



DigiLabAiR 2023 ON MIGRATION

On Migration

Migration is movement, it has infinite directions. It is leaving for entry. French philosopher Gabriel Honoré Marcel condenses the entire content of his anthropology in the expression *Homo viator*, which represents the idea that humans are constantly on a journey through life, searching for meaning, purpose, and self-discovery. However, being constantly on the move is not just a way of being that structurally characterises the human condition. More radically, it is an ethical question. What specifies human identity is, in fact, the tension forward—the openness to the future. Migration is, therefore, an original fact, constitutive of the nature of the human being, and an existential task to be accomplished. More profoundly, it is a category of the spirit—the way of “being-in-the-world”.

By definition, a migrant is a nomad in constant exodus, searching for a land of promise and hope, which, once reached, becomes the starting point towards further destinations. Marked by the tension between the “already” and the “not yet”, life is both a permanent pilgrimage and an internal experience, making it an ambivalent reality.

Geographical migration occurs when people are forced to abandon their land to escape extreme poverty, wars and violence, which compromise their existence. It is a serious phenomenon caused by inequalities and class divisions resulting from injustices that demand civil and political responsibilities. However, there is also a positive migration, consisting of thorough internal processes experienced by each individual. Migrating, in this case, means leaving oneself within the confines of one’s self-referentiality to meet the other. It is abandoning the condition of stability and security to face the unknown.

Migration is not without suffering and risk-taking. As a condition of personal growth and change, it presupposes the quest and conquest of new autonomies, which entails the passage through detachments and breakages, silence and listening, limitedness and receptivity, as Nicola Fornoni undertakes in *Nowhere*, filmed and edited by Julia Pietrangeli.

Migrating from oneself means putting one’s destiny at stake opening up to the complexity of reality. It is reversing course at the cost of losing even that part of oneself linked to a past now obsolete to reconstitute one’s identity. In the last scene, Fornoni seems to be going in the opposite direction he was previously heading, thus bringing about a radical change. The time of trial becomes the time for renewal and autonomous decision-making.

Matilde Sambo, in her *Being in the Act of Becoming*, migration is a synonym of freedom “for” or true freedom, which occurs only in choice, constituting the obligatory path for one’s realisation, at the same time reducing the space of one’s possibilities of choice. Sambo chooses to move across Nature poetically, at times like a cloud, a bird or a sea creature, giving up something else—geographical stability, thus inevitably crossing the experience of internal laceration to endure and heal. When understanding that stability (home) is not out there but within oneself, one’s inner world is recovered, and the personal self is consolidated.

It is possible to migrate and return to the ashes of one’s building where a new house has been built, remembering the past with patience and consistency. The rejection of doubt and the fear of the new push people to take refuge in adhering to totalising systems and risks having the upper hand over reason. Far from having the claim to explain every aspect of a reality that was, Sabrina Bellenzier and Giorgi Rodionov rely on an understanding of memories capable of evoking what envelops us. They make them migrate from home to home rather than letting them fade away. *19 Ghosts and One Yard* is the outcome of a process that has required ductility—the capacity to read and interpret the mutability of situations without indulging in unwilling nostalgia. The two artists have exercised a particular responsibility while producing their film, effectively bearing witness to the fabric values woven into a community’s personal and social lives.

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