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Preprint

Migration in the Digital Social Mediasphere

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Abstract

This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive theoretical framework for describing and interpreting digital videos as artefacts for producing, sharing and advocating cultural visions of the (social) other. The main objective is to explore in a non-formal manner the 'meaning landscape' of cultural visions (images) of the migration complex based on a small family of 'topoï' ('common places', in ancient rhetoric) which serve as doxastic frames of reference for masses of people around the world to judge (social) other and to interact with him. The principal empirical research domain, for this research work, is the You Tube platform with its thousands of videos and video channels dealing with migration.

1. Preliminary remarks

According to the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee), there are today (2018) more than 68 million of forcibly displaced people worldwide of whom about 25 million are refugees (UNHCR 2017) . The main reasons are war, political, religious and other discriminations, poverty, lack of jobs and youth bulge. Not only alt-rights but also neo-nationalists (like, for example in Europe, the Northern League in Italy, the Front National in France, the Fidesz party in Hungary, etc.) with strong media and political coverage (Eide & Nikunen 2011; Pink & Abram 2015) argue that the so-called developed countries have been (and still are) exposed to a risky influx of (im)migrants that is about to destroy the economic, social and "cultural" dimensions of Western society. However statistically the majority of displaced persons and refugees (around 85%) is located in the so-called developing countries of the South (UNHCR 2017). One of the most dominant themes is that of the 'European migrant (or refugee) crisis' (Luft 2016; Schulze Wessel 2017; Crawley et al 2018), which refers to the increased influx of refugees from Muslim-majority countries trying to join the EU since 2014/2015 across the Mediterranean Sea and overland through Southeast Europe. This theme finds a tremendous echo in the traditional news media as well as in the digital social mediasphere.

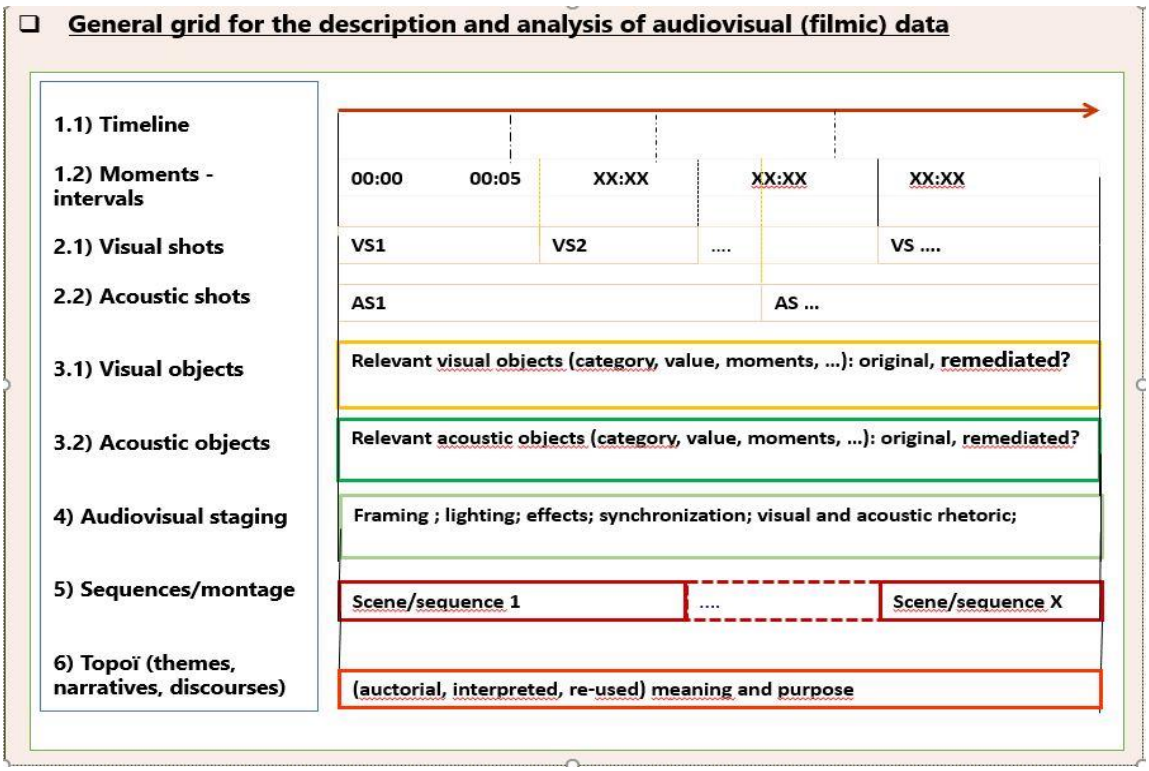
Even if it is extremely difficult to give exact figures, the number of You Tube videos dealing with the European refugee crisis can be estimated at several tens of thousands. As we can easily check it in using the YouTube search engine, new videos on this topic are posted almost every day. This quantitatively impressive video production is realized by traditional information media (TV and news channels), NGOs (non-governmental organizations), associations, political think tanks, religious and other charity organizations, political parties and, finally, a diversity of social movements, informal groups and anonymous individuals.

