to the Arab revolt, and promised the citizens to 'evacuate' all migrants in 48 hours. He emphatically declared his intention to invest in the economy of the small island by opening a State-owned casino in the near future, meanwhile personally purchasing a luxurious house, Villa Due Palme. Whether he really purchased the villa remains doubtful.