

ABSTRACT PRIN 2017

Archives of the South. Non-Fiction Cinema and Southern Landscape in Italy 1948-1968

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The aim of the research was to investigate, collect, and analyze Italian documentary production between 1948 and 1968, where the landscape of the southern regions is depicted and portrayed. The research aimed to analyze how the cinematic image of the southern landscape was conceived during this significant phase in the history of Italy and Italian cinema. Through the selection, analysis, and study of various types of documentary materials from audiovisual archives located across Italy, the research focused on how the landscape was represented through images and narratives and on the signs of transformations and changes in life practices, as well as the memory and perception of the South. In particular, the research focused on a period when some of the most important geographical, cultural, political, and economic transformations of Republican Italy, and especially in the South, occurred.

This period corresponds, among other things, to a time when our cinema (both art-house and genre) gained enormous artistic strength, an

awareness of its role within world film production, as well as great international success.

The work on archives and the possibility of analyzing films that have not been the subject of previous research was a chance to use a new methodology and open an important field of research with enormous potential for the study of our country's cultural identity. Each unit carried out and studied a selection of the audiovisual archival material, based on the thematic pairs that articulate the project and that were used to divide and analyze the collected material - Interior/Exterior, a thematic pair investigated by the research unit of the Suor Orsola Benincasa University of Naples; Speed/Slowness, investigated by the unit in Palermo; Land/Sea, investigated by the unit in Calabria; Myth/Narrative, investigated by the unit in Catania. In this initial phase, the work was also structured in multiple directions: identification of physical and/or virtual archives to be examined; access to materials; cataloging of materials through specific in-depth cards; organization of a shared database accessible through one of the access

keys present in the cards (authors, theme, year, places, names mentioned, etc.).

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the research was mainly focused on materials available in digital form. The second phase of the research saw each unit share the materials found and already organized according to the established criteria through a specific platform. Initially, the sharing tool was a database on which the various research participants, including personnel specifically recruited for it, worked to refine the criteria according to which the platform with all the results and scientific production of the project was later designed and built.

A shared common work characterized the first part of the research: identifying archival material, differentiating it according to the specific themes of the individual units, and the skills of the members of the various research units. The division of themes by research unit took into account not only the skills that the members of all research units had regarding the general horizon of research (relationship between Italian cinema and forms of life, documentary cinema, archive analysis, etc.), but also the specific skills of the individual units regarding the chosen theme.

The creation of the database as a common working platform allowed each research unit to access materials relevant to the chosen theme. These materials were then available to the researchers involved for the development of the themes of all research units. In the last year, the goal of each unit was to develop the chosen theme through the available materials and through continuous comparison with the work of the other groups. This process took place through seminars, conferences, symposiums, and publications (two books and numerous essays published in journals and collective volumes), as well as through artistic reuse practices of archival material: a documentary, created by the research unit in Palermo in collaboration with the Experimental Cinematography Center - Palermo Branch, was produced in the final phase of the research. The showcase website (<https://www.archividelsud.com/>) and the research platform "Sguardi del sud" (https://www.memoryscapes.it/it/serie/28_sguardi-del-sud) were further outcomes of the research. Other editing works of audiovisual materials are planned as part of the dissemination of the research results, following its conclusion.