In the social media in general and on You Tube in particular, we can observe besides the circulation of video content belonging to the traditional audiovisual genres, the production of new video genres . Representative traditional audiovisual genres which have shaped the history of audiovisual content production during the 20th century and which we can find also on the social media platforms, are, for instance, news programs, reportages or documentaries. Among recent audiovisual genres, we find web micro-movies (movies with a duration from some seconds to some few minutes), webdocus, direct video recordings (of events, *vox pops* …) and especially remediatized or remediated videos – a broad category of remixes of already diffused videos coupled with new communication intentions and hence modifying an initial message (e.g. on this specific topic Lucke 2017; Thevenin 2017, Navas et al. 2015; Ruschmeyer 2012; Eugeni 2012). On the YouTube platform, these videos are diffused via ‘channels’, which are small, user-generated and managed video portals. They are shared and commented by local, regional and sometimes global communities of video consumers.

In this sense, the digital social mediasphere (here: the YouTube platform) forms an excellent "in vivo" laboratory to observe the production, circulation and processing of cultural (mental and visual) images of the figure of the other. Examining You Tube videos can consequently help us to better understand the diversity and evolution of popular beliefs in a globalized world. These beliefs constitute the ‘common sense’ (Geertz 1983) of a new type of social groups that can no longer be identified with reference to ethnic, national or religious criteria. Instead, they tend to form ‘doxastic communities’, i.e. communities that recognize themselves first and foremost in a set of themes, values, narratives, discourses and iconographies, which they share, use and exploit in their daily life.

2. Goals of a semiotically oriented video analysis

We understand here videos as ‘textual traces’, that express or stage ‘topoï’ or topical fields (Bäumer 1973). The notion ‘topos’ stands for meaning models used by people as evidential, common sense truths and references (Geertz 1983) for imagining, qualifying, understanding, judging and narrating the other, communicating about and with the other, acting upon the other and interacting with the other. With regard to our research object, a topos hence thematizes *visions, ideas, convictions, appreciations*, etc. of migrants, immigrants or refugees and of the relationship between migrants/immigrants and natives, ‘homelanders’.



(**Figure 1:** General grid for the description of audiovisual data)

We want to reconstruct the topoï that frame the visions of the migrant/immigrant in using an interpretive and semiotic reading of videos. This approach refers to a general grid for identifying ‘remarkable’ or ‘critical items’ in a corpus of audiovisual data. Indeed, the perceivable linear audiovisual flow contains a series of hotspots, which – hypothetically – offer an access to the ‘meaning-sphere’ of a video.

Major categories of remarkable or critical items are identified in Figure 1. In this sense, we can speak of remarkable audiovisual objects, remarkable visual and acoustic shots, remarkable syntagmatic (linear) constructions of visual and acoustic objects in form of edited or unedited ('pro-filmic') audiovisual configurations, remarkable continued or distributed thematic and narrative sequences; remarkable features in the staging of the quoted elements (objects, shots, sequences…) such as camera angle, camera movement, lightning, dubbing features, etc.

3. A global common-sense narrative

Drawing on a corpus of about 150 videos on the YouTube platform, we have identified a field of ten major topoï which belong to a global narrative we call the 'Homelander-Stranger drama for inhabiting and shaping Homeland'. This drama produces an enormous variety of stories diffused by videos in the social mediasphere. The identification and definition of the ten topoï are based on a small series of narrative elements - entirely in the spirit of Greimas' narrative grammar (Greimas 1970). This series of elements includes the following four types:

