Ilaria Tucci

Community-Based Theatre as Conflict Transformation in Lampedusa

Co-Producing Knowledge about Life at the Militarised Border of Europe

tapri

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ACADEMIC DISSERTATION
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Dedication

To my sunshine Ennio

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Ilaria

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ABSTRACT

Over the last two decades, the Sicilian island of Lampedusa, which is the southernmost point of Italy, has epitomized the European border. Lampedusa is a transit hub for many people trying to reach Europe by crossing the strip of Mediterranean Sea between Sicily and northern African shores. In academic, mediatic and activist discussions, Lampedusa became a privileged observatory about migration and human rights. Concurrently, the surrounding waters of Lampedusa have been witnessed to thousands of deaths. The research presented in this thesis took place in Lampedusa, but offers a different perspective.

This is an interdisciplinary arts-based research in peace and conflict studies, and is about everyday life in the militarised context of Lampedusa. It focuses on the community-based theatre experience the author facilitated with a local association called Askavusa during two workshops, in November 2016 and October 2017. During the community-based theatre workshops, the researcher and the participants collectively wrote a play, which is the primary research material of this thesis. The main argument of the play captures the unspoken and contradictory aspects of living at the southern border of Europe and in so doing offers a counter-narrative about life at the border. The play reflects the marginalised, unseen, and underrepresented voices of people living at the border.

The main argument of this thesis is twofold, conceptual, and methodological. First, with the interdisciplinary conceptual help of military geographies, slow violence and moral imagination, the thesis makes visible those features at the border zones which are usually hidden and unspoken. Secondly, it pursues this by using non-traditional research methods from arts-based research through the platform of community-based theatre. In essence, the thesis explores the possibilities of community-based theatre to contribute to the field of peace studies by facilitating a research process where the subjects of the research itself are engaged in making their voices heard. In relation to this, the thesis focuses on the participatory process of co-production of knowledge of community-based theatre as a feminist practice for conflict transformation.

The main finding of this thesis is that feminist arts-based research can be demonstrably conducted in highly militarised environment, using a mixed methodological approach that critically explores the contradictions in the everyday lives of locals and visitors. Through the exploration of emotion, and the everyday paradoxes of people living in Lampedusa, the author and the participants made visible the hitherto

unseen impacts of militarisation, and realised an expression of conflict transformation and moral imagination.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Italian eteläisin saari - Lampedusa - on kahden viime vuosikymmenen aikana tullut tunnetuksi Euroopan rajana ja siirtolaisuuden symbolisena solmukohtana. Se on läpikulkupaikka monille Eurooppaan pyrkiville ihmisille, jotka ylittävät rajan Välimerellä Sisilian ja Pohjois-Afrikan välillä. Lampedusasta on tullut siirtolaisuuden ja ihmisoikeuksien observatorio tieteessä, mediassa ja aktivismissa. Samanaikaisesti Lampedusaa ympäröivä meri on todistanut tuhansia rajakuolemia. Väitöskirjaan johtanut empiirinen tutkimustyö on tehty Lampedusalla, mutta se tuo edellä mainittuihin keskusteluihin erilaisen näkökulman.

Tutkimus tarkastelee arkea Lampedusan militarisoituneessa kontekstissa. Työ on tieteiden välinen taideperustainen tutkimus, joka sijoittuu rauhan- ja konfliktintutkimukseen. Tutkimus pohjautuu lampedusalaisen Askavusa-kollektiivin kanssa toteutettuihin yhteisöperustaista teatteria hyödyntäviin työpajoihin, jotka on toteutettu marraskuussa 2016 ja lokakuussa 2017. Yhteisöperustaisten teatterityöpajojen aikana tutkija ja paikalliset osallistujat kirjoittivat kollektiivisesti näytelmän. Tämä prosessi ja sen tuloksena syntynyt näytelmä muodostavat tämän väitöskirjan pääasiallisen tutkimusaineiston. Näytelmä pyrkii tavoittamaan Euroopan etelärajalla elämisen sanoittamattomat ja ristiriitaiset puolet ja siten se tuottaa vastanarratiivin elämästä rajalla. Näytelmä heijastaa rajalla elävien marginalisoitujen, näkymättömien ja aliedustettujen ihmisten ääniä.

