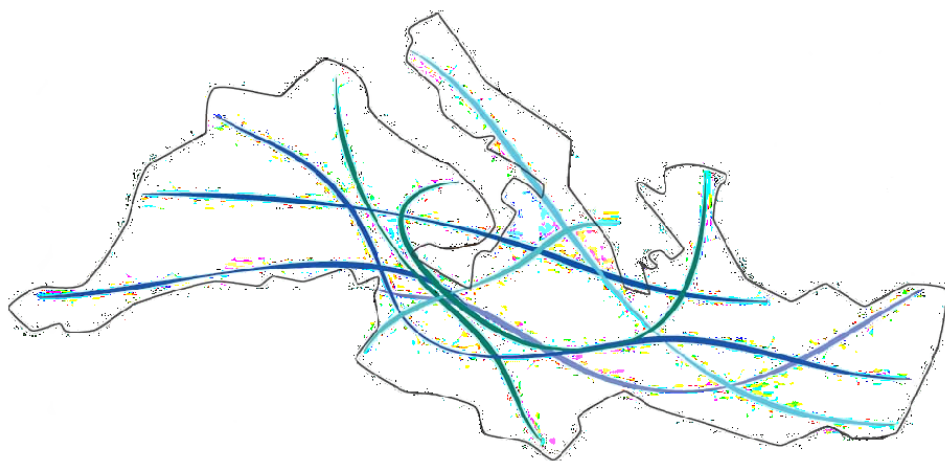


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Editor in Chief, Giuseppe D'Angelo

***Human and Social Sciences  
faced with the  
Covid-19 Pandemic***



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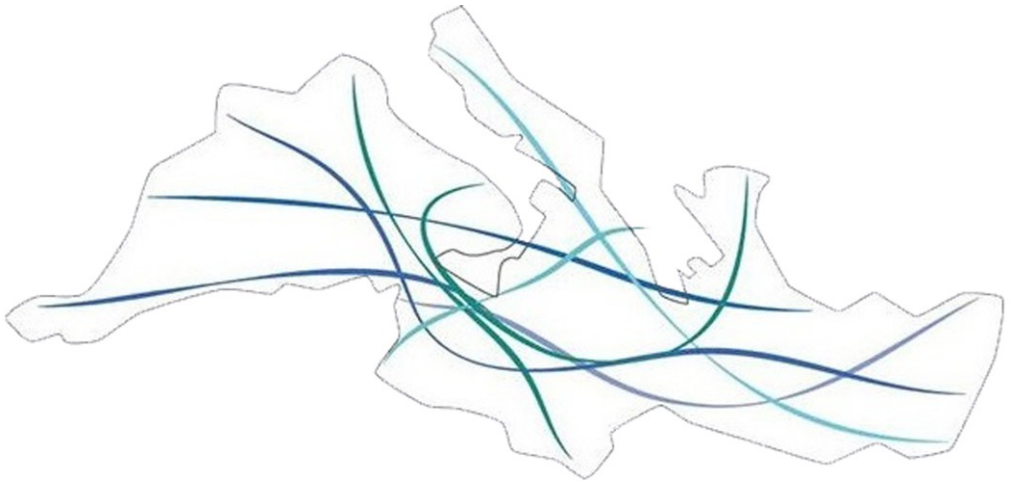
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## THEMES AND PERSPECTIVES



*Human and Social Sciences  
faced with the Covid-19 Pandemic*





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### *Humour as a way to get away from lockdown*

#### Abstract

The spring 2020 lockdown literally immobilised the planet and people were legally obliged to remain locked up. Morocco could not escape the health instructions and was condemned, as early as March 2020, to lockdown. The situation of forced immobility is dual for a writer as it can be both a period of intense production and a source of anxiety resulting from the loss of autonomy and the lack of links with his fellow humans. As a result, resistance enters the scene and imagination gives way to an intellectual escape which takes the form of renewed creativity in order to express facts or feelings. In the process, recurring themes emerge. Youssouf Amine Elalamy, a Moroccan academic and author, has chosen humour to set free from constraints and unveil the ensuing fantasies. Using Indian ink instead of his usual pen, he composed an album, which he mischievously entitled *J'ai fait un Dream*.

This paper aims at bringing out the forms and contents of humour, as well as understanding how it works. The purpose will also be to highlight the preoccupations that are already present in other books by the pluricultural author whose implication in the understanding of the contemporary Moroccan society is undeniable. Moving away from fiction and novels, he chose to write an album, which combines drawings and short comments supporting or contradicting them thus proving, if need be, the capacity of humour to transcend anxiety.

Keywords: Lockdown, Humour, Morocco, Caricature, Narcissism.

### *El humor como forma de salir del confinamiento*

#### Resumen

El confinamiento de la primavera de 2020 paralizó el planeta, obligando a los ciudadanos a permanecer encerrados en sus casas. Marruecos no fue una excepción y se vio obligado a cerrar en marzo de 2020. Para un escritor, la situación de inmovilidad forzosa tiene un doble efecto, ya que puede ser tanto un periodo de intensa producción como una fuente de preocupación por la pérdida de autonomía y la falta de contacto humano. En consecuencia, entra en escena la resistencia, mientras que la imaginación da paso a una fuga intelectual que toma la forma de una creatividad renovada para expresar los sentimientos o relatar los hechos. Hay elementos recurrentes en este proceso. Youssouf Amine Elalamy, académico y escritor marroquí, eligió el humor para liberarse de las limitaciones y revelar sus fantasías. Utilizando tinta china en lugar de su pluma habitual, compuso un álbum que tituló *J'ai fait un Dream*.

El artículo pretende examinar las formas y el contenido del humor y comprender su funcionamiento. También quiere poner de relieve las preocupaciones ya presentes en otros libros de Elalamy, cuya capacidad para comprender la sociedad marroquí contemporánea es indudable.

Palabras Clave: Encierro, Humor, Marruecos, Caricatura, Narcisismo.

### *L'umorismo come via d'uscita dal lockdown*

Sinossi

Il lockdown della primavera del 2020 ha paralizzato il pianeta, obbligando i cittadini a restare chiusi in casa. Il Marocco non ha fatto eccezione e, nel marzo del 2020, è stato costretto al confinamento. Per uno scrittore, la situazione di immobilità forzata ha un effetto duplice, perché può essere sia un periodo di produzione intensa, sia una fonte di preoccupazione per la perdita di autonomia e la mancanza di contatto umano. Di conseguenza, entra in scena la resistenza, mentre l'immaginazione cede il posto a una fuga intellettuale che assume la forma di una rinnovata creatività nell'esprimere sentimenti o raccontare fatti. In questo processo ci sono elementi ricorrenti. Youssouf Amine Elalamy, accademico e autore marocchino, ha scelto l'humour per liberarsi dai vincoli e rivelare le fantasie. Servendosi di inchiostro indiano invece della penna abituale, ha composto un album che ha intitolato *J'ai fait un Dream*.

L'articolo intende esaminare forme e contenuti dell'humour e capirne il funzionamento. Lo scopo è anche evidenziare le preoccupazioni già presenti in altri libri di Elalamy, la cui capacità di comprendere la società marocchina contemporanea è fuori discussione.

Parole chiave: Lockdown, Umorismo, Marocco, Caricatura, Narcisismo.

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# *Humour as a way to get away from lockdown*

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Silence fell upon the world in March 2020. Silence and a general paralysis, which left everyone sedentary, alone with themselves at home. The lack of entertainment as well as being reduced to the only “voyage around the bedroom” (de Maistre, 1794) have shaken people’s psyche while the media and the governments mentioned an enemy, which, though invisible, could be transmitted by a mere encounter. The Other then became threatening, a potential danger that had to be avoided. Such an attitude is totally opposed to what drives a writer: the observation of his fellow humans, sometimes through empathy and that he perceives as an anxiety filled by both the lack of freedom and fear of death. The fight against this harmful atmosphere became imperious and led to take refuge in creation, all the more so in Morocco, where conviviality is at the heart of any social encounter.

In such a prospect, Youssouf Amine Elalamy moved away from fiction and chose to write an album made of images without obvious link, a fragmented account of night wanderings. The book contains about one hundred drawings and proposes an image of its own entity undergoing metamorphoses. The drawings are accompanied by short explanatory texts. These physical variations, which play with the interactions between psyche, body and imagination, revolve around themes reflecting the obsessions of the mind in such troubled times and referring to constraints and their accompanying anxiety so as to try and set free from them through humour.

## *1. Humour as a commitment*

First, in order to briefly introduce Youssouf Amine Elalamy, who calls himself YAE, it is worth mentioning that each one of his publications (a dozen novels and short-stories collections) largely uses humour. It is probably the result of his kinship with British literature and its black humour.

As for the wit and play on words, they result from his studies at the Lycée Français in Rabat and from his readings.

Though it is acknowledged that humour encompasses multiple aspects, its Latin origin (*humor*) referring to the Hippocratic theory of the humours, is here left aside to the benefit of the distance taken with the thing mentioned. This process, *de facto*, entails a smile as one examines a given situation with a certain coldness that excludes “the feeling of superiority of the person laughing and the combined devaluation of the thing/person being laughed at” (Moura, 2010, p. 27).

Elalamy’s approach followed this when he wrote *J’ai fait un Dream*. The title itself is filled with derision: firstly because of the mixing of two languages, and secondly because of the obvious reference to Martin Luther King’s speech, *I have a dream*<sup>1</sup>. As it is used in a health context, its only common point with the original occurrence lies in the absence of freedom and the feeling of ostracising and insecurity. The assertion of the self, “J’ai fait”, is devoid of the militancy of the American Civil Rights Movement to focus more on an omnipresent Ego, which announces an imaginative delirium begotten by an imposed lockdown.

Also, the subtitle is meaningful: “Petit livre de twittérature illustrée”, which mixes the use of the abridged discourse used in Twitter (twitt) and literature cut from a part of its letters as etymologically speaking *litterae* means letters. This paves the way to the presence of short texts but also the notion of fractioning, which is, according to Elalamy, brought about by the unsettling experience of lockdown.

The Self is a major part of the illustration on the front cover. As a matter of fact, it is represented by this funny little man wearing striped trousers and a dotted jacket, bare-arms, the face of whom resemble Picasso’s portraits and a reminder of Egyptian frescos. One can then sense the fantastic aspect of self-portrait as well as self-mockery, which both liven up the metamorphoses of the character. The left foot, resting on a globe no larger than a ball, heralds self-reflection and the swelling of the Ego initiated by compulsory isolation.

Also present on the next page, the figurine is accompanied by a text which expresses the afore mentioned dream: “I have dreamt that the planet was getting smaller and I was growing bigger. Difficult then to keep your feet on the ground” “J’ai rêvé que la planète était de plus en plus petite et moi de plus en plus grand. Difficile dans ces cas-là de garder les pieds sur terre”. The character, which appears as a caricature of the author, is transformed into many figures, some of which are a hybridization between man and animal. This obviously hints at the bestiality of mankind but also at precise reminders of the epidemics. Furthermore, the use of black and

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<sup>1</sup> Speech given on August 28th, 1963 at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC.

white throughout the book clearly suggests the division of the psyche which excludes all forms of nuances. This choice is all the more edifying as “chronèmes” are particularly important and always full of meaning in YAE’s writings. (Rey & Mimoso-Ruiz, 2021).

As a consequence, the album resembles press caricatures, which aims at denouncing human’s failings or the oddity, even stupidity, of a situation through humour. YAE’s approach follows these elements but places them at the level of the elucubrations engendered by sleep or daydream, that is at a time when conscience is freed from good manners to express one’s most incongruous preoccupations or fantasies. In the context of Morocco, the flaws of which YAE has often highlighted, these caricatures embody the preoccupations of the author, prove to be sometimes haunting and constitute a proof of how essential the freedom of expression is (Ory, 2015).

In this unique introspection, YAE hints at, more than his personal unease, the problems encountered by and disturbing Morocco and to some extent Maghreb and the whole planet.

Humour used to consider lockdown as a revealing element, just like vinegar or acetic acid allow a photography to appear. The set of personal fantasies proposes a series of images of the Moroccan (and more largely the Mediterranean basin) society and its preoccupations, among which extreme Islamism. Other themes are linked to our contemporary world – pollution, emigration, racism – or prove more personal, like death, libido and of course the feelings entailed by a forced seclusion.

## *2. Humour and religion*

Several illustrations allude to religion in all its excess and useless demands, some elements of which the author stigmatises, hence creating stereotypes.

The first refers to the original sin: “I dreamt that I was in the garden of Eden and the fruit that was given to me was rotten”. It reminds of the weight of guilt as well as represents some kind of incredulity in the text. Much in the same way, the image shows a character holding an apple from which a worm comes out. The reference to Charlie Chaplin’s movie (*The Circus*, 70 mns, 1928) is quite obvious even though it has a different meaning. In fact, for Chaplin the aim is to undo the legend of William Tell and also probably to call into question the legend of the Big Apple and the myth of the American dream (Vigouroux-Frey, 1999, p. 148), while for YAE, it is a question of undoing the myth of paradise on Earth as it is henceforth wormy.

Another one is more directly linked to Islam; it shows the character dressed as a Pedrolino whose outfit is sliced; to which a comment about the obligation of eating halal meat is added. This establishes a link between the devouring woman – “I dreamt that no women wanted to eat me because my meat wasn’t halal” – and what is coined as pure food. It also alludes to the *Commedia dell’Arte* with the white outfit with black buttons. If the readers think further, they come to the conclusion that the playfulness of Pedrolino annihilates the religious recommendation by endowing it with a farcical dimension.

It is the same thing, later on, when the protagonist has four arms, which clearly recalls Shiva, who is reduced to this detail in the comment: “I dreamt that I was an Indian deity and that I was wandering with my love arm in arm, arm in arm”. The spiritual value of the divine power all over the four cardinal points is lost to the benefit of a derisory lovers’ walk despite the imposed lockdown.

Then comes an image of Jesus Christ on the cross, or more precisely a bearded man in a crucifixion position, with a desacralizing legend: “I dreamt that they wanted to crucify me, but couldn’t find nails” “J’ai rêvé qu’on voulait me crucifier, mais qu’on ne trouvait pas de clous”. The central scene of Christianity completely loses the idea of sacrifice and falls into triviality.

Buddhism is not spared either. It is shown in its Chinese version with a paunchy, cross-legged Chan Butai but without its friendly smile, which annihilates the image of benevolence normally associated with it. Usually a symbol of prosperity, Buddha here appears as suffering from obesity, a comorbidity criterion according to the doctors: “I dreamt that I was Buddha and all the doctors agreed on saying that I was a risky case”.

The uneasiness that goes together with lockdown is also perceptible in the angel-winged figurine represented by a detail of the icon, but it comes with the comment “allergic to feathers” which reduces a sacred and allegorical code to a biological malfunctioning.

These examples, all linked to religion, stigmatise faith in its specificities and deprive it from any spiritual dimension. It may be read as a response to Mahomet’s caricatures published in Denmark and in the French newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*, the dreadful outcome of which we all remember. It then stands as an assertion of the freedom of speech.

However, if YAE makes fun of religions, he does not provide of image of Mohamed the prophet. He limits himself to the mention of one of Islam’s rules, halal food. Neither does he criticize the Hebrew tradition, except for the mention of the Garden of Eden, which is actually common to all three monotheist religions. Mocking religion may verge on blaspheme, but it never crosses the line and sometimes leads to a bitter smile.

Humour, which is paradoxically inspired by reason in this apparent delirium, rests upon distance and exaggeration. Contradiction belongs to

the irrationality of dreams. This is essentially in line with Voltaire's vision: cults are only visual manifestations devoid of meaning. In this respect, YAE dismisses the idea of the pandemic being a divine retribution, in line with the tradition considering all plague as a new version of the Flood. According to him, it is more a criticism of superstition than a rejection of God, which implies a dissociation with the discourse heard in some mosques where the virus needed there to be fought against not with medical treatment but thanks to a new form of djihad with the purification of the planet from non-believers. (Fondation Recherche stratégique, 2020).

YAE allows himself to use caricatures to bring them back to their true dimension: discrediting stereotypes and associating the religious discourse during the pandemic with a simplistic belief.

### 3. *Humour and Covid 19*

If religion does not appear as a help and is shown in everything superficial, Covid 19 is represented by all the constraints it has generated. Indeed, the first mention focuses on the feeling of clausturation, for an unspecified duration, with the drawing of a fading character inside an hourglass together with the comment: "I dreamt that we were all locked up and it was only a question of time". "J'ai rêvé que nous étions tous confinés et que ça n'était qu'une question de temps" Proximity with death can be read through the next illustration showing a funeral urn, inside which an imprisoned character tries to open the top with his foot. The text leads the reader to consider lockdown as a step to an unavoidable death: "I dreamt that they could not incinerate me but had still managed to put me inside the urn". The use of *on*, an impersonal pronoun in French, summarizes the ways in which governments' decisions were perceived by the populations, that is to say without any identifiable figure, conveying thus the impression of an obscure coalition.

The absurdity of the situation becomes provocative when the character sees himself as a homeless obliged to stay inside. The obligation of staying at home becomes meaningless when it comes to homeless people; it even nourished many bad jokes seen on social networks.

Paradoxically, the terms "coronavirus" or "Covid-19" do not appear; they are only alluded to with words such as "virus" or "epidemic" and suggested by their effects and consequences on people's mind, imagination or unconscious.

Such an omission is meaningful and makes it easy to recognise the so far unprecedented phenomenon. In fact, the reader can do so thanks to clues – about lockdown for instance – but also to clear suggestions. As an example, it is the case with China, where the virus originated: "I dreamt that

I was dressed up as Mickey Mouse and that Chinese people had mistaken me for a bat and wanted to eat me.” “J’ai rêvé que j’étais déguisé en Mickey que des Chinois m’avaient pris pour une chauve-souris et voulaient me manger”. First, Mickey Mouse embodies here the US nation as the economic rival of China. Then, the bat alludes to the supposed origin of the virus and underlines the eating habit of the Chinese people. In fact, it is acknowledged that the virus first appeared in Wuhan’s market which had been infected by bats. Added to this is the xenophobia that gripped the West in the face of what Donald Trump has called “the Chinese virus”, an anxiety response correlated with the observation of the powerlessness of science.

Wearing a mask is far from the Mediterranean people’s habits and it is mentioned in the only hope to see it disappear: “I dreamt that we finally had overcome the epidemic and that I could take my mask off.” The anaphora “I dreamt that” suggests an indefinite duration and reinforces the theatrical aspect initiated by the figure of Pedrolino. Unlike what is expected, the mask bears the features of the character and once removed it lets appear an empty face, thus highlighting the absurdity of the situation.

This ideas can also be perceived in the playing card where the character becomes a king holding a sword: “I dreamt that I was wearing a crown and that I was mistaken for a virus.”

“J’ai rêvé que je portais une couronne et qu’on m’avait pris pour un virus”. This obviously refers to the peoples’ obedience to the advances of the pandemic which then ruled human behaviour. This is confirmed by two other images, one evoking Adolf Hitler with his military uniform, moustache and lock of hair on the forehead. However, the swastika is replaced by a heart, and torture changes into tickles. Hitler is then devoid of any monstrosity and is rather presented as a puppet, which in the end sheds light on the unsettling dimension of the pandemic. The second image is linked to black humour as it shows the character wearing a long white gown, a white pointed hat and holding a torch. It is followed by a comment which summarizes the Ku Klux Klan’s ideology : “I dreamt that I was a depressed racist and that I was in the doldrums”<sup>2</sup>.

The presence of the sect which is the most representative of racial hatred and the allusions to the persecutions against Black people in the Southern states of the US both suggest the devastating effects of the pandemic among the Afro-American population as well as the inertia of Donald Trump’s administration in protecting these citizens.

The plays on words which appear throughout the book come together with black humour when the devastating effects of the virus on the respiratory tract are represented by a nest with three eggs resting on lungs,

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<sup>2</sup> Literally, “broyer du noir” means “smash some black(s)”.



as seen through X-rays. The most common cause of death is here combined with the popular expression in French “faire son nid”<sup>3</sup> and the comment “in my bed, at night, I could hear it whistle” “le soir dans mon lit, je l’entendais siffler” which offhandedly refers to the symptoms of respiratory infection.

Taking seriously the obligations and precautions to protect people, the book puts hygiene and barrier gestures forward. For the first, the character physically changes and explains the transformation like this: “I dreamt that I was cleansed and I shrank while in the washing machine”. “J’ai rêvé que pour me désinfecter, on m’avait passé à la machine et que j’avais rétréci au lavage”. It is obviously a metaphor of the restrictions of freedom and the obligation to wash hands. As for lockdown and the removal of physical contact, they are shown through a sewn mouth, a truncated body with arms crossed behind the back and legs stuck in the chest. And, as a testimony of the forced immobility and the suppression of any manifestation of affection, the comment says: “I dreamt that I could no longer kiss someone, hold them in my arms or even stand outside. “J’ai rêvé que je n’avais plus le droit d’embrasser, ni de prendre quelqu’un dans mes bras, ni même de mettre un pied dehors”. Here too, the popular expression is transcribed in its first sense which becomes grotesque, in the bakhtinian sense of the term, because linked to deadly impulses (Bakhtine, 1970).

The troubles linked with the emergence of the virus and their ensuing protective measures come under a common feeling of threat and loss of autonomy in movements and emotional life.

YAE has chosen humour by taking official recommendations at face value and showing the accompanying psychological damage in the drawings. Such a behaviour clearly belongs to an intellectual taking his distance with the pandemic; it also is a way to find, in creation, a compensation to bans. This allows some kind of psychological transgression unlike what sociological surveys conducted in France and Morocco indicated: that populations were passive and subdued because they were frightened by the situation. (Mariot, Mercklé & Perdoncin, 2020). In Morocco, the phenomenon was studied in *the Survey on the impact of Coronavirus on the social, economic and psychological situation of households (Enquête sur l’impact du coronavirus sur la situation sociale, économique et psychologique des ménages)*, conducted by Abdelhak Najib et Imane Kendili in 2021 upon the request of “le Haut-Commissariat au Plan” (High Commission for Planning).

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<sup>3</sup> Literally it means “make one’s nest”; but it can also mean “set up” or “set in”.