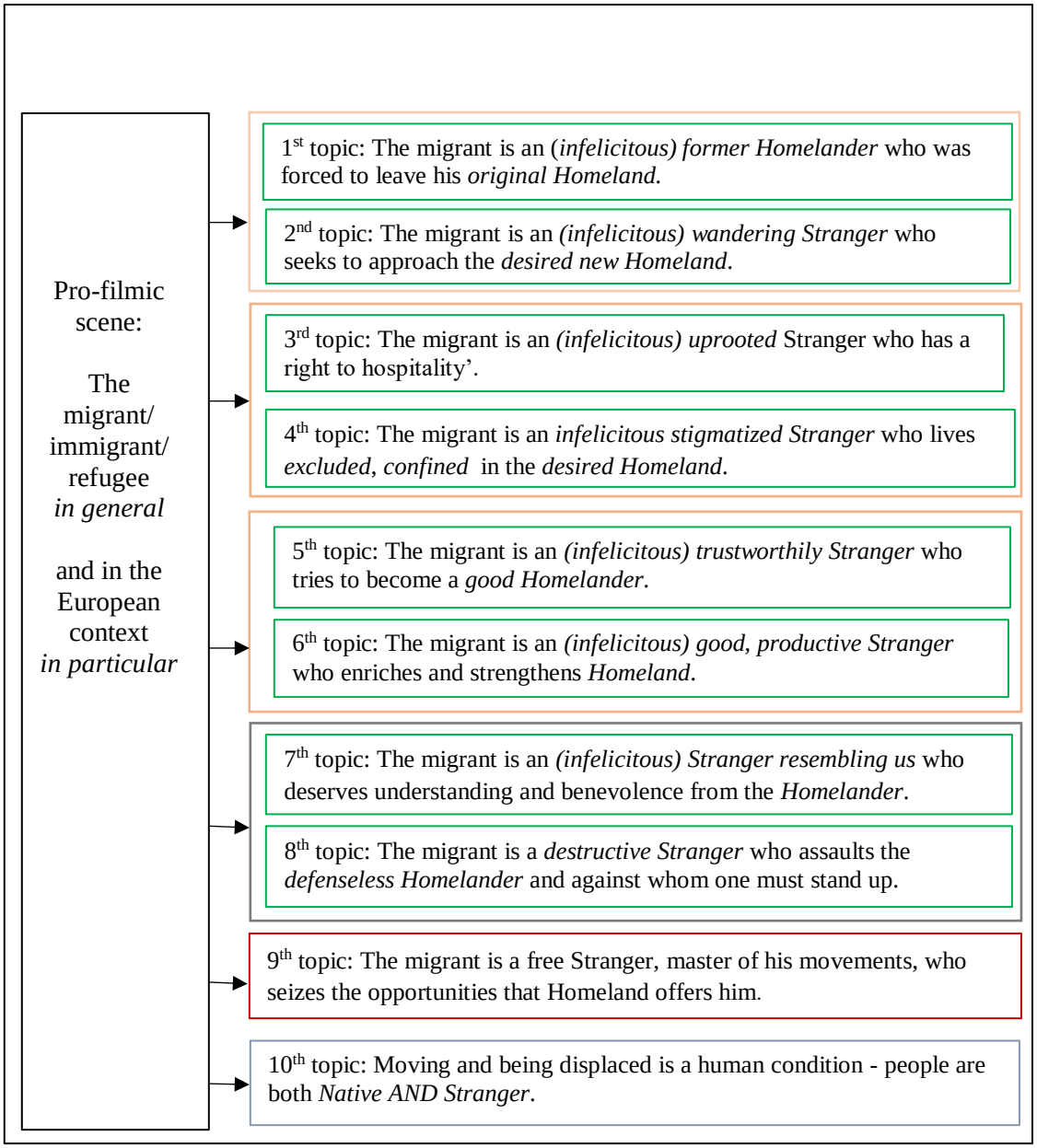
1) Two central thematic actants: the Homelander and the Stranger. The Stranger is, of course, embodied by the migrant, immigrant or refugee. The Homelander is a person or a collectivity who represents the Homeland.

2) A central space: the Homeland, the territory of the Homelanders. This territory can be embodied by a continent (Europe, America), a country, a city, a district or a rural area. The Homeland is the territory the Stranger is aiming at.

3) Typical actions and interactions. Following the dominant topos, videos deal with specific types of actions. There are videos that deal with the unlikely trials and tribulations of the Stranger's travels; other videos show the violent confrontations between Homelanders and Strangers; again other videos deal with the suffering of the Stranger excluded in the Homeland; etc.

4) Qualifications that hierarchize the various narrative elements. Again, depending on the selected topos, the two main actants and the staged actions are evaluated differently. For

example, in the majority of the reconstructed topoï, the Stranger is qualified as an 'infelicitous' one, but there exists also one topos following which the Stranger is a 'destructive agent'.



