

Title: *The Cartography of Self: Location Categories in African-Italian Post-Migrant Narratives*

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This paper examines how *location categories* (Schegloff 1972; Sacks 2010) function as structuring devices in two contemporary novels by authors of Somali heritage—*Cassandra a Mogadiscio* (2023) by Igiaba Scego and *La signora Meraviglia* (2024) by Saba Anglana. Drawing on the interactional framework of Membership Categorization Analysis, the study approaches spatial references as context-sensitive formulations that generate inferences, organize relational positions, and contribute to the articulation of identity.

Within both texts, place-denoting terms—ranging from indexicals (“here”, “there”) to culturally freighted categories such as “home”, “Mogadiscio”, or “Rome”—serve not simply as geographical markers but as narrative operators through which characters negotiate cultural belonging, historical consciousness, and self-positioning. The analysis focuses on the two principal geographical spheres evoked in the novels: Africa, which anchors the authors’ familial and cultural origins, and Italy, the sociocultural space in which their lives and literary voices are predominantly situated. The protagonists navigate a dual spatial imaginary in which the two regions interact, overlap, and mutually redefine each other through narrative practice.

In *Cassandra a Mogadiscio*, references to Somali spaces are organized through hierarchical and concentric location categories that shape the reconstruction of family history and inherited cultural frameworks. In *La signora Meraviglia*, spatial formulations operate as reflexive and relational cues that reveal how characters align with, or distance themselves from, dominant representations of African and Italian spaces.

Ultimately, the analysis demonstrates that location categories in these novels do not merely denote physical settings but function as key semiotic resources for constructing identity, negotiating intercultural meaning, and articulating the dynamics between origins and present contexts.

Key Words: *Location Categories, Membership Categorization Analysis Contemporary Italian Literature*

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