#### 4. Humour as an expression of fantasies

Living in a country where frontiers are closed (15 March 2020) and the state of emergency declared right after (20 March 2020) left the population without any personal project especially because no end date was given. Being under strict travel controls severely enforced by the police, people developed frustrations and a feeling of insecurity that only imagination could ease. In this logic, it is in times of privation that fantasies emerge, covered by dreams that are out of control because they appear while sleeping or result from a mind's wandering. The vision of the Self in a hybrid-half man, half animal – mode undoubtedly is a variation of Oedipe's Centaurus or Jérôme Bosch's creatures that were taken up by Surrealism as the reminiscence of an animistic cult present in religions in India or Egypt for instance. This therianthropy is sometimes, according to some psychiatric studies, linked to behavioural disorder, which allows a lingering doubt on the effects of lockdown on people's psyche. However, in the book under study, it fully belongs to the creation process and gives the various urges one could be submitted to during lockdown. As a matter of fact, the character is successively transformed into a fish, a pangolin, a giraffe, and finally into a butterfly. The choice of animals is quite significant: the fish allows YAE to hint at another painful phenomenon in Morocco, that is to say the often deadly attempts of *harragas* to cross the Strait of Gibraltar. The image of the fish alludes to two novels by the author: *Illegal immigrants – Les Clandestins – and War is beautiful – C'est beau, la guerre*.

The first novel gives a voice to some dead migrants drown in the Mediterranean Sea and often compared to fishes. The second portrays an actor fleeing by sea a country completely devastated by bombing, which is confirmed by the comment under the drawing: "I dreamt I had lost both my legs, both my arms during the fights but when I had to cross the sea to flee, I was in my element". "J'ai rêvé que les combats m'avaient pris les deux jambes et les deux bras, mais lorsqu'il a fallu traverser pour fuir la guerre, j'étais comme un poisson dans l'eau". The French expression "être comme un poisson dans l'eau"<sup>4</sup> is here ironic in the way that it establishes a gap between the disasters of migration and the easiness it suggests.

As for the pangolin, it is a hint at the rumour making of this animal a scapegoat as, because it is appreciated by Chinese people for its supposed medicinal virtues, it was declared the origin of the pandemic: "I dreamt that I was a pangolin and that, all alone, I defeated all human beings". However, if the pangolin bears viruses as any other mammal, "the analysis of the genetic material of SARS-Cov2, the virus responsible for the pandemic, shows that it is very comparable to coronavirus found in bats.

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<sup>4</sup> Literally, "to be like a fish in water".

Does that mean that pangolin has nothing to do with the current pandemic? The answer is no, because the S protein visible at the surface of the virus – the entrance key to human cells – is very close to the pangolin’s coronavirus S protein. In other words, the pangolin virus is the entrance door”. (David, 2020). The linkage of the character to the pangolin underlines how ridiculous its stigmatisation is. It also aims at condemning society’s vision of difference and the speed with which it is prone to accusing in order to find a scapegoat identified by all as the guilty one (Girard, 1982).

The giraffe with a human face incarnates hybridity as a source of instability in a world where uniformity is a rule. As the animal is imprisoned in a zoo, it underlines the fact that social constraints are bad for individual fulfilment: “I dreamt that, visiting the zoo, I had meant an animal in the midst of an identity crisis”. “J’ai rêvé qu’en visitant le zoo, j’avais rencontré un animal en pleine crise identitaire”.

In such a bestiary, the personality of the character is polymorphous, an indication of the instability resulting from lockdown which imposes self-questioning. The only ray of hope is the presence of a butterfly in the last pages of the book, thus representing the last step of the metamorphosis toward freedom. However, the anaphora “*I dreamt that* I finally was out of my cocoon”, immediately suppresses the idea of freedom by referring to a chimera.

The drawings portraying animals belong to a long tradition, first of fables then of comics and can make us think of Art Spiegelman (1980-1991) who transposed Nazis’ persecutions on Jews into cats chasing mice. Nonetheless, the author is in YAE’s book physically present as the intra and homodiegetic narrator (Genette, 1972), who claims responsibility for the imaginative delusions that he tries to overcome.

Together with these metaphors, there are more personal fantasies, as, for instance, that of wanting to still make one’s partner dream. This obviously shows some kind of discontent, of romantic frustration. Others, in a society where virility is important, express the fear of helplessness, even impotence, with women: “I dreamt that I was making love to a mermaid and she couldn’t come”. The play on word brings face to face the popular expression with the fact a mermaid doesn’t have feet and can’t therefore “take(prendre) her foot (son pied)”. The expression here loses its meaning and is on the verge of absurdity as “the absurdity of the words is added to the absurdity of the situation” much in the same way as nobody then really understood the (irrational) pandemic. (Perès, 2016, p. 117). The fascination for anything that is feminine, the dream to change sex are perceptible when the character sees himself dressed as and behaving like Marylin Monroe in the famous scene of *The Seven Year Itch* (Bill Wilder 1955) – taken up in a Tex Avery cartoon – when Marylin stands in a white dress above a metro

air vent. The allusion to the American movie is devoid of all its sensuality with the comment: "I dreamt that I was Marilyn and hadn't waxed that day". The uneasiness felt in front of women becomes ridiculous and even appears as a deadly resignation when the character is hit, not in the heart but in the navel, by an arrow and says: "I dreamt that Cupid hadn't aimed accurately and that love made me sick". The arrow in the navel alludes to narcissism as a metaphor of withdrawal into oneself and an expression of suffering, which humour seems to attenuate. Fantasy becomes a reality with the drawings, even though they are often contradicted by the comments accompanying them. The constant swing between dream and disappointment marks the instability the character has to cope with while maintaining a certain distance since, because it is a "dream", it is less terrible.

### *Conclusion*

Choosing the pandemic as the main theme of one's book may seem provoking if we consider the number of casualties; it may even make us believe that, out of respect for the victims, there are forbidden topics. This would amount to believe that art is under some kind of moral censorship when it is in fact below and beyond and should only be seen as an artist's vision of reality and the world combined with his own imagination. Even though the character epitomizes Morocco, it represents a kind of universality, much in the same way as the pandemic does. Such a *mimesis*, entwined with humour, rejects the idea according to which humour is a European, even Anglo-saxon, trait. It then follows Mohammed Aïssaoui conception when he said: "Yes, Arabs also are endowed with a sense of humour! Humour is a form of resistance to obscurantism", that is to say to all that is not accessible through Reason: "Yes, the Arabs have also humour! It is a form of resistance against obscurantism" (Aïssaoui, 2015, p. 9)

In this respect, YAE's album exemplifies modern time literature, that is far from the prejudices surrounding books coming from Maghreb considered by some people as mere ethnic testimonies. YAE's approach, using a variation of comic books, playfully expresses one's need to set free from personal anxiety. In doing so, he expresses the anxieties of all human beings: the fear of death, the fear of not being in tune with what is expected from you. The whole book makes us smile as a way to defend ourselves from forbidden things, frustrations and the uncertainty concerning the end of the pandemic. Humour takes many forms in the book but is closer to black humour than to anything else. In fact, it highlights the impossibility of the character to break free from the grip of the virus. The only possible

escape is imagination as the recurring anaphora “I dreamt” suggests. André Breton (Breton, 2019, p. 15) mentioned the freeing power of humour citing Freud: “Humour is not only a liberation factor, much in the same way as the mind and comedy, but it is also sublime and higher [...] The sublime is obviously linked to narcissism, to the invulnerability of the Ego which victoriously asserts itself”, which is reinforced by the recurrence of the personal pronoun I.

“Humorous is not only something liberating, analogue to the spirit of the comic, but also something sublime and elevated”. (Freud, 1994, p.137). The use of black for the illustrations as for the nature of humour lets the shadow of death linger as Dominique Noguez suggests: “Black, obviously representative of humour, is linked with death” (Noguez, 2000, p. 227). Even though narcissism is undeniably present as a protective shield, the metamorphoses of the body hint at the fragility of being. Nonetheless, the character never loses his head, thus keeping safe his true freedom.

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### *Can COVID's experience be of relevance to teachers?*

Abstract

While the publications of the IPCC and the Global Compact have challenged certain researchers and academics with regard to their responsibilities as teachers on the issue of climate change, the covid pandemic has highlighted the degeneration of each person's relationship with others. It is because this evolution has an impact on the forms and modes of consumption and production strategies in all productive organisations, whatever their activity, that it seems necessary to highlight in teaching the existing links between the relationship with others, the production system and its environmental effects. This has led us to suggest, in the perspective of an educational transition, lines of thought of a systemic nature concerning a renewal of the training courses offered in the universities.

Keywords : Covid, Ecological transition, Common good, Global studies

### *¿Puede la experiencia covid ser importante para los profesores?*

Resumen

Si la publicación del IPCC y el Pacto Mundial supusieron un reto para los investigadores y académicos en lo referido a sus responsabilidades como docentes en ámbito de cambio climático, la pandemia de coronavirus ha puesto de manifiesto la degeneración de las relaciones de todos con los demás. Esta evolución afecta no sólo a las formas y maneras de consumo, sino también a todas las estrategias productivas, independientemente del tipo de actividad, y es necesario destacar los vínculos que existen en la educación entre las relaciones con los demás, el sistema de producción y las consecuencias medioambientales. Esto nos lleva a identificar, desde la perspectiva de una transición pedagógica, algunas líneas de pensamiento sistémicas sobre la renovación de los cursos universitarios.

Palabras Clave: Covid, Transición ecológica, Bien común, Estudios globales.

### *Può l'esperienza del covid essere rilevante per gli insegnanti?*

Sinossi

Se la pubblicazione dell'IPCC e del Global Compact hanno posto una sfida a ricercatori e accademici in merito alle loro responsabilità di insegnanti sui temi del cambiamento climatico, la pandemia del covid ha fatto emergere la degenerazione dei rapporti di ciascuno con gli altri. Poiché tale evoluzione influenza non solo le forme e i modi del consumo, ma

anche tutte le strategie produttive indipendentemente dal tipo di attività, è necessario evidenziare i legami esistenti in ambito didattico tra relazione con gli altri, sistema produttivo e conseguenze ambientali. Questo ci spinge a individuare, nella prospettiva di una transizione pedagogica, alcune linee di pensiero di natura sistemica in merito al rinnovo dei corsi universitari.

Parole chiave: Covid, Transizione ecologica, Bene comune, Studi globali

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# *Can COVID's experience be of relevance to teachers?*

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## *Introduction*

If the experience of each person has led him or her, one day or another, to take the measure of his or her personal fragility, a small virus invisible to the eye has come to remind us of it. The same applies to the fragility of our professional structures. A ministerial speech rendered obsolete in a few hours the system of organisation of our faculties and teaching, which was nevertheless revisited at the beginning of each academic year. Being aware of one's vulnerability is by no means a given. Youth, health, economic ease and a good level of technical culture may lead us to believe that the danger is low. It is an accident, the departure or death of a loved one, a sentimental or professional failure, and today's health crisis that changes the way we look at things. It is the obvious risk of the spread of an epidemic that calls into question the working methods and the personal relationship between members of the teaching staff or the teacher-student relationship. It is no longer the material structures of our organisations that are at stake, but the human relationships of our professional lives. "Other people are not like a pen or a computer to me: if they run out, I get angry, but I make sure they are fixed or replaced. Concern for things is not concern for others: concern versus care. .... "My habits are challenged, my being in the world has shifted." (Agata Zielinski, 2007) .

It is undoubtedly this shift that explains the call for an awareness of the fragility of our organisations, which has been widely voiced by intellectuals from all disciplines, as well as business, social and political leaders. "This crisis forces us to mature. It is important to bridge the gap between awareness and action" (Corinne Pelluchon). While there was undoubtedly an awareness of the inadequacy of some of our teaching structures and

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<sup>1</sup> This text is based on the reflections of a working group convened by the Jean Rodhain Chair (ICT ) between October 2020 and February 2021. It was composed of Marie Paule Coulibaly (Sr Marie Paule Espérance), fr Gilles Danroc, Jean-Marie Fehrenbach, Bernard Ibal, Yen Le, Jean-Marc Moschetta, Jean Yves Perrouin, fr Luc thomas Somme, fr Tanguy Marie Pouliquen and Marie Christine Monnoyer.

methods for a student population that was more sociologically diverse than in the past, less financially secure, less prepared for a highly individual form of work .... However, even in Catholic universities, despite the injunctions of Francis, action is not forthcoming from 2018. “We are not only living in a time of change but a real change of era, marked by a global anthropological and socio-environmental crisis in which we encounter more and more symptoms of a breaking point every day because of the rapidity of the changes and degradation that are manifested both in regional natural disasters and in social or even financial crises.” ... “It is ultimately a question of converting the global development model and redefining progress” ..... This “considerable and undeferrable task requires, at the cultural level of university education and scientific research, a generous and convergent commitment to a radical change of paradigm, and even - if I may say so - to a “courageous cultural revolution”.

This call for the conversion of our modes of thought and analysis is expressed differently according to the authors and the disciplines, but they all point to an epistemological break that must be nourished by new intellectual resources<sup>2</sup> and a new look at those around us.

This rupture brought to light personal and collective questions about relationships with others. The pandemic made us discover people we did not see, even if we did meet them; it highlighted the fact that the quest for maximum efficiency in techniques or productive organisations led to the undermining of negative externalities, the impacts on living beings that result from the processes adopted. But the evolution of the way we look at others also modifies our relationship with ourselves<sup>3</sup> and, by the same token, our way of interpreting what has been transmitted to us, whether it is a text, a scientific report or what A. Cugno calls a “monument”.

Is this enough to accept the idea of a community of destiny for all humans in inseparable link with the bio-ecological destiny of the planet, as Francis says in *Laudato si* or E. Morin in his writings? ~~Morin in his writings?~~ Is this enough to lead academics to consider it essential to take a new look at their discipline and its links with the needs of the young people they train?

The university organisation in France, but also in all European countries, leads to a very regular control of the content of training courses by the ministerial administration in charge, which leaves little room for innovation and reactivity to ecological and social transformations. Are our curricula,

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<sup>2</sup> [https://theconversation.com/debat-face-a-lincertitude-faire-entrer-la-reflexion-ethique-a-lecole-147338?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=La%20lettre%20de%20The%20Conversation%20France%20du%2013%20octobre%202020%20](https://theconversation.com/debat-face-a-lincertitude-faire-entrer-la-reflexion-ethique-a-lecole-147338?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=La%20lettre%20de%20The%20Conversation%20France%20du%2013%20octobre%202020%20)

<sup>3</sup> [https://diocese40.fr/laudato-si-et-covid-19-reflexion/.](https://diocese40.fr/laudato-si-et-covid-19-reflexion/)

our teaching, our pedagogy and our attitudes in line with this demand for redefinition? Driven by the search for efficiency and productivity, in a globalised economy marked by competition, training courses have been increasingly specialised over the last thirty years. If the older academics are alarmed by the “gaps” in their students’ knowledge, this is not the result of “student flanderings<sup>4</sup>”, but the result of a narrowing of the subjects taught and the lack of transdisciplinarity in university training, which leads young people to be less sensitive to the effects of the decisions taken in their speciality on areas they do not master.

The pandemic and its corollaries seem to invite the academic world to multiple decenterings, via the evolution of the relationship to others of all those who constitute it. Because the surrounding world is expanding, can each discipline taught be positioned differently in relation to other disciplines, can the future responsibility of student-citizens be nourished in a less targeted way, on certain themes, can the university community be enriched by trans-generational contributions? Can we, as E. Mounier suggested, discover “under the gaze of others, that creative lightness of the for-itself which can, on the wave received, find the support of a new impetus.” (Ngandoul, 2020, p. 142).

To answer these questions in a precise manner seems too ambitious for the scope of an article, but it is possible to clear some paths that could constitute points of support for those for whom the ‘world after’ must be different. Because it is ambiguous for both literary scholars and some scientists, we have chosen to focus on the relationship to technology. Because it is an ancient concept whose re-reading opens doors to all teachers whatever their discipline, we have chosen to revisit our relationship to the common good. Finally, because it is one of the pillars of Western culture, we have chosen to deepen the meaning of the relationship to freedom for professors.

## *1 The relationship to technology*

### *1.1 An ambiguous relationship*

A curious paradox seems to be emerging among our contemporaries: on the one hand, technological euphoria, oblivious to the laws of nature, leads most people to believe that from now on, any physical limit is negotiable, any technical object born of the imagination is only a matter of financial means and the ability to think ‘*out of the box*’. Refusal to comply with the injunction to convert to new technologies is denounced as a

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<sup>4</sup> The word “flandering”, applied to workers, was in use in Fordist industrial organisations in the 1950s.

rejection of progress. On the other hand, a distrust in the notion of scientific truth, or even scientific fact, is emerging among scientists themselves, who are willing victims of a publication system that has gone haywire with the rise of digital media. The health crisis has highlighted the fact that some scientific journals, even the most reputable ones, no longer exercise sufficient critical scrutiny over the quality of communications. As a result, the practice of adversarial debate in science has been interpreted as proof that 'scientific facts' are, in the end, just another opinion, which is also open to question. And while some have an addictive relationship of intimacy with technology, others preach a moratorium on... scientific research.

The context of the health crisis has undoubtedly amplified certain behaviours, but some of them can also be explained by the fact that technology is never neutral and therefore challenges and disturbs, even if, as Bernard Stiegler suggests "when we want to fight the toxic side of a technology, we must begin by appropriating it: understanding its toxicity, stating its limits and possibly transforming its implementation. These positions also reflect a feeling among the population that the ethical and political awareness of the 'innovative scientist' has been taken away from them by certain forms of governance.

The rapid deployment of techniques, under the pretext of military emergency or economic competition, and their sometimes discreet implementation, have weakened the relationship between ethics and technique. "By refusing to think about evil, we become capable of committing it" said Hannah Arendt. The urgency in which we have become accustomed to living, in the most economically developed countries, has slyly eliminated the time for reflection and discussion, thus giving experts a power that is unequalled in a democratic organisation. Identifying the tensions between different points of view based on divergent values, interests or scientific results, and trying to find solutions through dialogue and the unveiling of "fruitful disagreements"<sup>5</sup>, is not the way to the profound appropriation of knowledge in most disciplines and professions<sup>6</sup>.

The transmission of technical knowledge of all kinds can therefore be challenged by the discovery of the relationship to others that lies behind any creation, whether material, immaterial or virtual. Indeed, the field of technology is not only industrial. Medicine, law, management and communication .... are all places where very diverse techniques are used without any in-depth study of the theoretical knowledge that underlies them and the consequences they generate for others. It is the consideration of the socio-economic situation of "others" that should lead, for example, to

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<sup>5</sup> Expression often used by the philosopher Patrick Viveret.

the definition of an ethical law, a fair economic organisation, an objective historical position, a non-discriminatory sociological choice, a responsible technical decision ..... E. Morin (2015, p. 40) recalls "the inadequacy between our disjointed knowledge on the one hand... and on the other hand realities or problems that are increasingly poly-disciplinary, transversal...

### *1.2 Technology and knowledge*

Training centers have become aware of this perverse effect through the difficulty that some students feel in thinking before launching the software, in agreeing to take part in a debate on a legal text, on a method of care, of psychological support, etc. What does this reflect? Undoubtedly a deficit in the mastery of orality and more particularly in its emotional dimension, both among young people and teachers. Does it not also reflect a deficit in thinking that is generalised across all strata of the population, whatever the level of training? Although some people think so within our reflection team (Monnoyer, 2021), a certain revival of interest in the study of philosophy and critical human sciences may contradict this. Some teachers consider that the taste for knowledge and debate should only be revitalised by a widening of the field of reflection, an openness to the different media of exchange, and an apprenticeship in listening to others. So, let us not forget what H. Arendt reminded us: "It is only because I can speak with others that I can speak with myself, that is to say think".

This observation by the philosopher refers us quite naturally to the use of electronic tools, telephones and computers. For who are we in front of our screens? The future of the world today undoubtedly depends on our personal posture in front of the screens. Either it is alienating, and it is the screen that comes to us, hypnotizes us, takes charge of us mentally, creates superficial needs in us and steals our time; or the screen is a simple means at the service of the integral good of people and the common good, the good of all and everyone.

The increasing omnipresence of screens must lead the teacher to question the "right" posture in front of them. What quality of relationship will accompany this permanent technological interface? If teachers now welcome these training aids that are websites, some feel that their relationship with students has been taken away from them. As one group of teachers states: "The transmission of knowledge involves interaction with the audience: turns of phrase, voice inflections, mimicry, jokes or provocations, ramblings are an integral part of teaching"<sup>7</sup>. The screen then

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<sup>7</sup> [https://theconversation.com/debat-face-a-lincertitude-faire-entrer-la-reflexion-ethique-a-lecole-147338?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=La%20lettre%20de%20The%20Conversation%20France%20du%2013%20octobre%202020%20](https://theconversation.com/debat-face-a-lincertitude-faire-entrer-la-reflexion-ethique-a-lecole-147338?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=La%20lettre%20de%20The%20Conversation%20France%20du%2013%20octobre%202020%20)

lives up to its name, it can screen the encounter, taking itself as a case, most often empty of human presence. The quantity of links does not determine the quality of the gaze.

This reflection on techniques could have a profound impact on training in the social sciences and religious sciences, whose students do not feel they are “technicians”, going so far as to neglect a somewhat thorough mastery of digital tools, despite the important use they make of them. Can we find good postures in front of the screens that will allow those for whom the activity of these future graduates is intended: litigants, the sick, practicing believers, young people in the process of schooling, and clients of all kinds, to be more at ease with the languages used by these specialists, with the techniques that are applied? Can the experience and know-how of young people in this field lead teachers to realise the role of co-producer of knowledge that can be played by students, as suggested by the work of C. Madrid (2020) on digitised teaching?

### *1.3 The engineer and technology*

In recent years, engineers have changed the way they look at their own profession and the way it should be presented to students. “The Portrait of the Engineer 2030” describes a world characterised by three major trends:

- accelerating technological change that impacts most disciplines, fueled by the globalisation of challenges and solutions.
- a horizontalization of the economic system which modifies the logic of intermediation in the company and profoundly questions the relationship to knowledge.
- a hybridisation of technical, economic and societal cultures that highlights new territories at the interface of several fields, with “design” as an emblematic multidisciplinary culture, a source of product re-creation (circular economy) with a view to sustainable development.

In this context, in addition to solid technical and scientific skills, the tomorrow engineer must have a sense of responsibility, which translates into, among other things:

- long-term vision in a short-term world
- anticipation and systematic control of risks (economic, ecological, security, etc.)
- the sense of security, collective utility, sustainable development, but also of intellectual property, of the legislator.

In this perspective, the “Commission des titres de l’ingénieur” (CTI) proposes the following definition of the engineering profession:

“The engineer’s job consists of posing, studying and solving in an efficient and innovative way often complex problems of creation, design, realisation, implementation and control of products, systems or services - possibly their financing and marketing - within a mostly competitive organisation. It integrates concerns for the protection of people, society and its values, life and the environment, and more generally for collective well-being” (CTI, 2015) .