(**Figure 2:** Family of ten topoï framing the cultural visions of the migration complex)

The 'Homelander-Stranger drama' is a common-sense narrative and indispensable for thematizing the migrant from the most varied points of view. In fact, none of the many, sometimes contradictory stories about migrants could be imagined without this presupposed drama.

Figure 3 lists the ten main topoï we found in our analysis of 150 videos. Each one form the semantic basis for a great diversity of images or models of the migrant. They offer the content for doxastically motivated "main stream" attitudes, discourses, narratives and iconographies on YouTube and in the digital and "traditional" mediasphere.

A brief look at Figure 3 shows us that the identified topoï are not independent from each other but rather form structural configurations that maintain manifold interconnections. For our non-formal presentation of the 10 topoï in this article, we have chosen one grouping among other possible ones.

Before turning to the 10 topoï, we would like to point out that most of the videos were not made *by* migrants (and also not *by* refugees). In other words, the videos examined are not *from* migrants but *about* migrants. In a certain sense, they reflect the ('natural', doxastically given) self-understanding of the (very generally speaking) 'occidental world of to-day' in relation to the 'other', who from a historical point of view is mostly the colonized other (in Africa, the Near East, ...). In that sense, it would be interesting, to examine critically the worldwide production of videos about migrants in the social and 'traditional' mediasphere as a production that tends to show ideological traces of an old colonialism at work, which - in a new disguise - selects and orchestrates the voices, believes and attitudes that interpret and stage the dramas of today's world and the fate of millions of people (concerning this subject, cf. Rings 2016; Beck & Osthuis 2016; Gabbert 2010; Sampat Patel 2001).

4. Nomads against their will

The first two topoï (Figure 3) thematize a common image of the migrant as a person condemned to nomadic existence. The first topos, entitled 'The migrant is an *infelicitous former Homelander* who was forced to leave his *original Homeland*', thematizes and narrates stories of people who leave their home against their will and whose new horizon of meaning consists in the desperate search for a new Homeland. The central message of this topos is that we should consider the reasons why somebody leaves his home to be able to understand the meaning of this decision. Videos telling the 'Homelander-Stranger' drama in the sense of this topos illustrate it with the help of stories of families, children or elderly people who are robbed of

their homes and possessions by war. The previous lives of these people are often visually and verbally portrayed as one that in principle corresponds to that of a 'normal' family elsewhere. Examples of videos dealing with this topos include cartoons (e.g. 'Carly, A Refugee Story'[1] by the UNHCR, 2007), short web reports (such as those by AJ+ in 2015 on the reasons why Syrians leave their country[2] and whether they miss their Homeland).

The second topos, 'The migrant is an *(infelicitous)* wandering Stranger who seeks to approach the desired new Homeland' thematizes, narrates and stages the figure of the migrant as a subject who has no choice but to wander around. These attempts to reach the desired Homeland are staged as perilous paths full of mortal danger. Typical *themes* and *stories* relating the *erratic journeys* of the *infelicitous Stranger* are the multiple dangerous stations (represented, for instance, by the desert, the Mediterranean sea, countries like Niger or Libya, etc.) for reaching the *desired Homeland* (a European country, the USA, …); the obstacles and dead-locks of these attempts; eye-witnesses and reports of harassment, physical violence of which the *infelicitous Stranger* is the victim; the desperate attempts to overcome the blockades dressed against the massive arrival of the *infelicitous Stranger*; blank despair and unperturbable hope to escape the evil as two omnipresent moods characterizing the *infelicitous Stranger*; the definitive failure of the *infelicitous Stranger* paying with his life his attempts to join the *Homeland*. *Typical audiovisual genres* staging this topos are *reportages* produced by main-stream media (such as Al Jazeera, Russia Today, The Guardian, …), web media companies (such as VICE News[3] established in 2013) targeting the younger generations and, once more again, Non- and Intergovernmental Organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Particularly impressive video documents here are for example: 'We walk together'[4] (produced by The Guardian, 2015) relating the walk of thousands of refugees from Budapest to Vienna; an Al Jazeera reportage entitled 'African Migrants: What really drive them to Europe'[5] (2015) and the Russia Today produced web documentary 'Lampedusa – Way to Paradise or Hell for African Migrants'[6] (2014). Particularly dramatic sequences of these creations are reused in diverse anonymous remixes, pursuing sometimes completely contrary

[1] https://youtu.be/oF1HGfg2bSo
[2] https://youtu.be/65gY5PRuT_E
[3] https://www.youtube.com/user/vicenews
[4] https://youtu.be/ubGhzVdnhQw
[5] https://youtu.be/HOYUZJWkilk
[6] https://youtu.be/NgpldGzumnk

communication goals with respect to those in the original documents. For example, original sequences staging masses of peaceful and intimidated refugees are reinterpreted as hordes of wild people breaking into Europe; people crying in deepest despair are reinterpreted as howling, aggressive savages, etc. These remixes, as we will see, mostly illustrates the eighth topos, which draws a picture of the migrants as of devastating agents.