The engineer’s horizon seems to be widening, as a result of the integration into technical thinking of the consequences for “others” of the choices made when designing the product and in the methods of its production. Pedagogically, this evolution presupposes the introduction of multi disciplinarity and an opening up to the social sciences, often described as “soft sciences”, in the training curriculum<sup>8</sup> . However, the road from a declaration of intent to a general development may be long.

One experience in this area seems interesting to us, that of the Icam in Toulouse, a general engineering school on a human scale, with an “arts and crafts” tradition and heir to Ignatian pedagogy. It has chosen to integrate into its curriculum (4th year) a “system of thought” course and an ethics course run by sociology teachers. These lessons are somewhat destabilising for young people used to mathematical rigor, but is this not the feeling of anyone who is confronted with someone who does not look like them at first sight?

The school has also chosen to value, during the internships that punctuate the training, the student’s commitment, i.e. the exit from the position of obedient intern, towards a position of questioning a hierarchy that has forgotten its responsibilities. Here again, the path is narrow, in a period of life when the person is “dependent”. The young person must be accompanied by his or her university and professional trainers, he or she cannot be left to his own devices.

These choices highlight an interconnection between training engineering and the analysis of social phenomena, the supervisor and the learner. Our geographical and intellectual proximity to this school made us realise that the extension of the teaching staff to human science disciplines (sociology, management, etc.) had facilitated collective reflection on the objectives of training future engineers.

## *2 Recovering a common good objective*

### *2.1 The re-emergence of an old concept*

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<sup>8</sup> The current experiment conducted by Institut des Sciences Appliquées (INSA) with the “Shift project” shows a diffusion of this reflection.

The current debate on the ecological transition challenges, via the relationship with others, all inventors and producers of technology, present and future, as we have just seen. But it also challenges every citizen and every consumer of goods or services who, in terms of satisfying his or her needs, is confronted with a narrow framework that distinguishes only two major categories of goods: public goods, which are specific to the state sphere, and private goods, which are specific to the market sphere.

When Elinor Oström published her work on the land commons in 1990, she challenged the foundations of the neoliberal economic current (1870) that underlies the functioning of contemporary capitalism. She led lawyers to look at the weakness of texts relating to the shared governance of land and reminded us that the greatest industrial successes have benefited from research and technologies developed by the public sector.

The tradition of land commons allowed peasants to graze their domestic animals and to cut wood, broom, etc. on communal land and according to precise rules, fixed by customary law, aimed at perpetuating the resource used over time. Without contravening the concept of individual property and its positive dimension in terms of productivity and response to market needs, the management of the commons gave access to complementary resources to non-owners, until the end of the 18th century, as far as Europe is concerned.

Awarding Elinor Oström the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2009 meant recognising that the organisation of the world economy and the collaboration of states had not yet made it possible to resolve the two major problems of the 21st century: the issue of climate stability and that of poverty, both in countries that have been in difficulty for a long time and in the 'rich' countries, for a significant proportion of their population. Awarding Elinor Oström the Nobel Prize in Economics was a recognition of the importance of the concept of the common good in economies marked by an unprecedented consumption frenzy. Awarding the Nobel Prize in Economics to Elinor Oström was to show that collective intelligence can serve as a guide.... "It was to show that 'past devastation brings to the surface the deepest stratum of our humanity, making it somehow, if not visible, then more audible' (Cugno, 2021, p 62).

Anthropologists, lawyers and economists such as Michel Aglietta (2020) are calling on states to "place at the heart of the economy a management of common goods freed from the destructive grip of financial capitalism". It should be remembered that in recent years, as a result of financial globalisation, shareholders have increased their demands for returns on capital to between 12 and 15% per year, making it almost impossible to finance long-term investments. Many researchers, with Bommier and Renouard (2018), now argue against the 'dogma' of the shareholder-owner, in the name of its historically situated character and the multitude of



property rights that are exercised in the company. The company thus appears much more than 50 years ago as a 'common'.

The re-emergence of this medieval concept has found applications in the hard sciences as well as in the social sciences, even in theology, because it calls into question certain elements of the right of ownership and the exercise of this right. As we shall see below, it can be the source of a multiplicity of innovations. Consequently, in order to bring about the ecological transition, this radical change in society, the political grid of the common good appears to be a fundamental element (Giraud, Ravet, 2015), which has already been emphasised in recent pontifical texts (*Veritatis Gaudium, Caritas in Veritate, Laudato si* and *Fratelli tutti*), or by the United Nations (the Millennium Goals, 2000 and 2015), and the 26 meetings of the COP (Conference of the Parties).

## 2.2 From theory to practice

Proposals for a more community-based management of goods come from very different sectors of activity in which communities of citizens, collectives and networks that do not neglect the gift element that exists in any exchange, have obtained very interesting results<sup>9</sup>.

This is the case in the agricultural field with the sharing of farmers' seeds, which since 2016 has made it possible to diversify cultivated species, protect biodiversity and open up new economic models for farmers. The concept of global public good launched by K. Annan, however, has remained at the stage of a declaration of principle. This is why the *Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative*<sup>10</sup> was created in 2003, proposing that pharmaceutical companies not apply for patents for vaccines developed while retaining the intellectual property of the molecules found when they are inserted into other medicines. The dynamics of citizens' communities, whose power has also been revealed in lawsuits against states for failing to meet their CO2 emission commitments<sup>11</sup>, led the organisers of COP 21 to include businesses and citizens in the process of reducing emissions, designated as legitimate interlocutors to respect and enforce the commitments made by states.

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<sup>9</sup> As Benedict XVI reminds us (*Caritas in Veritate* ch 3 n°34) but also some economists and sociologists (such as N. Alter, A. Grévin, L. Bruni (in *Culture du don*, (2014), (Ed) N. Geneste, and Monnoyer, M-Ch. Presses Universitaires de l'ICT.

<sup>10</sup> Launched by Médecins Sans Frontières, the Pasteur Institute and 4 other research institutes.

<sup>11</sup> Urgenda case in the Netherlands and Juliana case in the US.

Beyond its legal, economic and geopolitical dimensions, the question of the definition of the commons brings us back to the concept of the “common home” which must lead everyone to “recognise the contribution they can make” to its preservation. It is a call to create collectives, to encourage participation in networks, to launch dynamic experiments, within training centers, to appropriate the concept of “common” and “common home”. However, it is clear to all professors that the notion of the common good can be found in many disciplines: law, of course, management, communication, corporate social responsibility and tourism, but also history, medicine and pharmacy, political science, theology and philosophy...

The integration of the concept of “common” and its application as a catalyst for new pedagogical approaches is likely to develop a critical mind and a sense of responsibility in students, future citizens of the world, as some university presidents have pointed out. Putting this into practice may appear complex for those responsible for training who are already subject to the heavy regulation of accreditation procedures, but does it not constitute the basis of the intellectual resources necessary to respond to the epistemological break that has been observed?

### *3. The relationship to individual freedom*

Our so-called Western culture is based on two pillars: technical progress, which we have just mentioned, and human rights (as a value rather than as a fact). The global or at least UN benchmark, since 1948, of this second pillar is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which governs our rights vis-à-vis others. With the health crisis, we have seen a surge of solidarity, but we perceive an insufficiency in the implementation of human rights. This social contract was an enormous step forward in the 18<sup>ème</sup> century, but in the 21<sup>ème</sup> century, Human Rights often appear as a right to individualism fragmenting the human condition and damaging the communion between people.

Yet all educators rely on Article 4 of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of August 1789: “Freedom consists in doing everything that does not harm others”. We are all convinced that the freedom of some stops where the freedom of others begins. We do not realise that these proverbial phrases contain a toxic meaning that is the opposite of the implementation of our desire for fraternity or our current collective will to eradicate the pandemic. Feeling free to do what does not harm others, designates others as a potential nuisance, a limit to my freedom, a

boundary of my vital space. From then on, I am suspicious of others. Rousseau explains that his "Social Contract" published in 1762 is only an armistice between warriors tired of fighting to preserve or enlarge their living space. The Declaration of 1789 is only a cease-fire, not a peace treaty and even less a treaty of collaboration. Levinas in his famous article in the *Nouvel Observateur* consoles himself by writing: "Bad peace, better than a good war". He calls for a more fraternal, cooperative and supportive pact. "The freedom of all begins when each person feels responsible for himself, for others and for nature" (B. Ibal)<sup>12</sup>. Is this not suggested by the use of the term "common home" in *Laudato si*?

However, in order for each and every one of us to take charge of the common good and to form a new social contract whereby others are no longer potential adversaries but the condition of my freedom, we must undoubtedly imagine a knowledge base that is provided to all students, regardless of their major discipline. Such a transformation of curricula will undoubtedly worry many universities, although the opening of global studies programmes has already taken place over the last ten years in countries as different as Canada, Japan and the United States<sup>13</sup>. In the presentation of its curriculum Doshisha university (Kyoto, Japan) explains the concept as follows: "In today's society where people and things are intricately intertwined across borders, whatever issue that may arise should not be considered within the limited context of any specific area. And "global" does not only mean the geographical expansion. Global issues today involve multiple layers of contexts such as society, economy, culture and philosophy, which have previously been discussed separately". The promoters of global studies curricula announce that they are based on systemic approaches whose aim is to allow both a better understanding of the world and, even more, a better movement of knowledge. "For, if knowledge is stored, not shared, frozen, it would be useless and would end up withering away, even though the *raison d'être* of higher education and research lies in the transmission and retransmission of knowledge" (Saliba-Chalhoub and Schmitt, 2018).

Isn't it implied in *Veritatis Gaudium* when it refers to the revision of curricula in its preamble?

## Conclusion

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<sup>12</sup> Ibal, B. This sentence uttered during one of our think tank meetings must be attributed to its author!

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.doshisha.ac.jp/en/information/campus/access/karasuma.html>.

The publications of the Club of Rome, then those of the IPCC and the Global Compact, have challenged certain researchers and academics, particularly in northern Europe, with regard to their responsibilities as teachers on the issue of climate change (Monnoyer, 2021). The profound minorisation of the negative externalities of our productive organisation has only recently been widely shared. Few schools and training centers have been aware of this, and this awareness has led to a systemic reflection on the weakness of the curricula on offer in the face of the changes that the so-called Generation Z will have to experience and master.

The recent pandemic has highlighted a certain degeneration in our relationship with others, despite the appeals and numerous writings from both the papacy and recognised scientists. This two awareness complement each other, because, as we have tried to show, the two phenomena are self-sustaining.

In order to contribute to a certain decentering of our views as teachers trained mainly in one major discipline, we have targeted three themes which we felt were likely to facilitate, in the perspective of an educational transition, a collective reflection of a systemic nature on the renewal of training courses:

- enrichment of the relationship with technology because it may be considered secondary for some, or conversely totally mastered for others, while the vast majority of learners underestimate its multiple effects. In a society that has become highly technical, we believe that ethical reflection and a permanent quest for objectivity should be part of training in all techniques.

- reflection on the forms of consumption and the generation of short-term profit which encourages companies not to practice responsible resource management, without the new generations being aware of this, even though they are contemporaries.

- The questioning of a relationship to individual freedom that neglects the current shortcomings of subjectivity and rather of the intersubjectivity of relations between people that the evolution of freedom highlights.

These three themes intersect, without proselytising, with the meaning of Christianity and the pontifical exhortations: the priority of the human being and nature over the techno-economic paradigm, the common good which is not only the general interest but an enrichment of the sole concepts of private property and public property, and finally, freedom which finds in others its condition and not its limit. These three themes seem to us to constitute a useful inspiration for developing a critical approach that produces utopia in the sense that Ricœur gives to this word.

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### *Pandemic, Law, Religion. Brief (but Problematic) Remarks*

#### Abstract

The impact of the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 on the world of law has been wide and deep, directly proportional to that produced by the virus on habits, ways of life and social relations. However, the critical issues and uncertainties derived from the pandemic emergency are not an absolute novelty, as, with a deeper analysis, they prove to be connected to the dynamics of globalization and consequent phenomena. This is also true under the point of view of the relationships between law and religion. These relationships are not exempt from the implications of the emergency, but, at the same time, they reproduce the dialectic tensions already present in the pre-pandemic phase. More specifically, the pandemic emergency confirms the necessity to include the religious factor among the elements that contribute to the material and moral progress of society. Therefore, a renewed engagement of scholars and juridical operators for the enhancement of religion and for the complete inclusion of cultural and religious differences within the social and legal context is needed, in the perspective of the equal protection of constitutional rights and freedoms.

Keywords: Covid-19; Law and religion; Religious freedom; Cooperation; Social inclusion

### *La pandemia, la ley, el factor religioso. Breves (aunque problemáticas) observaciones*

#### Resumen

El impacto del coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 en el mundo del derecho fue enseguida amplio y profundo, podría decirse directamente proporcional a aquel producido en los hábitos, estilos de vida y relaciones sociales establecidas. No puede decirse, sin embargo, que las criticidades e incertidumbres de un ordenamiento jurídico que ha traído la emergencia pandémica constituyen una novedad absoluta ya que, analizándolas más de cerca, encuentran una correspondencia más profunda en la dinámica de la globalización y en los fenómenos consiguientes. Esto también es cierto desde el punto de vista de las relaciones entre el derecho y la religión, que no se salen de las implicaciones de la emergencia pero que, al mismo tiempo, reproducen, sustancialmente sin cambios, las tensiones dialécticas subyacentes que ya caracterizaban al derecho pre-pandémico. En particular, la emergencia pandémica confirma la legítima localización del factor religioso dentro de los elementos que contribuyen al progreso material y espiritual de la sociedad y, en consecuencia, requiere prospectivamente, tanto entre los estudiosos como entre los operadores jurídicos, un renovado compromiso con la valorización/inclusión de las diferencias religiosas y culturales, con importantes repercusiones en términos de protección igualitaria de los derechos y libertades constitucionales.

Palabras Clave: Covid-19, Derecho y religión, Libertad religiosa, Colaboración, Inclusión social.

*La pandemia, il diritto, il fattore religioso. Brevi (ma problematici) rilievi*

Sinossi

L'impatto del coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 sul mondo del diritto è stato da subito vasto e profondo, si può dire direttamente proporzionale a quello prodotto su abitudini, stili di vita, relazioni sociali consolidate. Non si può però dire che le criticità e le incertezze d'ordine giuridico restituite dall'emergenza pandemica costituiscano una novità assoluta, dal momento che, a una analisi più approfondita, esse trovano più profonda corrispondenza nelle dinamiche della globalizzazione e nei fenomeni ad essa conseguenti. Ciò vale anche dal punto di vista delle relazioni tra diritto e religione, che non risultano indenni dalle implicazioni dell'emergenza ma nel contempo riproducono, sostanzialmente immutate, le tensioni dialettiche di fondo già proprie del diritto pre-pandemico. In particolare, l'emergenza pandemica conferma la doverosa collocazione del fattore religioso tra gli elementi che concorrono al progresso materiale e spirituale della società e di conseguenza richiede prospetticamente, tanto negli studiosi che negli operatori giuridici, un rinnovato impegno alla valorizzazione/inclusione delle differenze religiose e culturali, con ricadute di tutto rilievo in termini di eguale tutela dei diritti e delle libertà costituzionali.

Parole chiave: Covid-19, Diritto e religione, Libertà religiosa, Collaborazione, Inclusione sociale

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# *Pandemic, Law, Religion.* *Brief (but Problematic) Remarks*

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## *1. Pandemic and Law (but also Economy)*

The impact of the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 on the world of Law has been wide and deep since the beginning. It is directly proportional to that produced by the virus on the ways of life and social relations. In its diverse stages (including the present stage of recovery and resilience), the pandemic has affected several sectors of the law system, has alimeted new tensions in the relation among the powers of the State, as well as between central and local authorities (State and regions). More significantly, it has affected rules and principles that constitute real cornerstones of the democratic form of State. Just to mention the most evident and discussed consequences, it is worth remembering the problematic impact of the first measures implemented to contain the infection on the sources of the law and on the constitutional rights<sup>1</sup>.

In turn, the (more or less successful) attempts to normalize the emergency by neutralizing, as much as possible, its economic effects, lead to reconsider some issues which have been too hastily considered overcome.

It is the case of the so-called economic constitution, that is to say the package of the constitutional provisions related to the economic relations and to the interactions between State and market (starting from the fundamental disposition of the art. 41 of the Constitution)<sup>2</sup>.

Actually, the pressure that the “pandemic and post-pandemic law” exercise on the constitutional dispositions (specifically on constitutional rights and liberties) can be viewed from different perspectives. For example, the attention can be focused on the emerging transformation that, beyond the initial resistances, seems to characterize the new course of the

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<sup>1</sup> For example, among the scholars of “ecclesiastical law” (of the State), or “law and religion”, see Colaianni 2020, and the additional citations contained therein.

<sup>2</sup> In truth, the meaning of the expression “Economic Constitution” is all but univocal. It is enough to mention, among the most recent, Cassese 2021, Bilancia 2019, Staiano 2019.

supranational European law (that is the policies, no longer only economic, of the European Union (Riviezzo, 2021). In a similar way, some Authors focuses on the hypothesis of a return of the State (Cassese, 2021), which can enhance-its role towards the market (Riviezzo, 2021) and, in any case, can re-affirm the reasons of the law – and of politics – over those of economy.

Furthermore, the possible perspectives of analysis are not always clearly distinguishable, but they tend to intersect, to the point that they must be considered sides of the same coin. In substantial terms, each of these possible ways we can think in emergency exit has to face the need to place the economic relations within the constitutional legality. This exigency imposes to preserve the connection between the economic goals, that is to say the production of wealth, and the centrality of human being (and the promotion of its relational dimension). Under this point of view, the debate on the economic constitution contains important elements of novelties, as well as interesting suggestions in terms of the necessary constitutional continuity.

The last consideration is useful to underline how the difficulties and the uncertainties emerged from the pandemic are not at all an absolute novelty. On the contrary, they must be understood, in their essence, as effects of different factors which have been consolidated and overlapped over time. I mean to refer, particularly, to the pervasiveness of the technological progress that had drastically reduced the time-space distances, the massiveness and the continuity of the migratory flows that have rendered the social contest more multi-cultural and multi-religious, as well as, in more general terms, the social-economic change, convergent in the wide phenomenon of globalization. The effects of the conjunct action of these factors and the sense of loss that they imply in relation to the crisis of law as exclusive and self-sufficient form of social regulation, have been clear since before the covid-19 pandemic and have involved political institutions, interpreters and practitioners of the law.

In this sense, the pandemic emergency shows an essential link with the continuous re-emergence of the trinomial “change-crises-emergencies”<sup>3</sup>, which constitutes a basic and ordinary feature in this interconnected world<sup>4</sup> and exerts the same pressure of globalization on the juridical systems. More specifically, the global dimension of covid-19 appears to be in a non-secondary relation with the condition of global interdependence that characterizes the juridical contemporaneity. It also confirms the inadequateness and the potential ineffectiveness of the responses of the States, in order to the exigencies of the juridical regulation and the

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<sup>3</sup> For a specific declination, with reference to «globalization, secularization and immigration», see Folliero, 2010, 1.

<sup>4</sup> On the relation between pandemic emergency and globalization see Berlingò 2018.

instances of protections that are developing and spreading beyond the territorial borders. It also proves the limits of the traditional and absolute paradigm of the State sovereignty (Ricca, 1999).

But there is also a constructive legal consequence of covid-19, strictly connected to the difficulties that it has (re)brought to the attention of the common citizen, as well as to that of the scholar of law.

By opposing – as an unavoidable way out from the pandemic – the sovereignty of the Constitution to that of the State, the legal reaction to covid-19 cannot fail to involve the fundamental pluralist character of the democratic-constitutional system and, therefore, to entrust itself to the relational and generative significance of freedom (Ricca, 2012, p. 127), by focusing on the enhancement of the contribution that all citizens are called to offer to the evolution of the legal system and to the affirmation of the constitutional aims-values. In this sense, it must be recognized that the pandemic, in its extremely tragic nature, constituted an unexpected occasion to reflect on the process of the implementation-actualization of the constitutional legality and also to rediscover the prescriptive significance of the solidarity principle and the importance of a systematic interpretation of the constitutional rights, both individual and collective, also in terms of inclusion of the cultural and religious differences.

## *2. Law and the double legal perspective in considering religion*

Such awareness and its operational implications cannot fail to involve the scholars of the relations between law and religion. Indeed, their attention toward the legal implication of covid-19 has been immediate and not lacking in useful insights<sup>5</sup>.

Actually, also from this specific point of view, the emergency of the pandemic has brought topics and problems (which cannot be considered unknown) to the attention of institutions and scientific community.

On the background there is the problem of conciliating two ways, logically different but actually interconnected, to look at the legal dimension of the religious factor. The problem, in other words, to consider the most genuine significance of religion as a qualifying element of a freedom that need to be protected and promoted, avoiding to fall in the different view of religion as a tool of power, which aims not only at orienting the behaviour of the believers, but also at colonizing the sphere of politics (by conditioning

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<sup>5</sup> See the contributions included in the dedicated sections of the website of DiReSom (*Diritto e Religione nelle Società Multiculturali – Law and Religion in Multicultural Societies*, [www.diresom.com](http://www.diresom.com)) and of Osservatorio delle libertà e delle istituzioni religiose ([www.olir.it](http://www.olir.it)). A useful summary of the measures and interpretative concerns is in Casuscelli, 2021a.

the public decisions), in order to undermine the formal and substantial equality of all citizens<sup>6</sup>.

Faced with the need of preserving the independence of the political sphere from undue interferences of religious powers, for a long time the State has responded by identifying an exclusive field of competence, from which religions must be kept away. However, under the push of the multicultural and multi-confessional society, this solution has proved to be more and more unnatural, inadequate, and, above all, disrespectful of the pluralist and libertarian principles of the constitutional democracy.

From here, the rise of a dialectics that, even within the tragedy of the pandemic, has continued to influence the relations between legal system and religion, with alternate results about both the equal protection of religious freedom and the safeguard of the specificity of the religious interests.

### *3. The religious factor and the “pandemic law”*

The experience of covid-19 has confirmed the coexistence of this double perspective in the legal approach to religion, but it has also indicated the way for achieving a conciliation within the aims and the values of the legal system.

Let us briefly consider the restrictions to the freedom of worship (in public and collective form) determined by the first containing measures (those that have brought to the so-called lockdown).

Despite some criticism for the interpretative uncertainty of such measures (Consorti, 2020), on the whole the limitations have been essentially considered legitimate by the majority of the scholars, because they have been understood as only indirectly coming from the regulation for the containment of the infection (Ferrari, 2020) or, at least, as the result of an adequate balance of the involved rights and interests (Colaianni, 2020; Licastro, 2020). It is to point out that the absence in the art. 19 of the Constitution of any reference to the protection of health as a possible limit to the public worship has been overcome by a systematic interpretation of the religious freedom within the constitutional framework. Furthermore, it is also questioned by the explicit provision of the art. 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which refers to the legitimacy of limits motivated by the protection of the public health and by the strict connection, within the law of the European Union, between the necessary protection of

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<sup>6</sup> On the double characterization of religion, as freedom and as power, see Vitale 2005.

public health and the European principles of precaution and preventive action<sup>7</sup>.

From here, an indication of noticeable impact, as it is not limited to the first stage of the pandemic emergency, but it is useful to valorise the contribution of the religious freedom in the stage of recovery and resilience. In such a way, the interpretative criteria (recognized by the European Court of Human Rights-ECHR) of legitimacy of the purpose, of the necessity, adequateness and proportionality of the containment measures adequate to the target, and that of the minor sacrifice, are not only to be considered as technical-operative tools in interpret the explicit limits eventually introduced by specific dispositions of national laws. Indeed, they tend to become principles and criteria of acknowledgment and concretization of the constitutional character of religious freedom, to be used even regardless of the existence of explicit predictions, in order to prevent undue limitations, but also undue privileges.

However, the same governmental provisions have raised some perplexity, connected to the alleged violation of the independence of the Catholic Church (art. 7, par. 1 of the Constitution), that is of the *libertas Ecclesiae* (Pacillo, 2020, 2021; Botti, 2021), as well as of the autonomy of the religious denominations (art. 8, § 1 of the Constitution) and of the agreed relations between the State and the Church (and the other religious denominations : art. 7, par. 2, and art. 8, par. 3) of the Constitution), or of the principle of the cooperation between State and Church «for the promotion of human being and the sake of the country» (art. 1, l. no. 121/1985, *Accordo tra la Repubblica italiana e la Santa Sede di modifica del Concordato del 1929*).

Sometimes it has been highlighted (and also complained) that the measures for containing the pandemic emergency have been unilaterally adopted by the State, without involving the religious authorities, as it should be in consideration of the above-mentioned principles<sup>8</sup>.

However, the beginning of a new stage – less serious – of containment has enabled a greater involvement of the religious communities, so contributing to downgrade the debate arisen on the basis of these considerations. I mainly allude to the Protocols signed by the Ministry of the Interior with the Catholic Church and the representatives of other religious faiths for the restart of the celebrations. Such Protocols have operatively translated the normative indications<sup>9</sup>, tailoring them to the exigencies of the faith communities.

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<sup>7</sup> For both issues see Causcelli, 2021a, with specific references to the pronouncement of the Italian Court and of the European law.

<sup>8</sup> See d'Arienzo, 2020.

<sup>9</sup> For a panoramic view of the contents of the Protocols, see Decimo 2020, Tira 2020.

The Protocols have been soon inserted in the framework of the administrative participation, so highlighting their substantial extraneousness to the logic of bilateral agreements and, in such a way, their imputability to the discretion of the State and, finally, their attribution to the State full responsibility (Colaiani, 2020; Alicino, 2020, 2021; Cimbalo, 2020, 2021).

In my opinion, this does not exclude that the Protocols may be considered an expression of a more general principle of cooperation, partly unconnected from the essential indication of the art. 1 of the *Villa Madama* Agreement.

The principle of cooperation represents a system principle. Without confusing it with the principle of bilateralism (provided by the art. 7, par. 2 and art. 8, par. 3, of the Constitution), we can say that cooperation can regulate not only the relations between State and religious groups, but also, in a wider sense, the interaction between sacred and secular, although maintaining the distinction provided by the Constitution.

The story of the ecclesiastical cooperation during the pandemic gives us interesting insights. Specifically, we can now conclude that the principle of cooperation has to be understood as a tool to assure the safeguard of an essential exigency of unity of the system, faced with the possible fragmentation that comes from the recognizing of the constitutional prerogatives of sovereignty/independence and religious autonomy. Under this point of view, underlining the connection between the principle of free and fair cooperation with the constitutional principle of solidarity is not casual (Casuscelli, 2021a).

Ultimately, the principle of cooperation between the State and the Church is now turning towards a wider system principle, so that it is devoted to regulate in a broader sense the relationships between religions and the legal system, that is to say the sphere of sacred and the sphere of the secular.

It is a trend to be understood as an acknowledgment of the wider importance of the religious factor but, at the same time, it also acts as a sort of counterweight for a wider interpretation of religious freedom.

In this sense, the ecclesiastical principle of cooperation has two competitive purposes, only apparently contradictory. It is a good way to guarantee the central role of religion, but it can also constitute an effective tool to affirm the reasons of the public synthesis (or the reasons of the sovereignty of the State) and to prevent the risk of undue field invasions.

Of course, all the parties (first the public institutions) have to be available to insert the praxis of the cooperation in a wider view, so as to allow religious actors to fairly contribute to the implementation of the value-aims of the Constitution, but, at the same time, to avoid that the guarantees of equal freedom and democratic pluralism could be undermined.

In this context, we have to reiterate that the full implementation of the constitutional aims and values and the pluralist composition of the involved interests finally fall into the framework of the sovereignty of the public institutions. They cannot escape this fundamental task. So, ultimately, the problem that arises is that of the effectiveness in the exercise of this crucial function, with regard to its forms as well as its real contents.

#### 4. *The religious factor and the “post-pandemic law”*

This kind of development of the interaction between religion and legal system can prove to be very fruitful in the present stage of normalization of the pandemic emergency, which questions the capability of public institutions and social actors to start virtuous processes of social, economic, libertarian and genuinely inclusive recovery.

Actually, also in this case the religious factor is destined to play a relevant role, as a ground of emersion and, at the same time, as a distinctive element of oscillations regarding the way itself of understanding the value and aims of the legal system and their relations with the exigencies of the emergency.

Important indications come from the *Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza* adopted by Italy within the programme *Next Generation EU (NGEU)*<sup>10</sup>, whose governance has been established with the recent decree no. 77/2021, converted into the law no. 108/2021, and in the further dispositions that the legislator has used to match the exigencies of this new stage, in the light of the recently implemented legislative measures.

It is now enough to consider that the cancelation of the inequalities, also on a religious basis, falls into the concept of the so-called transversal

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<sup>10</sup> As specified in the foreword of the document, the *Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza* (PNRR) is a «package of investments and reforms» presented and funded on the basis of one of the two tools of the European Programme *Next Generation EU (NGEU)* (the other being the *Pacchetto di Assistenza alla Ripresa per la Coesione e i Territori d'Europa, REACT-EU*). The PNRR is articulated in six missions (digitalization, innovation, competitiveness, culture and tourism; green revolution and ecological transition; infrastructures for sustainable mobility; school and research; inclusion and cohesion; health) and 16 components and it «benefits from the close interlocution of this months with the European Parliament and Commission, on the basis of the regulation RRF». As explicitly stated, «for Italy the NGEU represents an opportunity of development, investments and reforms. Italy needs to modernize its public administration, strengthen its productive system and intensify the efforts to restart a sustainable and lasting growth, removing the barriers that have blocked the Italian progress in last decades».

priorities of the *Piano*. It is also interesting to consider the reasons of such institutional commitment, aimed at overcoming a criticality that does not concern only the individual sphere, but also influences the implementation of the collective targets of development and cohesion. As PNRR explicitly states, the persistence of gender inequalities, as well as the absence of equal opportunities independently from provenience, religion, disability, age, or sexual orientation is not only an individual problem, but also a barrier to the economic growth.<sup>11</sup>

Against this background, we can even suppose that religions are again called to accompany the public institutions with a relevant action, using their capabilities of inclusion, mobilization and social cohesion. That is, to act as a powerful factor of motivation of the daily engagement of the faithful, «individual or associated», in activities useful for the common good. They should also propose themselves as an element of consolidation of the persuasiveness of political decisions<sup>12</sup>, acting as an ethical glue (Fuccillo, 2017, 37), an antidote to the fragmentation, and a bridge of dialogue among the various identities acting within the society.

It is evident that religious groups and denominations exercise this new role mainly in the concreteness (sometimes elusive) of the economic relations, relevantly contributing to understand needs and interests that must be satisfied and to implement the adequate measures. But it is also evident that this can create already known critical issues and ambiguities.

It is relevant to notice the importance that the PNRR entrusts to the civil society and, particularly, to the bodies of the Third sector, specifically in the field of the actions requested by the mission of inclusion and cohesion. Among them, although within the uncertainty and ambiguity that characterizes the reform of the Third sector (starting from the decree no. 117/2017, bearing the Code of the Third Sector), an important role is that of the «publicly recognized religious bodies» mentioned at the art. 4, section 3 of the same Decree.

Under this point of view, the beginning of the recovery seems to constitute a useful occasion to strengthen and re-launch the relations of cooperation between public bodies and religious actors, along the line indicated by the Codice del Terzo Settore on the topic of shared administration (see the art. 55, d.lgs no. 117/2017). But, naturally, to this goal a more aware and consistent approach to the generative dimension of religious freedom and therefore a deeper attention to the social and economic contribution of the religious entities is needed.

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<sup>11</sup> *Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza* (PNRR), p. 33.

<sup>12</sup> About the substantial acceptance of the measures of containment of pandemic by the Roman Pontiff and the difficulties in interpreting this approach, see among the others Cimbalò, 2021.



More detailed and deeper considerations are not possible here. But we cannot overlook the consideration that today the approach to religious factor, as an element that contributes to the achievement of the targets of material and spiritual progress of society, is still partial and incomplete (D'Angelo, 2020).

More specifically, the present openness of public institutions and legal system toward the religious factor continues to involve only the typical religious forms and to overlook the less traditional and more flexible manifestations of religiosity, which are present in the social, economic and cultural arena.

At the moment, the legal promotion of the possible contribution that religious factor can give to society does not entail a univocal result of safeguard of the equality in religious freedom. In fact, the access to the promotional mechanisms of inclusion in the circuit of the subsidiarity is limited to the catholic entities or to the confessions that have signed an agreement in accordance to the art. 8, section 3 of the Constitution. This is also true for the forms of cooperation established at regional and local level, that contribute to increase the gap between the religious denominations (and respective bodies) that have subscribed the agreement and those that lack it<sup>13</sup> (Elefante, 2020).

Moreover, on the whole, the legal approach to religious freedom is a too formalistic approach. It doesn't allow a secure progress in promoting the specificity of the religious interests, because it considers within the conceptualization of religious freedom only the traditional and consolidated forms of religiosity (the activities of religion and worship in a strict sense). In such a way, it undermines the strong potentiality in innovation and social transformation that religious freedom could express<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> It is not useless to observe that, within the pandemic emergency, regions and local bodies have not renounced to be protagonists of attempts of cooperation with the religious actors, proposing innovative solutions, more adequate to new social needs. As an example, just consider that among the measures of economic recovery connected to the pandemic emergency, some Regions have introduced the grant of extraordinary funds for the enhancement and re-launch of the social-educational function of parish oratories, in order to «conciliate the time of work with that of family, easing the return to work of parents» (*Decreto del dirigente del servizio politiche sociali e sport no. 203 del giugno 2020*, emanated in implementation of the *Delibera della Giunta regionale Marche no. 743/2020*). In a similar way, the Region Campania, aiming at easing the cooperation between the Region itself and the bodies engaged in the fight against the social marginalisation of the youth, has introduced the memorandum of understanding with the Regional Episcopal Conference. Considering the strong social-economic difficulty of some territorial areas of the region and its aggravation for the sanitary emergency connected to the Covid-19, the aim is to contrast the social marginalization and to promote the role of the parishes within the civil and pastoral community (*Delibera giunta regionale Campania no. 354, 9 July 2020*: Elefante 2020, p.194).

<sup>14</sup> On the importance of a more defined and consistent promotion of the religious factor in the framework of the evolutionary process of the system of subsidiarity and, particularly,

### 5. *A fruitful perspective of scientific and civil engagement*

The normalization of the emergency anticipates the opening of new spaces of promotion of the religious factor, towards a more ambitious project of social development. This is spurred by the above-mentioned implications of the pandemic on the economic constitution, which also concern the legal projections of the religious factor and the relation between religion and the legal system.

Actually, the inclusion (to be still verified) of the pursuit of not exclusively economic-financial interest in the supranational European law, as well as the renewed role of the State in its relations with the market, represent important factors of novelty. They surely ~~that cannot~~ but involve the national regulation of religious rights and interests and its relations with the so-called multi-level legality (Folliero, 2007). Moreover, the economic relation itself is one of the most meaningful parameters for evaluating the sense and the scope of the recognized public role of religions and for registering critical points and level of implementation (or non-implementation) of the principle of equal freedom without distinction of faith<sup>15</sup>.

The dense and articulated inter-relations that the religious factor establishes with the legal system are therefore bound to be more extended and complex. This scenery could produce ambiguous results.

In fact, the risk of hegemonic claims of the strongest religious communities cannot be underestimated. In this case, the guarantee of the equal freedom without distinctions would be further undermined. The physiological strengthening of the exigencies of social cohesion, connected to the management of the emergency, can entail a significant regression of the pluralist dynamic.

The goal of the exit from the emergency (and the alternative of the forced co-existence with it) needs the consistent and aware promotion of any possible contribution to the material and spiritual progress of society. With these premises, the reflection on the role of the religious factor is not a merely speculative exercise, but it also responds to concrete targets of implementation of constitutional indications, included those that impose to involve the religious and cultural differences.

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of the new subsidiary welfare, connected to the cautions to prevent the rise of obstacles to the equal protection of rights and freedoms, see D'Angelo, 2021.

<sup>15</sup> On the symptomatic and conditioning character of the so-called economic relation, see Folliero 2013. See also, with special attention to the so-called 8x1000, Pasquali Cerioli, J. & Domianello, S. 2020; C. Elefante, 2018. It is also useful to consult the contributions in Dammacco & Ventrella, 2018.

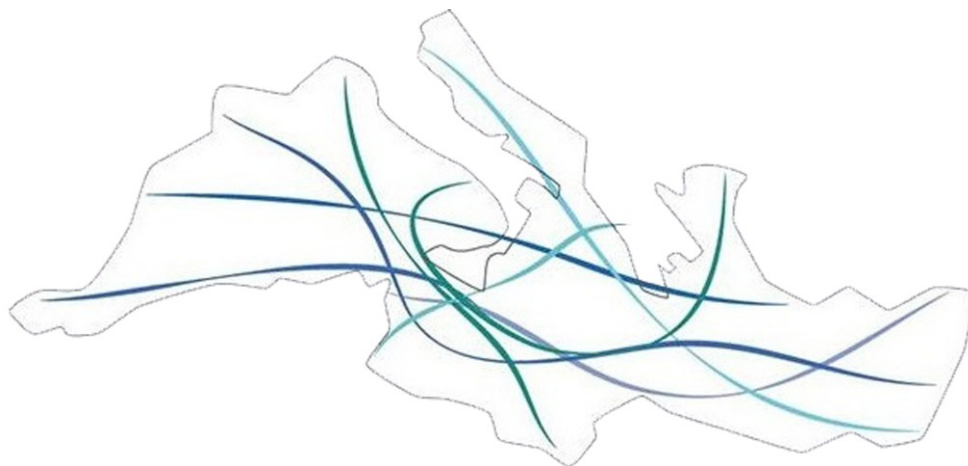
It is therefore necessary to look for a new operational balance among the exigencies of delimiting the orders of sacred and secular and the equally important inclusion of the religious factor among the elements that contribute to the material and spiritual progress of society. Indeed, economic and social progress has to be understood as a tool for a greater promotion of the human being and a better safeguard of the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution.

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## COMMENTS AND DEBATES





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### *Out of Sight, Out of Mind. Holding migrants at bay in the Mediterranean*

Abstract

The proposed 2017 EU-Libya agreement to prevent migrants from crossing over to Europe triggered the analysis in this paper concerning migration across the Euro-Mediterranean region with specific reference to Malta. We argue that this position of keeping migrants at arms length (out of sight and out of mind) from the heart of Europe makes any concept of a formal Social Europe (we recognise a different social politics from below) sound hollow. The main contention is that there can be no formal Social Europe unless it exists in solidarity with a Social World - a 'Fortress Europe' is no Social Europe at all. This applies to the interrelated issues of who can enter and who is barred from entering Europe, and who, among those residing in this continent, can enjoy the advantages of citizenship and who is denied them; in short, who is allowed to live in a dignified manner and who is omitted from the index of human concerns.

Keywords: Carceral state, Mediterranean, Illegalisation, Securitization, Social Europe, Social world

### *Ojos que no ven, corazón que no siente. Controlar a los inmigrantes en el Mediterráneo*

Resumen

El acuerdo de 2007 entre la UE y Libia para evitar que los inmigrantes llegaran a Europa ha impulsado este artículo sobre la migración en la región euromediterránea, en lo referente al caso de Malta. Creemos que mantener a los inmigrantes a una distancia segura ((ojos que no ven, corazón que no siente) de Europa hace que cualquier idea de una Europa social sea vacía (reconocemos una política social diferente desde abajo). El punto crucial es que no puede existir una Europa social a menos que no esté conectada a un mundo social, y la "Fortaleza Europa" no representa en absoluto la Europa social. Esta afirmación se refiere a las divisiones interrelacionadas entre los que pueden entrar en Europa y los que son rechazados, y, para los que residen en el continente, entre los que disfrutaban de la ciudadanía y los que no; esto es, entre los que pueden vivir de manera digna y los que no están en la lista de prioridades.

Palabras Clave: Estado carcelario, Mediterráneo, Clandestinidad, Políticas de seguridad, Europa social, Mundo social

*Lontano dagli occhi, lontano dal cuore. Tenere a bada i migranti nel Mediterraneo*

Sinossi

L'accordo UE-Libia del 2007 per impedire ai migranti di giungere in Europa ha fornito lo spunto per questo articolo sulle migrazioni nella regione Euro-mediterranea, con specifico riferimento al caso di Malta. Riteniamo che tenere i migranti a distanza di sicurezza (lontano dagli occhi, lontano dal cuore) dall'Europa renda vuota ogni idea di Europa sociale (noi riconosciamo una diversa politica sociale dal basso). Il punto cruciale è che non può esistere un'Europa sociale se non connessa a un mondo sociale, e la "Fortezza Europa" non rappresenta affatto l'Europa sociale. Tale asserzione si riferisce alle divisioni, collegate tra loro, tra chi può entrare in Europa e chi è respinto, e, per coloro che risiedono nel continente, tra chi gode della cittadinanza e chi no; in sostanza, tra chi può vivere in maniera dignitosa e chi, invece, non è presente nella lista delle priorità.

Parole chiave: Stato carcerario, Mediterraneo, Clandestinità, Politiche securitarie, Europa sociale, Mondo sociale

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# *Out of Sight Out of Mind. Holding migrants at bay in the Mediterranean*

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## *Introduction*

Often in history we find instances when leaders of certain countries engage in schemes which could partly have been motivated by the desire to keep particular ethnic groups out of sight if not out of mind – away from their home territories. Documentation with regard to the provision of a ‘settler-colonial’ homeland for Jews indicates that one of British PM Balfour’s motives in this regard could well have been to “restrict the entry to Britain of Jews from Eastern Europe, ... ‘keeping Jews out of Britain and packing them off to Palestine’ ” (Masalha 2018, p. 310).

Illegalized migration has emerged as a structural facet of neoliberal globalization. With many European countries witnessing an increase in immigration from various parts of the world, there have been attempts to make arrangements with other countries to keep migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East away from the shores of Europe. This is of particular concern to frontier island states or territories, with respect to North Africa, who used their influence in supranational organisations as the EU to lobby for policies to keep migrants at bay in the Mediterranean. Following the election of right wing populist anti-immigrant parties in government, Italy closed its ports to boats traversing the central Mediterranean route. This paper focuses not on Italy but on a neighbouring frontier island state, Malta, to shed light on the current situation regarding migration in the Mediterranean.

In the midst of the global pandemic, civil war in Libya continued to ravage the country. In the spring of 2020, the context was marked by armed conflict, displacement, human rights violations, and generalised lawlessness. Describing the deterioration of the humanitarian situation as at a level ‘never previously witnessed in Libya’, on the 4th of April the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) called for an immediate cessation of hostilities in order to combat Covid-19 (UNSMIL, 2020). A few days later, in breach of international law, the Maltese authorities contracted a vessel to return 51 individuals, including seven women and three children, to Libya following their rescue in the Maltese search and rescue

(S&R) area. By the time the vessel reached Libya, 5 people were dead, whilst a further seven people were missing at sea (Times of Malta, 2020a). Just two weeks later, the Maltese authorities refused to disembark hundreds of asylum seekers and migrants that had been rescued by the Armed Forces of Malta in the Maltese S&R area. Citing public health concerns and measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19, the Government chartered tourist vessels to de facto detain hundreds of asylum seekers and migrants in international waters. Criticising the lack of support coming from other Member States the Government stated that the asylum seekers would remain at sea “pending their relocation to other European countries” (Times of Malta, 2020b). At the end of May the Prime Minister stated that “relocation isn’t the solution. The solution is at Libya’s shores” (Malta Today, 2020). What followed was a series of meetings between the Libyan and Maltese authorities to secure new arrangements, and true to form, in November the Maltese Foreign Affairs Minister announced that cooperation with the Libyan authorities had prevented a ‘huge crisis’ since “7,000 people seeking asylum in Europe had been stopped from landing here” (Times of Malta, 2020). Efforts to avoid moral and international human rights obligations are thus framed within a ‘humanitarian’ discourse. These developments reflect a broader ‘solidarity’ between Malta, Italy, Libya and the EU member states towards the normalisation of practices revealing no solidarity with the refugee; rather, the ‘wretched of the sea’<sup>1</sup> are expendable pawns in a necropolitical chess game. The Government of Malta, representing the smallest EU member state, turned to Libya for solutions to the so-called solidarity crisis, political points and leverage.