5. The fateful hope for humanity and hospitality

Topoï 3 and 4 deal with the image of a migrant in need who appeals to the compassion of the Homelander. The third topos, 'The migrant is an *infelicitous uprooted Stranger* who has a right to hospitality', is staged by videos focussing on the *arrival* of *migrants* in the *desired Homeland* and their welcoming by an *open-minded Homelander*. Typical thematic developments we can observe in videos nurtured by this fourth topos are, for instance, scenes of fraternization between *Homelander* and *uprooted Stranger*, welcome of *uprooted Stranger* in *Homelander's* family and declarations of the *inalienable rights* of the *infelicitous Stranger* in *Homeland*.

A typical example of a video exploiting this topos is *'This Italian Village Was Dying … Until the Refugees Came'*[7], a short documentary of 10 minutes produced by the National Geographic staging the reception of Assan Baldé, a refugee from Casamance by an Italian family in the name of hospitality and Catholic values. The documentary develops a set of *typical visual themes* featuring the simple and ancestral village life; happy immigrants shown while accomplishing socially useful activities (such as repairing old houses, working for the property of the village, …); respectful interactions between immigrants and villagers; etc. These visual themes are reinforced by *interviews* with the concerned actors (immigrants, villagers, mayor of a village, …) and *voice-over comments* creating a very specific *cultural vision* of harmony between the Stranger and the Homelander. Another example is a CNN produced reportage entitled 'Canadian city welcomes Syrian immigrants'[8]. The main message of this reportage is that the fact to welcome refugees from Syria in Calgary constitutes only a *minor risk compared to the potential benefit* that Calgary could make from the arrival of Syrian refugees. This

[7] https://youtu.be/X4v51rNRUME
[8] https://youtu.be/gf3HcxTLU0A

reportage establishes indeed a link with the sixth topos thematizing the migrant as a productive Stranger.

'The migrant is an (infelicitous) stigmatized Stranger who lives excluded, confined in the desired Homeland' is the title of the fourth topos. It narrates stories of detention and lockout of the infelicitous Stranger in and around the desired Homeland. A general vision produced through this topos is that of a *closed world* represented by refugee camps where migrants are forced to live. This topos outlines an emerging parallel society, which, by and large, corresponds to that of 'asylum' in the sense of Goffman (1961) or Foucault (1966). The secluded world of refugee camps and asylums becomes the *anti-Homeland*, a dystopian place that produces the *forfeited Stranger* represented by migrants and immigrants struck by deception, physical distress, manifestations of insane violence and, finally, atony.

As examples we want to mention two videos: 'Life for Eastern Europeans in post-Brexit Britain'[9] produced by BBC Newsnight in 2016, and the documentation 'Detained in Italy. Misery for Migrants and Refugees'[10] produced by the United Nations in 2015. The first example offers us interviews with East European migrants living in UK after the Brexit referendum and experiencing progressive discrimination and exclusion; the second is a very hard-hitting documentary on the detention of migrants in special camps.

6. On the (symbolic, economic) value of migrants

Topoï 5 and 6 (Figure 3) deal with the value of the migrant for the Homelander and his territory, the Homeland. The fifth topos, 'The migrant is an *(infelicitous)* trustworthily Stranger who tries to become a good Homelander', articulates a vision based on the industriousness of the migrant. The Homelander has to appreciate these foreign people, because they are proud to become good Homelanders in the *new* Homeland. This topos alludes the Kantian imperative of the 'ungesellige Geselligkeit' (Kant 1978), i.e. the assertion that 'we are a community, after all, whether we like it or not'. Typical thematic developments we can observe in videos nurtured by this fifth topic are, for instance, the biography of a migrant/immigrant who has been forced

[9] https://youtu.be/RmQ5vzaJWXc
[10] https://youtu.be/BWdCysswPho

to leave his original place, the hardships he is facing after having joint the new *Homeland* and his efforts to become a *new Homelander*; the challenges (like the overcoming of the language barrier) that migrants face when arriving at Homeland; the fears and desires of migrants when arriving at Homeland; the personal achievements of migrants/immigrants as guarantees, as pledges for their trustful intentions to become *good Homelanders*. Among the many videos that exploit this fifth topos we can find, for example, personal montages describing the history of an ancestor with an immigration background[11], interviews with (former) refugees realized by private and public humanitarian and/or higher-education institutions (like the Canadian P2P Pathways to Prosperity Partnership[12]) or historical documentations relating, for instance, the history of the difficult European emigration to the USA during the beginning of the 20th century[13].