### 1. *This paper*

The idea for this paper was originally prompted by the Easter Monday 2020 pushback and subsequent developments. It analytically exposes the situation concerning migration across the Euro-Mediterranean region with specific reference to Malta, arguing that this position of keeping migrants at arms length (out of sight and out of mind) from the heart of Europe makes any concept of a *formal* Social Europe sound hollow. It is argued that all is related and connected in this world. The main contention is that there can be no Social Europe (formal or otherwise) unless it exists in harmony and in solidarity with a Social World - a ‘Fortress Europe’ is no Social Europe at

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<sup>1</sup> A term coined by Camille Scholl, author of “Les damnées de la mer”, or “The Wretched of the Sea” a book describing the experiences of women who crossed the Mediterranean. The play on the title of Fanon’s classic is too obvious to be missed.

all. This raises the interrelated questions of who can enter and who is barred from entering Europe, and who, among those residing in this continent, can enjoy the advantages of citizenship and who is denied them (Pisani, 2012a).

## 2. Malta

Malta (total area: 316 sq km, population officially standing, at the end of 2019, at around 514,564) is among the most densely populated countries in the world (NSO, 2020). The nation joined the European Union in 2004 as the smallest EU member state. Since then, the country has witnessed considerable economic, social and cultural change. Since the present Government took power in 2013 the population has increased by 25%, triggered by what can be described as an economic policy driven by cosmopolitan neoliberal globalization. Indeed, pre-Covid-19, it is fair to say that the Maltese economy witnessed unprecedented economic growth, primarily driven by tourism, financial services, i-gaming and actively encouraging immigration from around the world. The economy was further bolstered through the Individual Investor (IIP) program<sup>2</sup>. Through the sale of Maltese (EU) citizenship (and of course a Maltese/EU passport) the program offers citizenship rights, residency, and visa-free travel to more than 180 countries around the world to international investors.

For more than two decades the islands have also been receiving asylum seekers from the coast of Libya, crossing the Mediterranean Sea in an effort to access protection in the European Union. Boats capsizing, stand-offs with merchant vessels in the high seas, thousands upon thousands of drownings, and dramatic rescue at sea are all, by now, a familiar and regular occurrence, particularly, but not exclusively, during the summer months. Indeed, so regular, so normalized are these occurrences, that loss of life barely even makes the headlines. Indeed, at these challenging times, in the midst of a global pandemic that has wreaked havoc and taken too many lives too soon, we can draw on Butler (2016) to bear witness to the global divisions and ask whose lives are mourned and whose lives are considered ungrievable? Zygmunt Bauman (2006) spoke of the 'human waste disposal industry'. This may explain why, when the Prime Minister of Malta, was questioned about the push back to Libya and consequent loss of life over the Easter Weekend, he responded with "My conscience is clear because we are doing what is right. That is why I am serene" (Times of Malta, 2020).

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<sup>2</sup> In 2000 the IIP program was replaced by the Maltese Citizenship by Naturalisation for Exceptional Services by Direct Investment program; The key principles remain the same.

Certainly, it may be fair to say that, as an external border state, and indeed, a densely populated small nation, Malta faces a disproportionate responsibility in relation to other member states, and the nation's grievances in regards to other member states' lack of solidarity in this regard is justified. That said, it is hard to maintain the argument that Malta faces a 'crisis' given that this is a phenomenon that has continued, essentially unabated, for more than twenty years. In the absence of a safe and legal alternative, for refugees (Pisani 2018) and migrants making the crossing, and for the thousands who have lost their lives, the crisis is very real. For member states such as Malta, the crisis is both moral, and political, the response, by now, a familiar constructed narrative designed to negotiate with, and also to persuade the EU and the member states that Malta is too small, and too densely populated, to cope with the number of arrivals. At times of unrelated national political crisis (the murder of a journalist and accusations of corruption), the 'invasion' of illegalized black bodies provide a tried and tested strategy to deflect and blame or punish others for the islands' ills.

As the smallest member state, the nation also lacks muscle and leverage within the EU and in its negotiations with other Member States. The ongoing tactics the government deploys in order to prevent arrivals, though seemingly inhumane to many, can also be understood as efforts to compel (or essentially hold to ransom) the EU and its member states to shoulder its share of responsibility and act in solidarity with the island nation. From Malta's perspective, these policies are justified time and time again by the 'small scale argument'. It is a common characteristic of small territories to play 'Big' or 'Small' according to circumstance. It can play 'Big' as when then Maltese PM Dom Mintoff used the consensus option, at the Helsinki 1975 Security and Cooperation in Europe Conference, to influence global agendas. It can also play 'Small' when claiming 'exceptionality' with regard to the failings of the Dublin Regulation, and the lack of solidarity coming from the EU Member States (see also Mainwaring, 2012)

Adopting classic 'holding to ransom' tactics, the strategy appears to be one of intensifying the vulnerability of asylum seekers as a way of defying – or challenging – the EU and the Member States. In a report published following the Easter weekend push-back and ongoing stand-offs in the Mediterranean, Amnesty International describes Malta's 'unlawful practices' as:

the by-product of the European Union (EU)'s migration policies which have prioritized reducing arrivals at all costs, and of the EU member states' continuing failure to agree on a fair system to share responsibilities for arrivals. By progressively delegating to Libya control over migration flows in the central Mediterranean, the EU has shown that containing refugees and migrants in war-torn Libya mattered more than protecting their safety, and it has fuelled and facilitated violations and abuses on a vast scale...EU member states have

left countries on the external border of the Union such as Malta and Italy feeling legitimately aggrieved at having to face new arrivals by themselves... (Amnesty International 2020, 4)

In the absence of safe and legal measures to reach Europe (Pisani, 2018), the ongoing emphasis on deterrence in essence compels migrants and refugees to seek an alternative passage to Europe, thereby ‘facilitating’ rather than ‘combatting’ the smugglers business model. Research has demonstrated the complexity and heterogeneity of smuggling networks, ranging from informal contacts and ‘ordinary citizens’ to militia groups, and law enforcement guards. (Frontex 2016) People faced all kinds of ‘coyotes’ to use the popular Latin American term for unscrupulous smugglers (see the 1984 film *El Norte*<sup>3</sup>), throughout most of their hazardous journey (Gatti 2007)

While many make it to Malta’s and other shores (travelling via the central Mediterranean route persists) and others are rescued off them, a number drown in the process of crossing over from North Africa in overcrowded rickety boats. They travel in a sea that is terrifying to many who had previously not experienced facing an ocean; some have been forced onto these vessels at gunpoint<sup>4</sup>.

Because of the Dublin Regulation, and in the absence of ‘responsibility sharing’ from other EU member states (EUMS), beneficiaries of protection are forced to remain on this very small island state where they originally disembarked. Through fingerprinting, migrants who move on to other countries can be brought back to the country where they first landed (Mainwaring 2012). This has been described, from a Southern-European perspective, as an “infamous EU convention” that allows Northern countries to return migrants to countries like Malta if they first set foot in Europe there. (Frendo 2012, xvii).

### 3. *Smallness as a form of Exceptionality?*

Couched within a discourse of crisis and security concerns, political and popular statements stress Malta’s being a frontier island with respect to North Africa from where many migrants and refugees from the Middle East, North and Sub-Saharan Africa attempt the crossing to Europe via the Mediterranean sea. Malta shares this position with Italy and Greece from

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0085482/> Available on YouTube  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tiuRrsgMoME>

<sup>4</sup> Information disclosed to one of the authors by Her Excellency Marie Louise Coleiro, former President of the Republic of Malta as a result of conversations she has held with migrants and spokespersons of the African migrant community in Malta.

Southern Europe and also countries such as Hungary and Serbia within and beyond the EU respectively.

Located at the external border of the EU, Malta has indeed been disproportionately affected by the Dublin regulation.

The small scale factor heightens a xenophobic cultural discourse, in addition to a population density one. Derek Sayer (2018) reminds us "...small nations, as Milan Kundera points out, 'see their existence perpetually threatened or called into question; for their very existence *is* a question'" (p.173). This kind of discourse was already present prior to 2002 when the stress was placed on the Muslim threat to Malta's religious and cultural heritage (Borg and Mayo, 2006). It became arguably stronger post 2002.

It came as no surprise when, in November of 2020, the Prime Ministers of four countries, Italy, Greece, Spain and Malta, signed an undated memo stating that details in relation to the solidarity mechanism remain 'complex and vague' (Times of Malta, 2020). Indeed, the reader is reminded that prior to the launch of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, the Government of Malta was already seeking alternative solutions with Libya. In what has become a familiar approach, demonstrating a strong sense of cognitive dissonance, in December of 2020, the Maltese Foreign Minister penned an opinion piece for *Politico* wherein he accuses Europe of burying 'its head in the sand when it comes to tackling migration'. He continues:

The issue has become a thorn in Europe's side, exposing a decades-old failure to resolve those differences...we are no closer to an agreement than in previous years (Bartolo 2020).

Reiterating familiar and justified arguments, the Minister goes on to argue that front-line countries are under considerable pressure 'as a result of their geography and size' and should not be 'left to face migratory pressures alone'. He goes on to unpack a number of points as suggestions for the way forward. Many of the points made had been given importance in the political declaration of the Valletta Summit on Migration and consequent action plan of 2015. The Valletta Summit also sought to link migration to development and address the issue through the launch of the EU Emergency Trust Fund. Emphasising the need to work with African partner countries, the funds were put up in an effort to tackle 'the root causes of irregular migration and [for] promoting economic and equal opportunities, security and development' (European Commission 2015).

The very idea that these funds would manage to do what decades of work, programs and investment in international development had failed to manage seemed a trifle ambitious. This aside, it is more than apparent that this declaration, the funds, and of course subsequent agreements and programs have not managed to stem the flow of migrants and refugees.

Likewise, the spirit of such initiatives cannot be described as one of ‘partnership’ with African nations, wherein ‘development’ is used as ‘leverage’, an instrument of migration control and containment. Rather, the ‘solutions’ remain Eurocentric, steeped in racialised neocolonial manoeuvres that ignore the structural imbalances that pervade north/south relationships. The idea that development will stem the movement of young people migrating out of Africa might also be counterintuitive; research findings would suggest otherwise. Even when accelerated socio-economic development is factored in, economic and demographic imbalances and climate change are expected to increase the number of young people migrating out of Africa over the next 30-40 years; development will ‘reduce population growth, but increase the ability of young people to migrate’ (European Commission, 2018: 5). The question then, is not whether or not migration out of Africa can (or should) be stemmed, but rather, will the EUMS continue to pursue failed policies, geared towards containment and deterrence, that result in the violation of human rights and tragic loss of life?

#### 4. *Carceral Politics*

Peripheral countries such as Malta also sought to stem the tide of migration, post 2002, by increasing the repressive aspect of the State, the carceral state, especially through the mandatory detention policy. By carceral state, we mean the state that punishes as part of its function in dealing with the excesses of hegemonic globalization (de Sousa Santos, 2003), that is neoliberal capitalist-driven globalization or “globalization from above.” Often, in situations of migration crisis, or discursive constructions of ‘crisis’ (Mainwaring, 2012), countries resort to what Giorgio Agamben calls ‘the state of exception’ (Agamben 2005), a term not coined by him as it has had long usage in Italy. “This crisis is founded on the idea of a state of exception that warrants exceptional measures.” (see Mainwaring, 2012:1), the Bossi-Fini law being among the worst manifestations of this.<sup>5</sup>

Detention centres are institutions that reflect the presence of a carceral state (Hernandez et al, 2015), that echoes Foucault’s notion of ‘The Carceral’ (Foucault 1977, 293-37) Those who make it across the Mediterranean and are accounted for are all placed in mandatory detention

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<sup>5</sup> Italy’s Law No. 177, proposed by Gianfranco Fini of the National Alliance and Umberto Bossi of the Northern League (Lega Nord), introducing criminal sanctions for persons caught entering Italy illegally or who return following expulsion. Among other things, the law extended the time limit for those secluded in detention centres, as they await extradition, from 30 to 60 days. It also stipulates that asylum seekers are to be held in detention while awaiting asylum review. Source: European Roma Rights Centre. <http://www.errc.org/article/harsh-immigration-law-passed-in-italy/1598>.

on arrival as they await the outcome of their asylum claim. In the past, this waiting period would last as long as 12 months for asylum seekers and 18 months for those whose claim was rejected. Following ongoing condemnation by NGOs, and the European Commission of Human Rights (henceforth ECHR) among others, and changes to EU directives, the policy was revised in 2015 to no longer than 9 months for asylum seekers and an additional 6 months (with a possibility of extending to a further 12 months) for rejected asylum seekers. There was a case of rejected Malians being picked up and placed in detention for three months and later released following pressure from NGOs and other representatives of civil society. This and the earlier action regarding the wait for asylum seekers testified to the existence of a different Social Europe that operates at the grassroots. The detention policy and conditions in Malta, similar to that in Italy and other Mediterranean countries, have been subject to intense criticism and condemnation.

In 2013, the ECHR ruled that the policy – duration, conditions and absence of speedy judicial review - violated Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, namely, the prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment, Articles 5.1 and 5.4. The conditions inside some of these centres have been described by observers as appalling (Mainwaring, 2012), reminiscent of those depicted by Fabrizio Gatti in Lampedusa (Gatti 2005; 2007).

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) denounced the centres as unacceptable, lacking in: sanitation facilities and water, separation of men, women and children, privacy (see migrant voices in Cardona, 2010: 136, 149), bed space for every detainee, open spaces and access to outdoor areas, adequate medical facilities (Auditus and JRS 2015), food monitoring (see Médecins Sans Frontières 2009, in Mainwaring, 2012, 4) and baby facilities.

Psychological and physical stress abound (Pace 2012), often resulting in fatal casualties (suicide). This applies to not only those in detention but also those to whom deportation from the country crooks a beckoning finger. The body of Frederick Ofofu, 33, a Ghanaian national, was found in a building site in Malta, on a Saturday night in February 2017. The cause of death was strangling with an electric cable. "He left a recorded message for friends explaining his despair, saying he was being forced to feel like a criminal when he had done no wrong". (Grech, 2017) His death was immediately followed by a reversal of the decision to terminate the Temporary Humanitarian Protection (new) (THPN) of a number of migrants on the island.

With regard to the psychological effects of detention, the fear of deportation, the traumatic experience of the journey, poverty and family



separation, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) director Katrine Camilleri is reported to have said:

Unfortunately even migrants with protection faced “huge challenges” trying to build a life here. Most will be unable to be reunited with their families as they only have subsidiary protection. They live from hand to mouth, working long hours for little more than the minimum wage, with little prospect of improvement even in the long term...(in Carabott 2016)

The sense of desperation is best captured in this excerpt from an interviewee (Joy, originally from Nigeria) taken from Cardona (2010, 149):

My fear is that I don't have a future here in Malta because they don't have a plan for me and that I have been abandoned like every other African who came from West Africa.

The Carceral state also complements or subsumes, as one of its features, the ever present bureaucratic state, often denounced for systemic racism. There have been cases when migrants were sent to detention centres without any explanation, centres which were overcrowded and for which there was no alternative accommodation, this in the middle of a pandemic. They were kept there for around a hundred and sixty odd days, a situation slammed by magistrates as abusive and farcical.<sup>6</sup>

### *5. Flouting the 1951 Geneva Convention*

As far as asylum seekers go, this is all part of a Europe-wide negation of responsibility for people to exercise the right, in this regard, as enshrined in the 1951 Geneva Convention.

While goods travel easily in this age of globalisation, mobility of people from certain countries and of certain socio-economic background is curtailed. Tragedies continue to occur at sea and elsewhere, not least when crossing Africa itself, as different forms of smuggling mafias emerge on both sides of the Europe-Africa divide, some even including migrants themselves who stop at Libya and decide to partake of the lucrative business mainly as brokers /'connection men' (Lutterbeck 2012, 69).

Contrast this dire situation with that of wealthy foreigners capable of spending huge sums on buying Maltese/EU citizenship through the passport purchasing scheme introduced by the present Labour government, and one can argue that rights and citizenship are now de facto commodities, the privilege of the super rich.

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See [https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/court\\_and\\_police/106221/magistrate\\_blasts\\_abusive\\_and\\_farcical\\_migrant\\_detention\\_practice#.X\\_gv-9hKg2w](https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/court_and_police/106221/magistrate_blasts_abusive_and_farcical_migrant_detention_practice#.X_gv-9hKg2w).

It can also be a matter of religious identity if we are to take on board Hungary's and Slovakia's 2016 stances with regard to the EU's relocation plan. This invokes Europe's hegemonic Christian cultural legacy, which undermines the frequent trumpeting of secularisation as the hallmark of modern European societies.

Meanwhile, the North-South structural imbalances, lead to the shifting of populations in the South. This is a common feature of European imperial politics that persists: southern and oppressed populations can be moved at will to suit imperial interests (Mayo 2016). So when analysing the psychological effects of detention and hazardous journeys one would do well to not treat this as simply an individual condition but see it as symptomatic of larger structuring capitalist forces at play (Cooper & Hardy 2012).

## 6. *Reasons for Migrating*

The reasons for facing such hazards are many, but we would mention some here, not all of them imperially induced: civil wars fueled by a Western-based arms industry and the colonial legacy of the exacerbation of Indigenous group conflicts often resulting in rape and being disowned by family; the attempt, among women, to avoid female genital mutilation; evading religious fundamentalism; the negative effects on African farming of subsidies provided to farmers in other continents; the negative effects of climate change<sup>7</sup>; an impoverished environment - the ransacking of Africa (Rodney, 1973); a colonial ideology which presents the West as the Eldorado and a context for the "good life"; structural adjustment programmes; the quest for better employment opportunities (Pisani 2012b), social media and smuggling network inducements... and we can go on, perhaps falling prey to western stereotypes and constructions of Africa (Wright, 2012).

One global factor is that the economy of highly industrialised countries registers shortages in the amount of labour power that is required, and this has to be 'imported'. This is often done at a cost which undermines any claims for high remuneration by locally based workers. The global structuring economic forces are ensuring the ready availability of an underpaid and grossly exploited reserve or alternative army of labour to accommodate capitalist interests - depressing local wages and therefore labour costs (Aronowitz 2004, 28; Rizzo 2012, 160). A trade union official

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<sup>7</sup> Malaria is likely to hit regions hitherto untouched. The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicts an increase of 1.5 degrees centigrade (IPCC 2018) and millions of people will face famine, extreme weather, floods and heatwaves; wars over resources will occur – (Empson 2016, 1-2).

from Malta denounced the practice, among “bad employers”, to hire “two Africans for the price of one Maltese”, stating that businessmen do not care a hoot “about nationals or nationalism” as “It’s about money”. He argued that, as long as this persists, both African and Maltese workers suffer, as the former will accept very low wages to get out of the tent or open centre - a process of labour market segmentation pitting worker against worker on ethnic/racial grounds. The trade unionist’s task and that of his colleagues is therefore to entice immigrant workers to seek union membership and to convince them and union members of the benefits, to everyone, of third country nationals working legally.” (in Cardona 2010, 113).

David Bacon (2008) argues that hegemonic globalization necessitates migration, but it is the same victims of this process who are rendered “illegal” and criminalized as a result. Immigrants fleeing poverty, wars and the negative effects of climate change are criminalized for reasons not of their own making.

The criminalization of migrants serves to fan the flames of racism and xenophobia. The covid-19 pandemic has made the situation worse as a number of asylum seekers lost their jobs, became homeless and therefore more exposed to the virus, and face difficulties in accessing community living given the widespread racism encountered.<sup>8</sup> The marginalisation of migrants with no access to citizenship rights and social benefits, especially rejected asylum seekers, leads some to eke out a living at the very margins of society, in the “underworld” if need be. Lutterbeck (2012) points this out with regard to migrants in Libya who join the smuggling broker ranks. One can also point to some African women in Europe who, together with other women, both autochthonous or originally from other continents, line up the especially informal, as opposed to the formal (with unionised sex workers), red light streets of European cities such as Hamburg. This is exploited by the media, the one-sided debate seeming to focus on exclusively around the ‘hijab’, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), prostitution, HIV, or pregnancy (Pisani, 2012b).

Images of ‘rescued’ immigrants at sea being shown handcuffed in daily newspapers or when taken to hospital in Malta reinforce this image, conveying the message that “they are a dangerous element in society” (Mainwaring 2012, 8).

This obscures their being victims of a systemic oppressive and ultimately racist structure that encourages abuse of their vulnerability. They are often perceived as potential recruits for terrorist organisations. This adds fuel to the ‘security’ argument, constantly flung in people’s faces. Criminality is considered as being the terrain for the nurturing of would be

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See

<https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/migrants-more-vulnerable-to-covid-19-impact.780209>

rapists and terrorists, hence the efforts to keep migrants at arms length. The onus is on national and not human security. The securitization discourse feeds into illegalization, as Alain Badiou (2008) and the *Sans Papiers* (illegal immigrants) movement in France have been arguing (Nail, 2015).

## 7. Meaning of social solidarity

Migrant criminalisation is coupled with the constant hammering home of the threat they pose to people's jobs (Rizzo 2012, 159), never mind the fact that they can be carrying out jobs avoided by people forming part of the 'autochthonous' population:

...the jobs they are getting are jobs the Maltese are refusing to do. So these worries of the Maltese people against immigrants who are taking away their jobs are all fiction. Fiction.(ETC official, in Cardona 2010, 114)

This alleged misconception helps foment the usual 'us' and 'them' binary, common in many countries, leading to misplaced alliances between autochthonous workers and employers against 'the competition' (Mayo 2016, 2022) – the treacherous nature of this misplaced 'nationalist' alliance is underlined by the earlier quote from the trade unionist interviewed in Cardona (2010).

It is not surprising to see racism toward people of colour and Arabs being rife in this country. The swing to the right is a feature of the political scenario in many countries worldwide, in the context of increasing immigrant labour, including the *gastarbeiter* (guest worker) in central Europe and elsewhere. Once again, given the size and density issues, it would be writ large in small countries such as Malta. Mainstream political parties do little to confront the situation through educational means for fear of losing electoral votes (Mayo, 2022). As immigrants in Malta disclose (a selection from several documented voices):

I would have loved to stay here in Malta, but with the threat of what they say every day on television, radio, newspapers and other media, they are not encouraging anybody...I can't stay with the people who don't like to see me. They don't like to sit close to you on the bus as if there is no space in the seat...(Moses, originally from Niger, in Cardona 2010,132).

For the fact that we do not have the same skin colour Maltese people look at us as if we were animals...(Carrie, originally from Nigeria, in Cardona 2010, 137)

There was the recent cold-blooded killing (April, 6, 2019) in a drive-by shooting of an Ivorian migrant, Lassana Cisse, for which two members of the Maltese Armed forces were arraigned in court (Mayo and Vittoria, 2021). This sent shockwaves throughout the island and featured during protests by the Blacks Lives Matter Movement on the main island.<sup>9</sup> There were cases of black people beaten up, at times to death, by bouncers outside entertainment sites.<sup>10</sup> 'Living in terror' is added to the list of worries for African migrants on the island, part and parcel of the 'carceral society'.