The sixth topos, 'The migrant is an (infelicitous) good, productive Stranger who enriches and strengthens Homeland', narrates visions related to the *utility* of the (infelicitous) Stranger for the Homeland. This topos relies on an axiological separation within the role of the Stranger between the *good* and *constructive Stranger vs* the *bad* and *destructive Stranger*. The migrant in the role of the *constructive Stranger* is somebody who proves his goodness through the fact that he: a) is a hard worker; b) contributes to the prosperity and wellbeing of *Homeland*; c) therefore becomes a worthful element of Homeland and hence could be recognized – reclassified – as a *truly good Homelander*. The fact that the migrant has become a *truly good Homelander* is staged, expressed through plenty of material signs constituting a diversified material *heritage-scape* of *Homeland* (concerning the notion 'heritage-scape': Garden 2004). One of the central functions of such a *heritage-scape* is to recall us the general common-sense moral that people who are forced to migrate are often "good strangers". Typical material objects composing the *heritage-scape* of *Homeland* are the tools and instruments used by migrants for their (manual) work; memory objects representing glimpses of the life in migrant communities; personal objects belonging to migrants; etc. As well known, these and similar objects are used

[11] E.g. "Memories of a Migrant", a still image short relating the life stations of a Korean immigrant named Lee in Australia, produced by a member of his family in 2013 (https://youtu.be/U8kXp4bq_MY)

[12] E.g. *'Life as a Refugee: From Migration to Integration'*, a series of interviews with former refugees living now in Canada, produced in 2016 (https://youtu.be/qtfwijm0wj0)

[13] E.g. *'Immigration and cultural change'*, a 37 minutes long documentary produced in 2016 by the Schlessinger Video Company (https://youtu.be/zESKxpV73Sw)

in museum collections, exhibitions, books and audiovisual creations for documenting and narrating the contributions of migrants to the prosperity of *Homeland*.

Videos developing this topos are unsurprisingly using themes that enhance, make more "colorful" the portrait of the migrant as a *constructive Stranger* represented frequently by poor but hard-working people, by people who have been forced to leave their *previous Homeland* because of economic or religious reasons. A remarkable point here is a kind of tacitly presupposed *utilitarian value* of the migrant, the (in a broad sense) economic goodness of the *constructive Stranger* for the *Homeland* which conditions the narrative moral of the 'migrant as a good stranger'. This tacitly accepted utilitarian reference framework also conditions another cultural vision, viz. that of the 'good cultural diversity' as a by-product of the contributions of the *constructive Stranger* to the prosperity of *Homeland*. Examples here are video productions celebrating US American history as an economic success story based on the contributions of millions of migrants with different (linguistic, geographic, religious, …) backgrounds[14].

Besides the above discussed *utilitarian reference* frame, there exists however a considerable number of videos which develop more heterodox positions in celebrating the *intrinsic goodness* of cultural diversity (which has not to be justified or founded on more basic principles), the *intrinsic right* for everybody to be different and to live his/her difference.

7. The other as our likeness or as a destructive, deadly alien

The seventh topos, 'The migrant is an *(infelicitous) Stranger resembling us* who deserves understanding and benevolence from the Homelander', promotes visions and values of an all-encompassing human community and an empathetic, inclusive attitude towards its unfortunate members, sisters and brothers in need. Consequently, this macro-topos develops more specific themes and discourses related to the similarities between all human beings, i.e. characteristics that all human share; the moral obligation for helping somebody in distress; religiously and philosophically inspired reflections on compassion and pity.

[14] Cf. for instance the documentary "Immigration and Cultural Change" of Schlessinger Video Productions, published on YouTube 2016 by John Berg: https://youtu.be/zESKxpV73Sw

A good example illustrating this topos is the animation 'Calais – The Migrants' Path' produced in 2015 by the International Organziation for Migration[15]. The basic message of this animation of still images is that immigrants and refugees who are forced to live in the camp of Calais in France are people like "you and me". This evidence is produced by a montage of a series of sequences, each one organized in three acts:

- first act: short written texts (example: "Just like" you"; "Just like us"; …);
- second act: a visual evidence (a bicycle; a pan; …);
- third act: a second short written text containing the explanation ("… they want to go to school"; "… they have to eat"; etc.).