Over the years a range of actors in Malta, including Human Rights organizations and other advocacy NGOs (these more recently included migrant-led organizations), academics, the former President of Malta (Coleiro, 2016), migrants and groups of concerned people have developed a strong body of knowledge and experience, and a powerful collective voice. This collaboration, combining legal strategies with ongoing advocacy at the national and transnational levels (including developing an ongoing dialogue with the media), has contributed to changes to the detention policy (particularly in the case of child migrants), preventing a push back (eventually blocked by an interim order handed down by the ECHR), the release of detainees pending deportation (their ongoing detention was not in compliance with Human Rights, EU and Maltese law) and more recently an apparent reversal on the revocation of 'Temporary Humanitarian Protection (new)' status. This seems to imply that the best opportunities for political action, as far as the rights and dignity of irregularly arriving migrants and refugees are concerned, come from below, that is grassroots movements. This is a reflection of the kind of 'politics from below' which made their presence felt in other countries. It shows once again the presence of another Social Europe, or rather Social World, that exists not in the formal sectors but at the grassroots and across civil society. Maltese NGOs operate not only at the national level but also globally.

#### *8. Out of the formal 'social' Europe's sight?*

At the highest political levels, however, we continue to witness strategies intended to provide a semblance of keeping at arms' length the downtrodden of this earth. Rich and powerful countries finance others on the periphery in return for keeping migrants at bay, as with the aforementioned Malta-Italy deal and that involving Australian financing of

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<sup>9</sup> See [https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/102975/black\\_live\\_matter\\_is\\_the\\_end\\_of\\_silence\\_on\\_racism#.X\\_c3KRYo-Uk](https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/102975/black_live_matter_is_the_end_of_silence_on_racism#.X_c3KRYo-Uk)

<sup>10</sup> The case of Somalian Suleiman Abubaker stands out for which a huge anti-racist march and protest took place in 2011 in Valletta which we attended. One of us attended his funeral service and burial inside the grounds of the country's mosque. [https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/10981/sombre-vigil-marks-death-of-sudanese-migrant-after-paceville-beating#.X\\_c4AxYo-Uk](https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/10981/sombre-vigil-marks-death-of-sudanese-migrant-after-paceville-beating#.X_c4AxYo-Uk)

projects in Papua New Guinea<sup>11</sup> and, of course, the past Italian deals with Libya - The Italian-Libyan Friendship Treaty (Ronzitti, 2009). This treaty was found, by the ECHR, to be in violation of human rights. It eventually collapsed owing to the uprising against and overthrow of the Gaddafi regime in Libya. In addition to the ones mentioned earlier, we also have had the EU deal with Turkey.

'Invaders' are to be seen as being 'kept at the gates' with hardly any concern for the conditions there - anarchic conditions in Libya with its two governments where 'slavery', anarchy and violence are rampant. The situation in Libya was decried as far back as 2010:

[...] It took me 15 days to travel from Sudan to Libya...In Libya also there is no stability of life...Nobody can really bear life in Libya..."(Bartholomew, originally from Eritrea, in Cardona 2010, 128)

[...] Just imagine where they have to collect 1,200 US Dollars from each person and load up to 32 persons on a small boat, putting their lives at risk...But still I prefer to be like that than to stay in Libya [...] (Moses, originally from Niger, in Cardona 2010, 131-132)

Just like people who suffer from fundamentalist terrorist attacks, where some have the right to be defended and mourned (Parisians) while others (Nigerians), who die in their thousands, hardly make any headlines, certain persons are accorded the right to work and live while others continue to be disposable, erased from the index of human concerns. One can dare say that their identities can be subsumed under the term 'migrants' just like those branded 'deportees' in the famous Woody Guthrie song (*Deportee or Plane crash at Los Gatos*).

Meanwhile, whatever the nature of the deterrents, migrants, who have lost all their possessions and risk so much to make it through the Sahara and survive the terror that is Libya, will want to cross over to Europe by any means possible. Joy's affirmation is telling: "Then in the sea; that was another big danger but I had to take the risk because there was nothing I could do to help myself" (in Cardona, 2010:148).

Irrespective of the deals and security measures taken, there will always be those who attempt to deftly smuggle people across, the latter feeling that, at this stage in their journey, they have nothing to lose, 'only' their life.

As a migrant stated as far back as 2009:

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## 11

[https://www.migrationexpert.com.au/australian\\_immigration\\_news/2011/Aug/493/australia\\_signed\\_immigration\\_deal\\_with\\_png](https://www.migrationexpert.com.au/australian_immigration_news/2011/Aug/493/australia_signed_immigration_deal_with_png). The detention centre on Manus Island, PNG is now being closed. See also See BBC News Report Australia's 'beautiful prison' in Papua New Guinea. <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-31369186>

[E]ven if detention is three years, people will not stop coming. They will still come. Even if detention is four years. [If] they make it four years, people will not stop because they believe that one day they're going to be free... [Detention] is a punishment...that will not stop people coming' (in Mainwaring 2012, 7-8)

This applies also to detention by proxy, that is to say offshore detention and exploitation. And yet, in the absence of safe and legal channels, caught between the devil and the deep blue sea, migrants and refugees will continue to make the journey, hence the tragedies that continue to turn the Mediterranean into one huge watery graveyard. The numbers are staggering: the total number of migrant deaths at the European external borders from 1994 to 2013 was calculated at 22,394 (Brian, Laczko, 2014: 20). Since then loss of life has continued: 3,279 in 2014, 3,784 in 2015, 5,098 in 2016, 3,139 in 2017, 2299 in 2018 (IOM 2018) and at least 1283 in 2019. (IOM, 2018, 2019, 2020); 256 deaths in the Mediterranean recorded from January to April 2020 (IOM, 2021).

## *Conclusion*

People continue to express their indignation at these tragedies and sympathy for those who lose their life at sea. We recall the April 2015 tragedy when around 800 people, including children and toddlers, drowned in waters between Libya and Italy.

Questions however continue to be raised: given that the right to asylum is a human right, enshrined in the UN Geneva Convention of 1951, why are no international humanitarian visas issued to spare this human carnage? Are illegality and the mass human tragedies it spawns, a means of enabling Capitalism to cut down on labour costs relying, whatever the death toll involved, on an ultra vulnerable reserve army to depress local wages? Is this scenario of illegality a key requisite for the hidden economy that thrives within many countries on the periphery of the European continent?

Is the notion of the carceral state constantly changing its form as it accounts for victims of neoliberalism, from detention centres to now offshore centres (from a European perspective) as has been documented with regard to the US whose 'enhanced interrogation techniques' (read: methods of torture) were adopted in centres away from its shores in Egypt, Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib (Giroux, 2010: 15)? Is Europe, just as the USA, so concerned about its image to want to have unsavoury mechanisms of control deployed afar from its shores? Is the concern with simply stemming the flow of migration, rather than confronting the unequal

exchange relation between North and South, endemic to the current global economic model?

José Manuel Durão Barroso, then outgoing EU President, spoke of the social dimension being an inherent feature of the EU project - 'Social Europe' [in the formal sense]:

The social dimension is not a new, additional strand, something that we add to what is, let's say, the core of Europe. The social dimension is an inherent part of the European project and of all that we have done over the years. (Barroso 2013)

Official Europe seems content with formally confining this social dimension to the area lying within its fortified terrain (as opposed to grassroots social action that tends to be more global in scope), to the detriment of those from afar, and those living precariously within, negatively affected by its and others' global economic policies. Given that all is related in this world, with actions in one place having ramifications for life elsewhere, we would question whether a genuinely Social Europe can conceivably exist in fortified isolation, disconnected from and oblivious to the idea of a genuinely Social World.

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### *Heroes of a Different Gen(Der)(Re). The Waldensian Women*

Abstract

The paper highlights some of the numerous acts of heroism that Waldensian women performed from the late Middle Ages to the Modern Era. In the second part, instead, the famous text by Reformed pastor Jean Léger will be analyzed, which highlights the condition of Waldensian women as "prey of war", during the notorious Piedmontese Easter massacres of 1655.

Keywords: Waldensians, Waldensian women, heroines, persecution, heretics, Inquisition

### *Héroes de diferentes géneros. Mujeres valdenses*

Resumen

El artículo destaca los numerosos actos de heroísmo realizados por las mujeres valdenses desde la Baja Edad Media hasta la Edad Moderna. La segunda parte examina el conocido texto del pastor reformado Jean Léger, que se centra en la condición de las mujeres valdenses como "presas de guerra" durante las tristemente célebres masacres de las Pascuas piamontesas de 1655.

Palabras Clave: Valdenses, Mujeres valdenses, Heroínas, Persecuciones, Herejes, Inquisición

### *Eroi di genere diverso. Le donne valdesi*

Sinossi

L'articolo evidenzia i numerosi atti di eroismo che le donne valdesi hanno compiuto dal tardo Medio Evo all'Età Moderna. Nella seconda parte si prende in esame il noto testo del pastore riformato Jean Léger, che si sofferma sulla condizione delle donne valdesi come "prede di guerra" durante i famigerati massacri delle Pasque piemontesi del 1655.

Parole chiave: Valdesi, Donne Valdesi, Eroine, Persecuzioni, Eretici, Inquisizione

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# *Heroes of a Different Gen(Der)(Re). The Waldensian Women<sup>1</sup>*

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The marginality of the Waldensian female component misguidedly shown by the best-known historiography of heresies<sup>2</sup> (Volpe, 1997) was recently readdressed by Marina Benedetti, on the basis of research thereof undertaken some time ago by both Grado Giovanni Merlo and Peter Biller. In her previous studies, the historian argued for the need to reexamine the complicated topic of female preaching, and, specifically, the role played by female Waldensian preachers (Benedetti, 2004), also recalled by Herbert Grundmann in the volume *Religious Movements of the Middle Ages* (Grundmann, 1970). Said *preacheresses*, as shown by Benedetti, were the object, by the medieval Inquisition, of an intense propaganda aiming at the debasement of both their human and social profile — a true, collective character assassination. In this regard, the case of Guglielma da Milano appears emblematic (Benedetti, 2018). The active involvement of the *mulieres valdenses* in preaching, as documented by the Limousin Stephen of Bourbon (Merlo, 2010), and, therefore, their being preachers on a par with the male community<sup>3</sup> (Molnar, 1974), had them go down in Catholic history under the well-known sobriquets of “dangerous testimonies of heterodoxy” (Valente, 2013) and “Sin-burdened silly little wives” (Benedetti, 2017). Such definitions originated in the unquestionable Pauline prohibition — a veritable cornerstone of medieval society explicitly banning women from all sorts of public preaching (O’ Connor, Militello & Rigato, 2006). All this gets further complicated if we take into account that Pope Alexander III, on the one hand, had in 1179 acknowledged the Waldensian ideas about

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<sup>1</sup> Translation into English by Alfonso Mauro.

<sup>2</sup> With the exception of a reference to the seamstresses and female textile workers involved in some 14<sup>th</sup>-century Piedmont trials, the part of Volpe’s work here analyzed seems to make no direct references to the role of late-Middle-Age Waldensian women. Cfr. R. Manselli, *Studi sulle eresie del secolo XII*, (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1953), 75. Manselli indirectly presents the role played by Waldensian women as “preachers”, when he clarifies that, according to Waldensian faith, every believer had the right to preach.

<sup>3</sup> According to Waldensian beliefs, anyone could wield the role of preacher (women included) and spread the real evangelical message.

voluntary poverty, but had on the other confirmed a denial of concession regarding the ministry of preaching; it is not therefore effortful to imagine what was the opinion of the Catholic clergy towards the laity and especially women who “made themselves preachers” (Merlo, 1989). The issue of the historiographical marginality of this borderline subject hasn’t found recognition in the aforementioned research only; in an article appeared on *Sintesi*, after reaffirming the presence of *marginal heroines* — especially with reference to 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century Waldensian historiography and studies thereof, conducted by Alfonso Tortora (Tortora, 2004) — Claudia Pingaro moved on to an analysis of the real and *concrete* role played by the *mulieres* within their community and in their close-family nucleus. A few interesting results seem to have emerged from this initial research — not only because of some of the acts of womanly heroism cited by the historian, but also because of the ability of Waldenses to be custodians of their community’s historical memory, which would be passed down from generation to generation (Rochat, 2018 & Pingaro, 2017). The recent studies by Alfonso Tortora shed light on the transmission of behavioral and social models and patterns, along with the more specifically moral and denominational ones, that were passed down from mother to daughter. The reference is here to the remarkable examination of the “Waldensian bonnet”, about which the historian from Salerno presented first intriguing results at a recent international conference of studies dedicated to fashion between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>th</sup> centuries (Tortora, 2019). Another work by Benedetti, *Donne Valdesi nel Medioevo (Waldensian Women in the Middle Ages)*, is able to break through the thick curtain of silence of women living during the 14<sup>th</sup> century, who, rather than recanting before the inquisitors, spontaneously embraced the sentence to the stake (Benedetti, 2007). Among these, the unique heroism of Margherita Latoda stands out; not only would her hanging (so sentenced in 1387, for religious reasons) bear significance for her own figure, celebrated as she was as heroine of the Waldensian valleys, but it would affect her son Giovanni and future generations too. Latoda, however, is but one of many late-Middle-Age “Waldensian heroines”. Leafing through the initial forty pages of Teofilo Gay’s *Eroine Valdesi* booklet, there stands out a detailed summary of those *mulieres* who, from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, distinguished themselves for their perseverance in spreading the Waldensian faith and standing up to Inquisition agents — be here remembered the issue of Waldensian women’s preaching. Among these (a majority of whom voluntarily walking up the martyrdom pyre) the significant cases of Rosamonde De Foix, who was silenced by the friar Stefano Minia during a religious dispute; Katharina Henzlin; the beautiful Alasia, Grite Wegenerin; Els Feur; Catherine de Saube; and Anna Weiler need be recalled (Gay, 1906). Waldensian women’s steadfastness in showing firmness in faith strengthened by



preaching fervor, seems to undergo a radical change in the Modern Era following the famous meeting between the medieval Waldenses and representatives of the Swiss-Strasbourg Reformation (Chanforan 1532). From this moment on, in imitation of the Church of Geneva, the *mulieres* saw their role in the community progressively reduced (Hugon, 1980)<sup>4</sup>. This being the outcome of the contact between Reformation ideologies and Waldensian women, it is not possible to overlook the protests some of the latter raised; in particular, thanks to Toti Rochat's research, we come upon the story of a former Augustinian prioress named Marie Dentière. After learning about the real consequences of the Swiss-Strasbourg Reformation, she, not without rancor, wrote: « [...] And even though we are not permitted to preach in public assemblies and churches, forbidden to write we are not» (Rochat, 2018). Furthermore, Teofilo Gay writes about a group of Waldensian noblewomen continuing to defend their religious convictions since the 16th century — among whom Françoise De Foix, Countess of Tende, and remembered as first Protestant princess of the House of Savoy; Blanche de Levis, who singlehandedly tried to negotiate with the Savoyard soldiers during the 1545 crusade; and Filippo Morglia's wife, who sacrificed herself acting as a shield and falling under the Spanish soldiers' arquebus shots. Lastly, the heroic and moving sacrifice of Margherita Garner must be remembered; during the 1655 siege of Rorà (Piedmont, Italy), already wounded in her breast, she kept beseeching her husband Giuseppe Garnier not to recant his faith, while a second arquebus shot knocked her down over her little son's body she was trying to protect (Gay, 1906).

We can attain a broader understanding of the subject with Roland H. Bainton's famous volumes *Women of the Reformation*. These works present themselves as a mapping of the unusual cases of female personalities characterizing the years of the Protestant Reformation. It is worth pointing out that these profiles have often been presented in a marginal way, as parts of a story whose foreground was however occupied by male figures of high caliber: Luther, Erasmus, Zwingli, Calvin, Melancthon, Bucer, Oecolampadius — fragmented and marginalized, the women of the Reformation represented a safe *fallback point*, if not a real support, for their spouses. Such is the case of former nun and then wife to Luther Katharina von Bora (1499-1550), mentioned by Bainton as having been an unquestionable point of reference for the Augustinian monk in the moments when he felt assailed by *sin, death and the Devil* (Prosperi,

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<sup>4</sup> In Hugon's text: «it is known that, in its ecclesiastical organization, the Reformation left no room for women, neither ministry nor diaconate being granted to them. Clearly the Pauline verse in which it is said that women should be silent in assemblies became a dominant factor. Obviously, the Waldensian church (strongly linked to the Calvinism of Geneva) adapted to this general condition».

2017). Katharina Zell (1497-1562) may be added too, having played, as she did, a leading role, alongside her husband Matthew Zell, in the failed attempt to quell the spirits leading to the peasants' revolt in Germany. Furthermore, she's mentioned as both performing the ministry of preaching (on her husband's death she was indicated as *doctress*) and as granting hospitality to all those fleeing French territories during the wars of religion (Crespi & Ruspini, 2014). But more attention is due to the extraordinary figure of Argula Von Grumbach (1492-1563), for she had the courage to challenge, through a dense correspondence in German, those students and doctors of the Ingolstadt University who had condemned the then only 18-year-old Arsacio Seehofer. According to our sources, this interference cost her ridicule from the theologians and her own husband — all obstinately rebuked<sup>5</sup> (Bainton, 1992).

Nevertheless, Argula's criticism and preaching campaign would continue until her death in an extreme act of heroism.

Turning to Modern-Era sources, this brief research will now focus on heroic acts (not necessarily military) that were carried out by some Waldensian women — especially between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. A first reference point is Scipione Lentolo's *Historia delle Grandi e Crudeli Persecutioni fatte ai tempi nostri, in Provenza, Calabria e Piemonte, contro il popolo che chiamano Valdese (History of the great and cruel persecutions of our times, perpetrated in Provence, Calabria and Piedmont against the people they call Waldense)*. Premising from the massacre of Cabrières (April 20<sup>th</sup> 1545), in which the main victims were indeed the women of the city, Lentolo reports that they chose to “die burned inside a grange” rather than disavow the real evangelic message. From this first example we come to a further act of heroism — Giovanna's, wife to the Waldense Maturino<sup>6</sup> (Comba, 1923); the testimony of Lentolo, later repropounded in the research of Ernesto Comba, reports that she was the first of the two to walk up the pyre, and that she remained very adamant (*costantissima*) during the torture, while encouraging her husband not to abandon his faith. Furthermore, during the campaign against the Waldenses in Piedmont carried out by the Truccetto brothers, those who were most outraged after the capture of the Minister of Rioclarretto were the townswomen themselves: «women especially became so outraged that

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<sup>5</sup> We know that, at first, the members of Ingolstadt University wouldn't reply to the woman's letters, except for a document signed by a man who, in a few couplets, urged Argula to rather return to the silence becoming her gender «Frau Argula though being thy name, / thou ornery and without shame / forgettest thou art but a maid...» — to which Argula replies «he telleth me to mind my knitting. / Obedience is to husband fitting, / but if he driveth from God's word / in Matthew Ten we are thus spurred: / abode and child must we forsake / whene'er God's honor is at stake.»

<sup>6</sup> Comba defines her as a heroine. Not only did she decide to share death with her husband, but she was the first to walk up the pyre.

they almost strangled Truccetto» (Lentolo, 1906). The non-marginality of Waldensian women in military actions (a characteristic they shared with the Hussite women<sup>7</sup> — Tealdo, 1887) can actually be literally interpreted, according to Hugon, in their being real companions-in-arms. To this fact, hardly negligible, must be added their perseverance and obstinacy in not giving in to abjuration before the enemy. All this is confirmed in various studies and, in particular, in the account of the military campaign waged by Count Costa della Trinità in 1561. Hugon writes:

«The count of Trinità, commander of the troops dispatched by the Duke of Savoy to quash the Waldensian heresy, thus wrote to the latter, on 5 May 1561: In this case, may your highness show no mercy to women, for they are more radicalized than men. » (Hugon, 1980)

In another work by Hugon, *Storia dei Valdesi, dal Sinodo di Chanforan all'Emancipazione (History of Waldenses, from the synod of Chanforan to emancipation)*, relating the bloody conflict waged by said count against the inhabitants of the *valleys*, the representation of the *mulieres* seems to shift. Historiography portrays them here as war victims and being used as bargaining chips. But the situation was different in Villar and Rorà: in 1620, the Waldenses of these towns were the first to react against the interference of the Capuchin friars pushing with continuous preaching of conversion on some territories of the Alps; as confirmed by Ernesto Comba's studies, the women «would carry the friars on their shoulders, thus forcing them out of the municipal territory» (Hugon, 1984). The Waldensian pastor's report, though possibly exaggerated it be, stands out in importance precisely because it relates an extraordinary heroism pertaining not men only but, unexpectedly, *robust Waldensian husbandwomen* too. Such feat is also reported in the renown *Historia Breve & Vera de gl'affari de i valdesi delle valli (Brief & truthful history of the affairs of the Waldenses in the vales)* by Gerolamo Miolo (Miolo, 1971) — precisely during the defense of the borders of Val d'Angrogna (besieged by Charles I of Savoy), when, as related by Gilles and Jean Jalla, «Women and children would provide stones for those able to hurl them» (Gilles, 1881 - Jalla, 1904).

The 17<sup>th</sup> century shows a rather more stereotyped image of Waldensian women — for we find them more precisely identified with women as such *because war preys*. This characteristic emerges, moreover, in the most recent investigations “on the war of Spain against the Waldenses in the early Modern Era”, in which the massacre of the Calabrian Waldensian communities by Spanish and Roman Catholic imperialism between 1560 and 1561 is treated. In these new studies, based on unpublished

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<sup>7</sup> It is well known that, during the conflict between Jan Žižka (leader of the Taborites) and emperor Sigismund, Hussite women would not only join the fight but were also able to repair the fortifications.

documents from the State Archives of Naples,<sup>8</sup> it is attested that the Spanish soldiers «murdered many women», while Gilles confirms the terrible fate befalling some women prisoners from Guardia and Fuscaldo: «Several greatly perfidious women remained in prison, and, being all instrument of the devil, would be thence thrown into the fire» (Tortora, 2020).

Fundamental for the subject here proposed is Jean Léger's *Histoire Generale des Eglises Evangeliques De Piemont ou Vaudoise* (*General History of the Evangelical Churches of Piedmont and Vaud*), written by the Waldensian pastor with the precise aim of informing the whole of Protestant Europe of the brutal slaughter perpetrated in the *valleys* in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Comba, 1923). During the infamous Piedmontese Easter (an event that Comba remembers as «full of horrors»), even though they got subjected by the Savoyard soldiers to unspeakable abuse and torture, the *mulieres* remained adamant in their religious convictions. Being an obvious, graphic confirmation of this, the detailed iconographic apparatus reported by Léger deserves careful scrutiny in order to grasp, understand the attitude of fear but also of endurance the victims bore throughout the most varied and gruesome tortures — as recently analyzed by Susanna Peyronel Rambaldi relatively to the *Histoire Des Martyrs di Jean Crespin*. Said sufferings can be compared to the definitions that Agostino Ceccaroni gave in his *Piccola Enciclopedia Ecclesiastica* for the entries: *martyr*<sup>9</sup> and *martyrdom*<sup>10</sup> (Ceccaroni, 1953). Equally interesting is the similarity between the iconography proposed by Léger and that which Ceccaroni himself provided regarding the execution methods of the first Christian martyrs.

Chapter XII of the *Histoire Generale*, after an introduction listing the questionable reasons that led to the dramatic massacre, opens with the testimony of Sir Thomas Ghiot (presented as a surgeon) and a certain François Pra (whose profession is not specified); from these individuals we learn of some of the gruesome abuses inflicted on Waldensian women, and especially on those of Pinerolo. Protagonist of the first scene is a sixty-year-old woman from Lucerne, Sara Rostagnol, being forced on her knees by the Savoyard soldiers in order to pray as they impose — a sad story closing, probably after the woman's refusal, on her death by dismemberment before the eyes of her daughter hidden in the snow. So

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<sup>8</sup> It is interesting to observe how, in these researches' documents, women are presented as pleading, for the salvation of their children, before the local feudal lords and/or the enemy, revealing an intimate degree of human vulnerability towards the cruel behavior of soldiers. Cfr. appendix I, 84-85.

<sup>9</sup> Greek name meaning *witness*, bestowed par excellence to those who suffer death bearing witness to the truths of the Gospel.

<sup>10</sup> The definition for this entry better suits the comparison with the Waldensian vicissitudes — particularly when martyrdom is defined as “torment or death endured in the name of religion”.

atrocious an execution — performed with a sickle in Rostagnol's case — would stay in use until the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Di Bella, 1961). But the fate of Martha Costantina of St Jean would be even more dreadful: after raping her, the soldiers mutilated some parts of her body, breasts included, and eat them — «they cut into her privates, split the abdomen open, and chopped her breasts off» (Léger, 1980). George Ryley Scott, through meticulous research in his *A History of Torture*, has shown how the practice of female mutilation (especially breasts and genitalia), in the rare cases of survival, aimed at *branding* them, leaving a permanent mark. Ryley Scott also wrote about the Waldenses, via his studying Morland's work; and Léger's report reminds us of Ryley Scott's, when the latter (also quoting sources in Grafton, 1809) relates the devastating consequences of the Turkish raids in Austria during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Scott writes: « [...] they committed unprecedented cruelties and atrocities: some had their noses and ears cut off, others their private parts. They cut off women's breasts, raped virgins, and ripped open pregnant women's wombs and burned the fetuses» (Riley Scott, 1999).

These two dramatic examples are followed by the finding of Marie Raymond Vesve's and Magdeleine Vesve's corpses — both having probably found shelter in the caves of Villar Pellice, and died of hardship and frostbite, and eventually been defleshed by rats. The spiral of horror of the Piedmontese Easter<sup>11</sup> continued with the murder of Anna, daughter of Jean Charbonnier, raped and then impaled on a pike, through her sex, by Catholic troops: «empalée par la nature a une pique» (Léger, 1980). This practice, also documented in Assyrians and Persians, got re-popularized in Europe by the Ottomans Turks, and for Waldensian women employed as a “spectacularization of punishment” (Moore, 2017); and it is thoroughly treated in Michel Foucault's research — as in *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison*, where «le grand spectacle de la punition physique» is cited (Foucault, 1976). Here we can't but interpolate a comparison with Adriano Prosperi's important volume *Delitto e Perdono (Crime and forgiveness)*, in which, with a reference to Cesare Beccaria, the Italian historian re-proposes the condemnation of the «horrors perpetrated by the Inquisition» and of capital punishment being unjust not only per se but also in light of its being a public deterrent<sup>12</sup> (Prosperi, 2013).

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<sup>11</sup> As Ernesto Comba explains, said definition includes the horrors perpetrated by the marquis di Pianezza and his garrison in the Piedmont valleys. The massacre that went down in history as the “Waldensian St. Bartholomew” started in April 24<sup>th</sup> 1655; the Savoyard soldiers, together with Bavarian, Irish and French contingents, indulged in all sorts of abuses and tortures on Waldensian men, women, and children (Comba, 1923).

<sup>12</sup> We thus read in Beccaria's invective against the horrors of the Inquisition: «the reader will perceive that I have omitted speaking of a certain class of crimes which has covered Europe with blood, and raised up those horrid piles, from whence, midst clouds of whirling smoke, the groans of human victims, the crackling of their bones, and the frying of their still

Proceeding with our perusal of Léger, more tortures inflicted to the *mulieres* can be found. Magdeleine, Pierre Fontaine's daughter, died at only ten years of age due to a heinous sexual assault described in dramatic tones by Léger: «...having been seized by some of these monsters, who could not rape her like the others, for being still too young, she was violated in a way that I do not dare tarnish the paper with» (Léger, 1980). The agony of Marguerite Revel and Marie Pravillelm (the latter being 90 years old) is worth considering — they were both burned alive in a place called Les Vignes, and, observing the iconography left to us by Léger, we see the stoic resistance of the two women, entirely enveloped in flames and yet turning their faces upwards in prayer (Léger, 1980). It is clear, therefore, that the majority of Waldensian women were subjected to continuous and brutal sexual violence by Savoyard soldiers — the phenomenon being a constant attributed to mercenary soldiers, and increasingly disapproved of from the 1630s, as Georges Vigarello pointed out. This bore a dramatically symbolic significance: the notion of «*possessing* a territory along with everything within it»<sup>13</sup> (Vigarello, 1998).

In conclusion, returning to the subject of Waldensian women's heroism, let us recall the excellent relation that Hugon gave of their conduct from the late Middle Ages to the Modern Era. The crux of the matter seems to lie in the way Waldensian mothers and wives educated and forged themselves first, and then their own families — both moments being excellent points of reference in understanding not only the stoic resistance these “silent heroines” showed during the dramatic circumstances cited above, but also the role that Waldensian women played in actively collaborating in the reorganization of their communities after the most gory and dire devastations. If in every circumstance the Waldenses were always able to resist, defend themselves, and face punishment and torture of every kind while always demonstrating a tenacious and unshakeable faith, this is due in large part to the education they received within the family. And here the importance of women appears — those who, in addition to being collaborators in toiling away in the fields, inspired and instilled in their children the values of faith, the importance of freedom of conscience, the ardor of a tradition which one must never fail» (Hugon, 1984).

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panting bowels, were a pleasing spectacle and agreeable harmony to the fanatic multitude». Beccaria, Cesare *An Essay on Crimes And Punishments*, trans. Anonymous. London: F. Newbery, 1775

<sup>13</sup> As highlighted by Vigarello, after the conquest of a certain territory, the soldiers would often give in to every form of violence, especially towards women and children: «kids were kidnapped and infants snatched from their parents' arms, mothers were left at the ferocious mercy of men-at-arms».

*Iconographic appendix*

The narrating body — the scars of History. The case of Waldensian women



1

Sara Rostagnol, des vignes de Lucerne, âgée de 60.ans, surprise au lieu nommé "Eyrat, les massacreurs luy commanderent de faire la priere, & puis de dire Jesus Maria, & ne voulant dire que Jesus, allegant mémes le passage qui dit, qu'il n'y a autre nom sous le ciel donné aux hommes, par lequel il nous faille estre sauvez, et devant lequel tout genoüil se ploye, que le nom de Jesus, un des soldats luy ayant enlevé une faucille qu'elle portoit, & la luy ayant plantée au bas de ventre, de la maniere que vous le represente cette figure, la fendit toute vivante jusque au nombril. Et l'ayant laissée agonizante, un autre soldat luy cupa la tête; sa belle Fille, qui s'estoit enfoncée & cachée dans les neiges, où elle a demeuré deux jours sans autre substance, a vû de ses yeux ce pitoyable spectacle, & a juré la Deposition presente. (Legér, 1980, p.117)



Martha Constantina, de S. Jean, Femme de Jacques Barral, fut attrapée & saisie par les massacreurs, apres en avoir vû cruellement massacrer plusieurs autres devant les ses yeux; ils couperent ce qu'ils pûrent des parties honteuses, & luy fendirent le ventre; ils luy couperent aussi les mammelles qui leur paroissoient, disorient- ils, extraordinairement belles; c'est porquoy ils les porterent jusques à Macel en Piémont où ils les firent fricasser, & les ayant mises dans un plat à table, d'autre Soldats y furvenus à l'impourveüe, comme on leur saisoit accroire que c'estoient des emplûres, ils en mangerent avidement une partie, & comme les autres leur dirent que c'estoient les mammelles des femmes des Barbets qu'ils mangeoient, l'un d'eux prenant mal de coeur alla rendre gorge, & les autres querelloient ceux qui les leur avoient presentées. Ce qui aussi esté attesté par le Sieur André Jouel, Ancien de l'Eglise de Pinache, sur terre du Roy, qui vit encores, & qui en a oui le recit de les oreilles, d'un de ceux qui avoient assisté à ce funeste banquet. (Legér, 1980, p.117)





3

Deux autres Femmes de la Tour réfugiées au lieu nommé la Sarsena, surprises dès le 22. d'Avril, par le Capitaine Paul de Pancalier, il leur fendit le ventre, & en ayant fait fortir les entrailles, les laissa dans cet état étendues sur les neiges: en presence du signeur Pierre Gros, Pasteur alors prisonnier, encore plein de vie. (Léger, 1980, p.120)



Anne Fille de Jean Charbonnier de la Tour, après avoir est violée, comme presque toutes les autres Femmes ou Filles, fut enfilée ou empalée par la nature à une pique. Et en c'et état portée quelques tems en tête de l'Escadre de ces bourreaux, qui distoient que c'estoit leur Enseigne, & puis fatiguez de la porter de cette façon, planterent leur pique en terre sul le

grand chemin, laissant cette nouvelle forte de Croix pour spectacle à tous les passans. (Léger, 1980, p.121).



Marguerite Revel due lieu de la Cartera, Village de S. Jean, belle Mere du vaillant Capitaine Paul Genolat, & Marie de Pravillelm, âgée de 90.ans, & aveugle, aussì de S. Jean, furent brûlées au lieu qu'on appelle les Vignes, de la façon que vous le represente cette figure. (Léger, 1980, p.128).

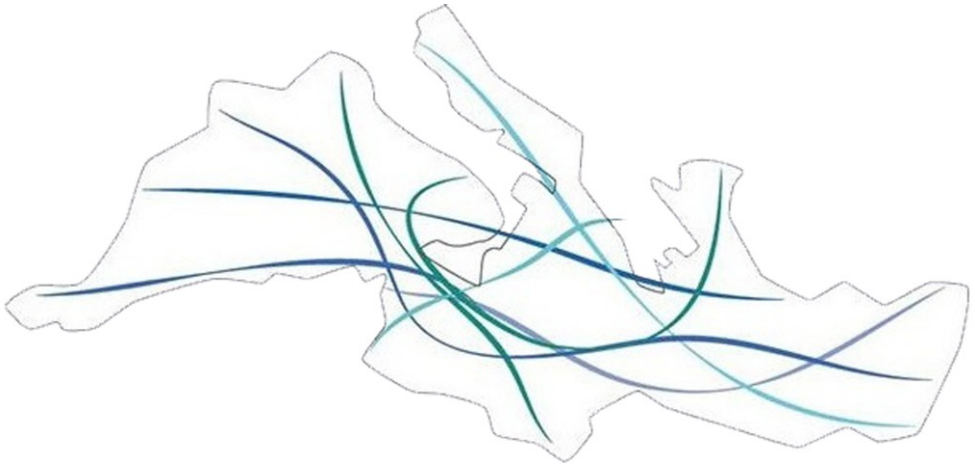
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# REVIEWS AND REPORTS





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### *Reproducing the dreams, the travels, and the traces of migrants in the theatrical scene*

Abstract

*Dreams, Traces, Travellings, Containers* is a European Theatre Project, born at the end of 2020, supported by the Creative Europe Fund of which Teatro Valmisa, from Senigallia (Marche, Italy), is leader. The project talks about the power of dreams, the strength to self-determine that has always pushed women and men to leave to be reborn.

In the theatrical imagery, the container is a kaleidoscope that houses the dreams of women and men of yesterday and today.

The containers -typical vectors of travel- will be stage space and moving will give life to a Theatre Festival in the five European countries involved project partners and will end in Brussels.

The project inspired by the United Nations 2030 Agenda on economic and environmental sustainability intends to honor and reaffirm a founding principle of the European Union of free movement of people and goods.

In this technical monitoring report will be summarized some general scientific aspects, phases of activities and the main results of the European Project currently in the closing phase.

Keywords: Migrants, Bodies, Theatre, Dreams, Containers

### *Reproducir los sueños, los viajes y las huellas de los migrantes en la escena teatral*

Resumen

*Dreams, Traces, Travellings, Containers* es un proyecto teatral europeo, nacido a finales de 2020, apoyado por el Fondo Europa Creativa liderado por el Teatro Valmisa de Senigallia (Marche, Italia). El proyecto aborda el tema del poder de los sueños, y de la fuerza de autodeterminación que siempre ha impulsado a las mujeres y a los hombres a renacer.

En el imaginario teatral, el "contenedor" es un caleidoscopio que alberga los sueños de mujeres y hombres de ayer y de hoy.

Los contenedores –vectores típicos del viaje– serán espacio escénico y en movimiento darán vida a un festival de teatro en los cinco países europeos socios del proyecto y terminarán en Bruselas.

El proyecto, inspirado en la Agenda 2030 de Naciones Unidas sobre sostenibilidad económica y medioambiental, pretende honrar y reaffirmar un principio fundacional de la Unión Europea, el de la libre circulación de personas y mercancías.

Este informe de seguimiento técnico resumirá algunos aspectos científicos generales, las fases de actividad y los principales resultados del proyecto europeo que se encuentra en su fase final.

Palabras clave: Migrantes, Cuerpos, Teatro, Sueños, Contenedores

### *Riprodurre i sogni, i viaggi e le tracce dei migranti nella scena teatrale*

Sinossi

*Dreams, Traces, Travellings, Containers* è un progetto teatrale europeo, nato alla fine del 2020, sostenuto dal Fondo Europa Creativa di cui il Teatro Valmisa di Senigallia (Marche, Italia) è capofila. Il progetto affronta il tema del potere dei sogni, della forza di autodeterminarsi che da sempre spinge donne e uomini a partire per rinascere.

Nell'immaginario teatrale, "container" è un caleidoscopio che ospita i sogni di donne e uomini di ieri e di oggi.

I containers – vettori tipici del viaggio – saranno spazio scenico e in movimento daranno vita a un Festival teatrale nei cinque Paesi europei partner del progetto e si concluderanno a Bruxelles.

Il progetto, ispirato all'Agenda 2030 delle Nazioni Unite sulla sostenibilità economica e ambientale, intende onorare e riaffermare un principio fondante dell'Unione Europea, quello della libera circolazione di persone e merci.

In questo rapporto tecnico di monitoraggio verranno riassunti alcuni aspetti scientifici generali, le fasi di attività e i principali risultati del progetto europeo attualmente in fase di chiusura.

Parole chiave; Migranti, Corpi, Teatro, Sogni, Container

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# *Reproducing the dreams, the travels, and the traces of migrants in the theatrical scene*

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## *Introduction*

The project *Dreams Traces Travellings Containers* was developed with the intention of analyzing, narrating and representing the concept of “dream” linked to the theme of human mobility, and of migrations in particular, in a world that is now interconnected and globalized.

The dream (from the Latin *somnium*, derived from, sleep”) is a psychic phenomenon linked to sleep, in particular to the REM phase, characterized by the perception of images and sounds recognized as apparently real by the dreaming subject<sup>1</sup>.

In the specific case of the project, we are faced with what scientific literature defines as “lucid dreaming”, the exploration and attempt to actualize that form of thought born in our minds (Bernardi, 2004).

In this specific case the lucid dream is a project, a “life policy”, to quote the sociologist Bauman (2000).

The desire to be or to do, to turn one’s life upside down and (re)construct, modify or strengthen one’s public and private identity is an objective/need that pushes people to travel, beyond the oneiric and cognitive dimension. This happens with the aim of improving oneself and networking with cultures different from one’s own.

Stories, the telling of lives and diversity are fundamental tools from a pedagogical and socio-cultural point of view for a deeper understanding of the reality that surrounds us<sup>2</sup>.

The empathic narration of the encounter, of the discovery of the Other, of the desire to grow and change has been a reference point within this

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<sup>1</sup> In *Treccani.it – Vocabolario Treccani on line*, Istituto dell’Enciclopedia Italiana. “sógno” s. m. [lat. *sōmniūm*, der. di *somnus* “sonno”]  
<https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/sogno/>.

<sup>2</sup> Text at the link: <http://teachingthroughthearts.blogspot.com/2012/07/storytelling-as-pedagogical-tool.html>.

theatre project, developed using the three fundamental communication channels in human relations: verbal, para-verbal and non-verbal.

The words, rhythms, tones of voice and bodies of the artists are those individual mediums chosen to represent one of the most complex contemporary social phenomena: migration.

The focus of this project has been exchanged, the desire to be open to diversity and the challenges of the contemporary world. Accepting different perspectives (and dreams) in a complex historical period, where hatred, polarization and conflict seem to prevail on a global level, is an anthropological challenge.

In line with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda, the use and application of artistic forms and human communication, “staged” in a public environment such as the theatre, made it possible to recount the diversity and uniqueness of dreams.

The dream told through real stories of people who in their lives have chosen to change, or have had to mobilize for social, political, or economic reasons, is the lowest common denominator of a European project inviting institutions, associations, and the business world to actively participate in a process of awareness-raising and storytelling of an intercultural and global nature.

Theatre, through life stories, tales of everyday life and their translation through the bodies of the artists on stage, represents a non-judgmental way of listening, which favors understanding the feelings and fundamental needs of the Other (Grotowsky, 1970).

The subjects involved in the project have a history of “existential” research, artistic production, and growth in the social fabric of their territory, as well as experiences of international exchanges and collaborations.

A project such as this, which deals with a transnational theme such as migration, if tackled exclusively at a local level risk aligning itself with the cultural political orientations of the country itself. International collaboration was therefore fundamental to have a broader perspective, far from prejudices, clichés, stereotypes, and polarizations.

It is important to point out that despite the health emergency caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, which is still ongoing, the various actors actively involved in the project immediately began working and coordinating their activities, readjusting, or reinforcing certain scheduled work phases. Above all, those of collecting and analyzing data or setting the scene, which were obviously supported by digital technologies.

The Covid 19 pandemic emergency, which began at the end of March 2020, did not stop the Dreams Traces Travellings Containers team’s “dream”: to travel around Europe, making the theatre a hospitable space for growth, sensitivity, encounters, history, and culture, tackling the “burning” issue of migration without prejudice or fear.

The project succeeded in achieving its primary objective, i.e., to organize a Travelling Dreams Festival lasting 45 days, in continuity in the various project venues and allowing the stories collected to come to life through the kaleidoscope created by the theatre show, in various parts of Europe.

The festival included 5 stages: Senigallia (Italy), Heraklion (Greece), Seville (Spain), Holstebro (Denmark) and Brussels (Belgium). The partners performed during the festivals with replicas in the different locations, always welcomed in small or large historical theaters, typical of each town.

### *1. State of the art*

In a new communicative cultural environment made up of exchanges, of fragmented and alternative models that owe their originality to a “new order” in the media, culture and socio-economics, it is possible to identify two opposing drives that constantly conflict: the tendency towards a single thought, which translates into typically assimilationist policies towards other cultures (global), and the tendency towards particularization (local), which accentuates cultural and identity differences. The former seeks to absorb and annul multicultural distances, the latter defends itself by reinforcing the regionalization of cultural content.

Electronic means of mass communication have radically changed the field of mass media and other media, offering new resources and new disciplines for the construction of ‘imagined worlds’.

Mediation’ (understood here as media communication or communication by mass media) has transformed everyday political, economic and social discourse while initially maintaining a sense of distance between event and observer and has become an important resource for experimenting with constructions of the self in all types of society and for imagining the self as an everyday social project.

Parallel to this evolution of communication processes, a change can also be observed with regard to the phenomenon of human mobility, in particular the sphere of migration, whether forced or voluntary, which is increasingly accompanied by the flow of mass-media images and the cognitive-emotional effects they create.

Information and migrant subjects are simultaneously in motion, intersecting in unpredictable ways, and it is this unprecedented form of connection that defines the link between globalization and the modern: the circulation of people and electronic mediation mutate the global scenario as technically new forces that seem to propel the work of imagination.

The transformation of everyday subjectivities becomes to all intents and purposes a 'cultural fact', imagination in the post-electronic world plays a significant role for three main reasons (Appadurai 2001):

1. the idea of living and working in places other than one's birthplace is normal today, and this idea is accompanied by a "right", that of being able to imagine new ways of life. The difference between today's migration and that of the past lies in the decisive role of images and narratives that pass-through mass media-action in its functional or realistic forms. The mass media imaginary, crossing national borders, influences the impulse to move to different environments and adaptation within these and the massive use of media undoubtedly produces "action";

2. distinguishing fantasy and imagination becomes a must in a connected world. While the former takes the form of a thought separated from projects and actions, based on a self-referential logic, capable of leading to indifference, imagination is accompanied by a sense of projection, creating ideas of neighborhood and nation, of job prospects abroad and moral economies.

3. another fundamental distinction is that between individual and collective sense. Imagination is a priority of collectivities and the collective enjoyment of media content, video, and film, creates sodalities of worship and charisma, 'communities of feeling'; capitalism, and the press, are key media for those groups of people who have never interacted face-to-face and can begin to enrich their cultural identity.

This new proposal/interpretative view of contemporary complexity and global flows, focuses attention on the processes of acceleration and communication and on the power of connectivity that merges the circulation of people with that of media and cultural content.