The last sequence of the animation finishes with the affirmation *"Just like you ... they deserve dignity and respect"*.

The eighth topos, 'The migrant is a destructive Stranger who assaults the defenseless Homelander and against whom one must stand up', occupies a specific place within the family of the ten reconstructed topoï in the sense that it focuses on migrants as destructive agents that invade Homeland with the intention to replace (physically) the native Homelander. Interestingly enough, the affective thematic 'infelicitous isotopy' that runs through the first seven topoï, disappears here. A destructive Stranger cannot be infelicitous!

Stories nurtured by this topos reconstruct the division between the inner world of the Homeland and the outer world which is a terrific, eerie space full of destructive agents against which the Homelanders must stay together, with dignity and aware of the uniqueness of their hearth. Typical titles of videos here are for example:

- *'With Open Gates. The Invasion of Europe'*[16] (an amateur remix that, like most others of its kind, is a compilation of violent scenes allegedly caused by migrants);

[15] https://youtu.be/PNf1PJdX9Mc
[16] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kwl5kyjLGT8; cf. also: https://vdare.com/posts/reposting-with-open-gates-powerful-video-of-the-invasion-of-europe

- *'The destruction of Great Britain through immigration'*[17] (developing the idea that Great Britain (like Ireland, Sweden, …) is menaced to disappear because of the massive arrival of immigrants);
- *'Paris 2016 from the Apocalypse'*[18] (a remix relating the invasion of Paris by "hordes" of immigrants and that show Paris sink in the dirt);
- *'Europe Needs You - Save Your Children - Stop Immigration'*[19] (an alt-right remix that doesn't shy away from the use of Nazi references and symbols), etc.

This topos knows indeed important thematic, narrative audiovisual developments which document the existence of a specific political folk culture in the social media sphere belonging to the far-right in French so-called *fachosphere* (Albertini & Doucet 216). Some significant characteristics of this topos are:

1) The thematic (and visual) differentiation of the key role *destructive Stranger*. In the videos produced since 2014, one often finds in this role the Muslim immigrant and the sub-Saharan African (as far as Europe represents the *Homeland*), the Latino and the Mexican (as far as the USA represents the *Homeland*). But there are other – especially – visual characteristics of qualifying somebody to be a *destructive Stranger*: people moving as organized hordes ('animated bodies' having lost their individuality), masked ('animated bodies' hiding their identity), defying the police or other security organs of the Homeland (uncontrollable 'animated bodies') and physically attacking the defenseless Homelander (terror sawing 'animated bodies'). All these visual characteristics form together an *identikit picture* of the *destructive Stranger*.

2) The thematic (and visual) differentiation of the second key role, viz. the *assaulted Homelander*. The *assaulted Homelander* is typically represented by the pretty white, defenseless girl or the elderly person who do need help. There exists a series of recurrent visual characteristics which form, once more again, a sort of *identikit picture* of the *assaulted Homelander*. Besides the gender and the age characteristics, typical characteristics are related

[17] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9HU-8AW3JW0&bpctr=1540728367
[18] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzOrDnp8HKQ
[19] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EGK0JD4GyY0

to the economic prosperity of people, their religious appurtenance and their traditional (in general folk) life style.

3) A variety of forms of aggression conducted by the *destructive Stranger* against the *Homelander*. Besides *physical destruction* (of goods), recurrent forms of aggression are *sexual harassment* of the white woman, *brutalization* of individuals in public places, *violent manifestation* and especially the *repeated threats* of the so-called *ethnic replacement* and *islamization* of Europe.

4) The thematization of the resistance and of the advent of the *true Hero*. The *true Hero* covers two more specialized roles: a) the *true Expert* denouncing the destruction of *Homeland* in defying the ignorance of the *naïve Homelander* as well as the deceitful activities of the *Traitor* (represented by leftist intellectuals, political elites, …); b) the *brave Warrior* combating the *destructive Stranger*. Together, these two roles conduct the resistance of *Homeland*.
5) Finally, the thematization of a variety of cultural references defining the *Homeland*. These cultural references dip in the fabulous historical epochs of Homeland (the Roman Empire, the Vikings, the Teutonic knights, the Napoleonian army, etc.). All these cultural references thematize the glorious history of warfare, rehabilitating regularly fascist and Nazi "achievements" and symbols.