Within the framework described, a "new" migrant is configured, a de-territorialized subject who goes on to construct non-authentic ethnic identities but is now able to build multiform and contingent life projects, suitable for the interactions that characterize contemporaneity, useful therefore to inhabit the current world and adapt to it (Buoncompagni, 2021).

This complexity, social change, and the migrant's possibility of redesigning his or her life (first of all by imagining it), were told and represented in the project. It happened through the voices of the migrants and the bodies of the actors involved in the public space of the theatre.

Theatre and intercultural relations allowed this. Theatre, in fact, in its true essence encompasses what integration is, it is an art that is very open to the social, so much so that in recent years it has been expressly referred to as "social theatre" (Bernardi, 2004).

Social theatre deals with the interaction between people, the construction of personal identity and the change in daily life and thinking. It opens a door to taking care of oneself, of one's own feelings, enabling us to act to relate to others, making us the protagonists of our own existence and that of those around us, of those we dare to feel, sharing different situations and stories.

Through such relationships and sharing, we can recognize that each life story is closely related to the others, and since theatre is the social and inclusive art par excellence, it can work for socialization and the abandonment of personal and interpersonal judgment.

In a society in which everything is seen from a rational, sterile, almost aseptic point of view, in a trend of civilization that is almost hostile to integration, not open to true social relations, so much so that we are forced to wear masks that put us in a position to adapt in a context in which we do not feel free to express ourselves, the theatre can "eliminate these masks and theatre-making can create a way to achieve transparency of being and the ability to express and become aware of reality and truth" (Bernardi, 2004, p.25).

Culture and art have always been fundamental instruments of intercultural communication that emancipate participation in social life, lead to listening to and encountering the Other, and are creative instruments of social justice.



## 2. Research (objectives and methodologies)<sup>3</sup>

The project focused on the migration crisis and on the figure of the migrant, trying to raise awareness, from an artistic and social point of view, among the citizens and the European institutions on the theme of diversity and otherness, in order to foster the meeting between native and foreigner, between migrant and host community, working first of all on the communicative, cognitive and emotional level of individuals, as well as on their levels of perception and imagination before embarking on their journey.

The project mainly involved two operational macro-areas:

*-Observation/theatrical representation of the human being and his "mobile" life.* The aim was to tell the story of the migration project, especially in the initial phase of imagination and (cognitive) planning of the journey, and to communicate to the audience the migrant's desire/dream of improving his existence by moving to another place unknown to him, highlighting how this last aspect is an anthropological element common to all and recurring in the history of mankind:

*-The creation of the "Archive of Dreams":* an intercultural, multilingual digital archive containing the stories of migrants, constantly updated, and enriched with multimedia, informative, artistic and scientific contents, available to citizens also in the following months once the project is completed.

The project was built with several work phases in mind, but in particular this document will highlight the structure, the main social aspects and the methodologies of this one.

The latter was structured and carried out using mixed methodologies (quantitative and qualitative). From an operational point of view, the research work was structured as follows:

- a. Definition of a methodology
- b. Study of the literature to scientifically support the entire European project.
- c. Construction and sharing of online surveys.

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<sup>3</sup> Being a project leader, an Italian partner (Teatro Valmisa), most of the activity was carried out in Italy and considered the Italian migrant context. But, despite the health emergency, thanks to social and digital research methodologies and the use of telematic tools, it was possible both to involve subjects from other European countries (as regards the collection of life stories) and to study the historical and cultural characteristics of the contexts of the countries involved.

- d. Analysis and collection of migrants' stories in national archives, literature, and Italian and international newspapers.
- e. Analysis and collection of migrants' life stories and in-depth interviews in agreement with local associations and social cooperatives.
- f. Data analysis and drafting of a final report.
- g. Support in identifying institutional targets in social channels and communication activities during the ongoing theatre performances through their own contacts/social channels.

Each phase aimed to analyze and collect those stories useful to be part of the final play and to build the digital archive, called "Archivio dei Sogni": a virtual container made up of narrative material useful for the play.

The methodology that was chosen to be used was mixed, considering four factors: health emergency, type of public, project duration and project purpose.

It was decided to use so-called mix methods, supported by new digital technologies. Specifically, at first the literature on the theme of theatre and migrants was studied from a sociocultural, psychological, and anthropological point of view.

At the same time, a survey (in English) was created and distributed online to collect socio-demographic information about migrants and their stories.

The various sections to be filled out concerned<sup>4</sup>:

- Age: most participants were between the ages of 18 (10, 3%) and 22 (12, 8%).
- Origin country: Greece (30,5%); Romania (11,1%)
- Destination country: Poland (28, 4%); Greece (15,3%); UK (9,8%)
- Reason of travelling<sup>5</sup>
- Your story<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>The total number of responses was 139, here only the highest percentages.

Here the link to the track of the questionnaire via google moduli: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1JFntLpNzdaUHcchCgZr1\\_xK7naGV3qTcNv4uGRe\\_vHI/e](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1JFntLpNzdaUHcchCgZr1_xK7naGV3qTcNv4uGRe_vHI/e) dit.

<sup>5</sup> We can summarize the answers in 5 key words: study; work; family problems; change of life and new expectations; reunion with relatives or partner.

<sup>6</sup> The 'life stories' section was constructed as an open-ended answer. This set no length limits and allowed respondents to freely enter all information (private and otherwise) about their family, the journey, and their current condition as migrants. Generally, three points in common emerged in reference to the "migrant dream": *-risk in leaving their country, but a deep desire to start again and redesign their life; feelings of fear and uncertainty; satisfaction and confirmation of that difficult choice that led them today to live a new life in a different community.*

## -Contact

In a second stage, through methodologies such as textual analysis and in-depth interviews (or focus groups), about 30 stories were collected and 25 migrant subjects (immigrants and emigrants) were interviewed, mainly within the Italian context, with different socio-economic conditions, from European countries. The interviews took place via chat or platforms such as WhatsApp or Skype, as the COVID-19 pandemic prevented communication and meetings in person for many months.

At the organizational-operational level, historical archives, associations working in the field and local communities were actively involved in this phase of collecting stories, asking for their support or for the names of those who might be willing to tell contemporary and past stories.

The objective was the 'migrant dream', to understand what drove them to move in the first place.

At the end of the project the information will be made available to those who request it, when they register to future events or meeting online.

Since the completion of this phase, a further phase has been opened concerning the process of dramaturgical writing based on the material collected and then transformed into dramaturgical workshops, creating performances that come to life in the stage space inside 5 containers.

In the project, therefore, migrants are not the protagonists, but their stories and their dreams. Their words, as mentioned, have been translated by the moving bodies of the artists of the theater companies involved. Bodies that moved, communicating hope, or suffering within a limited context, that of the container.

Also, in this phase the scientific support provided was useful to advertise the events online, identifying within the Facebook, Twitter and Instagram platforms, the main audiences, and institutional targets (politicians, schools, families, third sector organizations).

Digital as a transparent public space allows interconnection, so it was necessary to invest time and resources not only in research but also in building an online public communication strategy to make the theatre project a success.

This aspect is confirmed by the primary need to build an official online site that is simple, clear, and brief from the first impact. In this digital environment all details and news, about the live shows during the last summer, have always been loaded in real time<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Official website: <https://dreamscontainersfest.eu/>.





Integration pathways, understood as complex and multidimensional processes, are not simply achieved through access to work and housing, but are above all based on the active participation of people and their dialectic with the host societies (Cesareo, 2004).

Artistic forms, such as theatre, can help achieve a positive outcome within these processes.

Through the project, migrant communities and social actors/artists implemented cultural and theatrical activities. On the one hand, the aim was to raise awareness to strengthen the culture of welcoming; on the other hand, additional critical tools were provided to understand the condition of otherness and diversity in the mobile society.

Informing the citizens about the real condition of those who flee from wars and persecutions, from poverty and climatic crises, about the history of emigration from their own country through music, images and the bodies of the actors is a historical necessity to strengthen public memory and extend collective cultural identity. It is through verbal, para-verbal, and non-verbal language that the theatre and its protagonists have created moments of encounter with the citizenship, paying greater attention to the social and relational needs of the most fragile people.

Theatre, within a European context strongly affected by a pandemic, was the perfect medium to create emotion and critical thinking, knowledge, and art, contact and vision of the future, courage and ideas to reduce inequalities, fragility and conflicts towards the Other that have characterized the past and present of our European history.

But the project in question did not “limit” itself to representing and recounting a historical and global phenomenon such as migration but

undertook to externalize that specific cognitive-emotional condition of the migrant before departure.

The theatre and the body of the actors told the dream, the imaginative path of the person who, out of will or necessity, wants to start a “mobile” life to explore the world beyond all borders and rebuild his future.

Imagination is a condition that draws in the mind of the individual the migration, the discovery, the challenge, the courage, the change, the difficulties (Grotowsky, 1970; Bernardi, 2004).

The possibility of being active within the cultural fabric of the host society also means allowing migrants to become protagonists of their history and actions once again; it means facilitating the enhancement of their resources so that they are no longer perceived as eternally vulnerable and in need of assistance from others.

In the process of (re)gaining their autonomy, the recreational dimension should not be forgotten, as it helps to strengthen self-esteem and lay the foundations for a (new) social life, which is just as urgent as finding a home and a job, especially for people who have experienced exile, forced separation from their homes, families, and affections.

The reconquest of a strong identity, the support of an affective and instrumental social network in situ, the possibility of cultivating a sense of belonging and of forging relationships based on trust and dialogue, are elements that affect the psychological condition and contribute to making the refugee an active interlocutor in the host society.

The possibility of regaining possession of one’s own life, of being able to tell one’s own story, is an important stage in the life of immigrant. Thinking of all the work that involves reconstructing one’s history, the reasons for fleeing, necessary to re-elaborate one’s own experience and to present oneself at the hearing with the Territorial Commission for the recognition of international protection.

Telling is an activity that gives coherence and meaning to experience, both individual and shared, and theatre is also (and above all) the telling of a story.

The choice of theatre, as a medium and public space, was a winning choice for many reasons.

It was an opportunity to socialize, a recreational moment that distracted the ‘actors’ from their daily worries. Above all, through the theatre, the protagonists were able to voice their frustration, to vent their malaise; they were able to be seen not only as asylum seekers fleeing persecution and war, but as protagonists on the stage of life.

The performances were successful in terms of participation (not so expected in the middle of the second wave of pandemic), especially thanks to the word of mouth of the public, who had the opportunity to get closer to the reality of local immigration.

In conclusion, the artistic process is therefore a way of realizing personal identity, a way of reconstructing the relationship between the person and his or her new community of reference.

This opportunity becomes a social necessity, especially during social and health crisis situations.



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Scritture/Riscritture.  
44<sup>th</sup> International Conference of American Studies  
University of Salerno, 11-13 May 2022

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The University of Salerno has recently staged the study days on literature organized in the framework of the 44<sup>th</sup> International Congress of American Studies, promoted by the *Circolo Amerindiano ONLUS di Perugia* and the *Circolo Amerindiano di Salerno*.

The conference, chaired by Rosa Maria Grillo, took place from 10 to 13 May 2022, with a numerous attendance of scholars from Italian and foreign universities. The participants, although coming from diverse backgrounds, were united by the study of the cultures of the American continent.

The title *scritture/riscritture* (writing/rewriting) opens multiple points of reflection. Of course, it is impossible to give a complete account of the conference in the short space of a report, thus we will discuss only some contributions.

Piero Gorza, author of report on the relationship between orality and writing in the land of Mayas, leads us into a dimension of song/prayer, in which meaning and significance are not literal; on the contrary, they need to be renegotiated (reinvented) from time to time on the base of a *discard* (deviation, context, criteria), filled with the presence of the involved actors. Enigmatic words in the prayer, being “pure”, generate such discard and, at the same time, allow the return of images that build memory, despite being always the same. This polysemous characteristic of keeping the same and saying different things is the common thread that takes us back to writing and rewriting.

Pedro Pitarch, in *La escritura del jaguar*, has interpreted the topic of writing and rewriting in the conception of the collective writing of indigenous people in Chiapas. For the Chiapas people, writing is linked to the afterlife and to the world of spirits and death. Particularly significant is the role of the missionary, seen in the collective imagery as a figure intent on writing. In Chiapas he would represent the materialization of the malaise that has always linked writers to death. Writing is a source of disease, especially a disease of memory: in accordance with Socrates and Phaedrus, writing entails coercive power, reduction of memory, as well as loss of exchange,

whereas the sounds generates dialogue. And this lack of exchange makes writing a source of absence: because of the implicit and primary characteristic of the same, the verbal interchange, which allows the presence, fails. Thus, how to fight the ills produced by writing and why a body get sick? According to the Chiapas indigenous culture, writing produces infirmity. Words have been introduced into the body of the patient; the curator must speak to the words and somehow persuade them to leave the body. 'La escritura del jaguar', the red and the black ink, are the obvious manifestations of degeneration, spots related to advancing age, to chemical and biological processes that among the natives represent the unequivocal sign of a writing, which must be eradicated with words.

In the contribution titled *From living memory to rewriting*, Dilian Ferrer deals with the novel *Yo soy Napëyoma, relato de una mujer raptada por los indígenas Yanomami*, autobiographical tale of a little girl kidnapped by the Yanomami population. Beyond the personal history of Napëyoma, according to Ferrer the novel is a real historical document, which anthropologists, historians and experts have repeatedly studied to reconstruct the live of the Yanomami society. A few years later the first edition, the autobiography has been enriched with new and defined details that better summarize the events of Napëyoma, who, after having run away from Yanomami world, was not welcomed by her family of origin, because she was mother of two children born in the two decades spent away from native home.

Among the other contributions, *Estereotipos de género en México: una comparativa* by Berenize Galicia Isasmendi offers us an interesting contribution on the artist Regina José Galindo. Regina, born and grown up in Guatemala, proposes performances aimed at amplifying her malaise against a closed and hostile dictatorial regime, which through a relentless censorship restricts not only the freedom of expression, but also the normal course of daily life. The artist, author of poems filled with an intense feeling that, in addition to chanting intimate and personal memories, denounce the female condition in her country, approaches art as a subsequent phase in her poetry. According to Isasmendi, Regina uses her own body as an essential part of the artistic language; her performances become the natural consequence of her expressive needs, as if the body may express in a more urgent and immediate way the thoughts of the artist. A sort of rewriting without restraints. Using her body as a tool to transform the absence into presence is an act of female vindication in every performance. Her works come from the awareness that women suffer an individual and collective pain, they are not based on empathy but on a collective revenge, in which the idea the basic idea is that when one advances, all advance. In this sense, the artistic potential of the performative body is an invitation to the reflection, understood as writing and rewriting of a new direction, paths and ways of redemption, female emancipation.

Camilla Cattarulla, in her presentation on *Reescrituras de la primera misión apostólica vaticana*, deals with the Catholic mission in Chile held between 1824 and 1825 by the Apostolic Vicar Giovanni Muzi, the abbey Sallusti and the prelate Giovanni Mastai Ferretti, future Pius IX. The mission was unsuccessful, as it was not able to bring order in the Hispanic-American Church, but the reports are an important source of the opinions of the Holy See on the South-American Church. Particularly, the diaries of Mastai Ferretti have been a source of the novel of Carpentier *El Arpa y la Sombra*. According to Cattarulla, in this “rewriting” Carpentier starts the aesthetic elaboration of the American contexts, thus establishing relations and categories between Europe and America. The writer use the paradox of imagining the future pope reading Voltaire and Rousseau, reproducing a dialogue to establish a relation of equality between Europe and America, an equality constituted by the political ingenuity of both American and Italian liberals.

All the presentations have addressed new topics and shed new light on the studies of the American literatures. Being impossible to summarize them here, we remind that the videoclips of all presentations can be watched on the YouTube channel of the *Circolo amerindiano di Perugia*<sup>1</sup> and that the proceedings of the conference will be soon published.

Finally, the conference has been the occasion for giving the prestigious award of the *Circolo Amerindiano di Perugia* to Rosa Maria Grillo for her long scientific activity, which have marked not only the history of the Amerindian circle, but also that of American studies. Grillo is the eleventh recipient and first woman in 44 years of life of the *Circolo*.

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<sup>1</sup>[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC\\_yzkm09IL74m87rgtMdg2A/featured](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_yzkm09IL74m87rgtMdg2A/featured)





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*Fabien Archambault, Il controllo del pallone. I cattolici, i comunisti e il calcio in Italia (1943-anni Settanta), Firenze, Le Monnier, 2022, pp. XII-420.*

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In Italy, football is the most studied sport under the historical point of view, along with cycling. This is not surprising, because since several decades it has been not only the favourite sporting discipline of Italians, but also a tool able to shape national and local identities. Apart from some pioneering attempts, scholars started to study the history of football in 1954, with the famous *Storia del calcio in Italia* (Einaudi, Torino) of Antonio Ghirelli, a well-known journalist. In the following decades, particularly from the Nineties, several studies have analyzed the role of football and the characteristic of its evolution over the years. However, most studies have focused on professional football, highlighting its importance for the nationalization of the masses, but neglecting the amateur and popular dimension.

The recent book of Fabien Archambault fills this gap for one period of Italian history. The book, indeed, examines the history of Italian football from the end of the World War II to the Seventies and focuses mainly on amateur sport. The author takes into consideration the two most important “political” sporting federations, the *Centro Sportivo Italiano* (CSI), connected to the Church and supporter of the *Democrazia Cristiana* party, and the *Unione sportiva sport popolare* (UISP), established by the Communist party.

In the post-war period, as is known, Italian society was deeply divided and both Catholics and communists experienced the confrontation between them a good-against-evil fight. Sport, and particularly football, could not but be involved in this confrontation, also for the legacy of the Fascist regime. Mussolini had used sport as a tool for the politicization of the people and during the *Ventennio* physical activities had hugely spread, but amateur sport was controlled by the Fascist party and its collateral organizations, leaving little room to the independent societies. After the collapse of the regime, new political parties, first Christian-Democrats and Communists, collected this legacy, although in a completely different situation and without the aspiration to the totalitarianism.

The pages of Archambault describe the establishment and the evolution of CSI and UISP, their relations with the political arena, their geographical diffusion, their penetration into the society. What is interesting is that, in the previous decades, both in the catholic and the leftist area, the opposition to sport had been very strong and the physical activities had been often considered a frivolous distraction. After the World War II, Pio XII on the one side and Palmiro Togliatti on the other side understood the potentiality of sport for the socialization of the masses and for the propaganda of their ideas and beliefs, allowing the development of organizations such as CSI and UISP.

A section of *Il controllo del pallone* focuses on the politicization of professional football. Both Catholics and communists (the latter more vigorously) opposed professionalism, but they could not ignore it and, gradually, were forced to accept that their supporters followed the matches of the *Serie A*. Football, furthermore, was often viewed as a tool able to create political consent.

However, in the post-war Italy, football was also an element of modernization. Once overcome the crisis provoked by the war, in the Fifties Italian society changed, the economic situation improved and new ways of life became common all over the national territory. Football represented modernity and, not by chance, its popularity was connected with the diffusion of new media, particularly the television, which changed the fruition of sport. Football was the television sport *par excellence* and, after the beginning of regular broadcasting in 1954, its popularity increased. Between the Fifties and the Sixties, football took the place of cycling as favourite sport of Italians: the bicycle, despite being still used by millions people as a means of transportation, represented a backward Italy and, in a society that was discovering the mass motorization, began to lose its attractiveness.

Reading *Il controllo del pallone*, it is impossible not to notice the disparity between the North and the South of Italy, existing at both popular and professional level. It is well known that, over the years, the most competitive football clubs have come from the Northern regions, mainly from the industrial triangle Turin-Milan-Genoa. However, the problem also concerned (and, under certain respects, still concerns) the amateur sport. CSI and UISP were more active in the Centre-North of the Peninsula, more specifically the CSI in the Northern Regions (Lombardy, Piedmont, Liguria and Veneto) and the UISP in the «red» regions of Central Italy, *in primis* Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna.

More generally, the book in an insight into the Italy of the reconstruction and the economic miracle, seen through the lens of football. Of course, CSI and UISP did not represent all the amateur football: there were also other organizations, such as the *Gruppi Fiamma*, connected to the neo-fascist

party *Movimento sociale italiano*, the *Centri universitari sportivi*, which aimed at promoting sport in universities, and others.

In the final chapter, Archambault highlights the changes of the late Sixties and Seventies. The modernization and the development of civil society also affected sport. In the case of football, many independent clubs challenged the predominance of the politicized organizations, but both the CSI and the UISP kept a high number of members. Indeed, they are still today among the most important organizations for amateur sport.

The greatest value of the book is probably given by the accuracy of the research. Along with many printed sources, Archambault has consulted the archives of the CSI and the UISP, almost unknown among the Italian historians; furthermore, at the *Archivio Centrale dello Stato* he has not limited its research at the holding of the Ministry of Interior, like often happens in the works on the history of sport, but he also consulted other documental series, such as that of the Presidency of the Council.

*Il controllo del pallone* covers the period until the Seventies. In recent decades, football has deeply changed, both at amateur and professional level. The number of amateur clubs and schools has enormously grown and playing (often, in the five-a-side formula) is a pastime of a large percentage of youngsters. Furthermore, the game has undergone a sort of depoliticization and the attractiveness of organizations such as CSI and UISP has unavoidably diminished. Independent clubs have gained the upper hand. However, this does not mean that the relation between sport and politics has broken. For example, many political leaders are involved in the management of professional teams and often have used them as a tool for the creation of the consent. It is an old phenomenon, dating back almost to the Fascist regime and continued after the war, when the most evident case of “exploitation” of football for political purpose was that of Achille Lauro, leader of a monarchist party, major of Naples and president of the *Napoli* team in the Fifties. In recent times, this praxis has continued, although with different forms, and the case of Silvio Berlusconi is only the most known.

Moreover, some changes modified the fruition of sport. This evolution has begun during the “second economic miracle” of the Eighties, which caused a further modernization of society, and continues still today. Another novelty is the female involvement, almost unknown until few decades ago. In recent years, the female participation has gained popularity and recognition, also thanks to the performance of the national team, even if its popularity is not comparable to that of male football. Also migrations have affected football, as most immigrants come from geographical areas (Eastern Europe and Africa) where the game is very popular. Many teams have been established with the aim to integrate foreigners and sport is proving to be one of the better ways of intercultural

dialogue. The definition of “popular football”, once used by the UISP to identify its initiatives, today often refers to immigrant teams, established by left-wing groups.

The hope is that, after *Il controllo del pallone*, new studies may analyze the recent developments of football and its relation with the evolution of the Italian society.