Overall, the 'Stand up, menaced Homeland' folk culture can be understood as the product of different influences, ranging from political activism (such as identitarian, neoconservative and white supremacist movements) to video game and tv culture. It is also nurtured by a plethora of so-called experts and journalists working for highly conservative (web) news channels (such as *Fox News*[20]or *The Alex Jones channel*[21], USA) and/or neo-conservative think tanks and foundations (like the American *Centre for Immigration Studies*[22]).

[20] https://www.youtube.com/user/FoxNewsChannel
[21] https://www.youtube.com/user/TheAlexJonesChannel
[22] https://cis.org/Report

8. Freedom and independence

The representations of migrants discussed so far in the above discussed eight topoï are, ultimately, all in contrast to the ninth topos entitled 'The migrant is a free Stranger, master of his movements, who seizes the opportunities that Homeland offers him'. In contrast to forced migrants, the actantial role 'Stranger' is represented by 'global nomads', 'idlers' (Kannisto 2016), 'lifestyle nomads', 'backpackers' or 'third culture kids' (Pollock et al 2001) choosing freely, following their desires and interests to leave their home and to settle (temporarily) in a new Homeland, which offers them 'good opportunities' to satisfy their desires.

This topos develops visions and values of the free, often but not necessarily wealthy person seeking to realize himself. The central message is 'Take your life. It's yours'. Obviously, this topos doesn't play any role in the audiovisual representations of migrants related to the so-called European refugee crisis. It nurtures videos thematizing expatriation (from elder people who want to live in a "sunny country", from younger people who want to find themselves, from students who want to gain foreign experience, etc.). Typical video titles – among many others - here are for example 'Expat Africa: Living in Africa, careers in Africa' (a ten minute video from the year 2010, diffused by the YouTube channel "Nomad Capitalist"[23]); '6 Years of Full Time Van Life for Travelling Digital Nomad Couple' (a video from 2018, diffused by the YouTube channel 'Exploring Alternatives'[24]) or again 'How to choose the good country for expatriation" (a French video, published 2018 by a YouTube channel called 'Objectif Eco TV'[25]).

9. The truth about migration ...

Finally, the tenth and last topos we want to present here is entitled 'Moving and being displaced is a human condition'. This topos thematizes visions and values of 'objective knowledge', 'assumed reality', '(scientific or expert) truth' and 'moral authority' propagated by dominant epistemic communities in research (concerning the notion of 'epistemic

[23] https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3k3floOm_HtKOv0l6JU-xQ
[24] https://www.youtube.com/user/explorealternatives
[25] The URL of this channel: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_GwWSdmBaWw

community', cf. Haas 1992). The central message is that migration is intrinsic to human history, even though there have always been social movements against people coming from elsewhere. *Typical audiovisual genres* staging this topos are scholar and especially pedagogical ones in the form of *(animated) courses*, *historical documentaries*, academic *conferences*, etc. *Typical thematic developments* are based on historical, demographic, social, economic, … themes explaining migration.

One central and recurrent scientific theme is the *"pull- and push"* theme, i.e. the fact that migration is based on "push"-factors (= the reasons why people leave their place) and "pull"-factors (= the reasons why people choose a target place). From the *(visual) rhetorical point of view*, the videos developing this topos are using, unsurprisingly, scientific experts, archival documents, statistics, etc. From an *intertextual point of view*, it is noticeable that this topos is regularly used by the other topoï as an argumentative back up, as an epistemic frame of reference (for the seventh topic, the '*Menaced Homeland'* topos, it constitutes unsurprisingly the perfect example of a fake *argument* …). Among many other examples we want to quote here the three-minute didactic animation 'Migration - Why Do People Migrate' (2015) diffused by the YouTube channel "Geographer Online".

10. Concluding remarks

The research work outlined in this chapter in non-formal terms should be understood as a contribution to an archaeology of mediatized content (here: content circulating in the social mediasphere). Its task is to elicit the common sense underlying the social classifications of the other (here: the migrant complex) through a semiotic-interpretive approach to textual (here: audiovisual) corpora. We consider common sense as a sort of fundamental semantics (Greimas 1970) underlying the practical thinking, judgment and verbal and non-verbal doing of people for whom it forms an unquestioned, presupposed doxastic framework.

This approach primarily addresses the problem of culture as that of a *sphere* of permanent "sense-making" for a social actor (a person, a group, a community, ...). 'Cultural diversity' is seen here as a problem of identifying diverging doxastic frames of reference for practical

thinking and acting, and 'interculturality' as that of locating or creating more comprehensive ones.

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