Väitöskirjan kontribuutio on kaksiosainen: käsitteellinen ja metodologinen. Ensinnäkin tutkimus juontaa monitieteisistä sotilaallisen maantieteen, hitaan väkivallan ja moraalisen kuvittelun keskusteluista tehdäkseen näkyviksi sellaisia raja-alueiden piirteitä ja ominaisuuksia, jotka jäävät julkisuudessa usein piiloon tai kokonaan tunnistamatta. Toiseksi, tämä tutkimus lähestyy tavoitettaan taidepohjaisen tutkimuksen ei-perinteisiä tutkimusmenetelmiä käyttäen. Tutkimus tarkastelee sellaisen yhteisöperustaisen teatterin mahdollisuuksia rauhantutkimuksen alalla, jossa tutkimuskohteet itse ovat mukana tekemässä ääniään kuulluiksi ja näkyväksi. Väitöskirja keskittyy osallistuvaan tiedon yhteistuotantoon ja feministiseen konfliktinmuutoksen prosessiin yhteisöperustaisen teatterin kontekstissa.

Tutkimuksessa todetaan, että feministinen taideperustainen tutkimus voidaan toteuttaa erittäin militarisoituneessa ympäristössä tavalla, joka tekee näkyviksi militarisaation huomaamattomat vaikutukset. Tutkimuksen merkittävin tulos on, että

näin voidaan harjoittaa moraalista mielikuvitusta arkielämän ristiriitojen kriittiseen tarkasteluun ja siten luoda mahdollisuus konfliktinmuutokselle.

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a collective play

Lampedusa, November 2016, October 2017

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Prologue

Chorus: - Lampedusa is like a small child who has to be breastfed.

Lampedusa is like a weak baby, who cannot survive alone.

If they do not take away the nursing bottle from her, how can Lampedusa develop and grow up?

How can she follow the will of her people if there is always someone from the outside who gives her the bottle?

Lampedusa is like a small child who has to be breastfed. Lampedusa is like a weak baby, who cannot survive alone.

That's why the Island is always sick.

How can the Island grow into adulthood?

Lampedusa is like a small child who has to be breastfed. Lampedusa is like a weak baby, who cannot survive alone. They give her the minimum to get a move on.

She's like a sick child who wants to become an adult, but never take away the bottle.

Lampedusa is like a small child who has to be breastfed. Lampedusa is like a weak baby, who cannot survive alone.

Houses

There are two different spaces: One for the Citizen, who wants to live close to nature, and one for Gianni, who wants to build a house for his son in accordance with building regulations.

The citizen is in a dark empty space, like a cave.

Citizen: - I've lived in my parents' illegally built house my whole life. Two days ago, I started to renovate it, to make it bigger. It's almost impossible to get it approved and I don't understand why. I don't understand if it is illegal because it's between the sea and the cemetery… But then, they tell me that people don't have building permits in Lampedusa… So I ask, Are we sure that my house is illegal? Illegal to whom? What is not illegal in Lampedusa! They say that the school building is also unapproved… Anyway, my house is in a wonderful spot, and I would not exchange it for the world…

…But honestly… I don't mind… I am not interested in having a council approved house, I could even live in a cave or in the forest. In fact, that's what I do, when I can…

Municipal offices. Gianni, citizen of Lampedusa, is speaking to the Municipal Building Office Chief.

Gianni: - I want to build a house for my son. Next year he's back in Lampedusa. They've decided to move back here. I need some land in the area, near the lighthouse…

Chief: - Gianni, that area is already taken by a developer, a friend of the General. You can't build anything there. Look for some other rundown place in need of renovation. About the lighthouse area, we can't help you; a military barracks has already been planned for that location.

Gianni: - My son and his wife are coming back to Lampedusa because they want to open a small restaurant and rent a flat. Let me know which documents I need and when the building committee has their next meeting.

Chief: - Does the committee have a meeting? Really? I would also love to know when the committee has their meeting!

Gianni: - I want to do everything by the book. When we built my house, we built illegally, as everyone else did at that time…but now, I want to do everything lawfully.

Chief: - Come back tomorrow. Let's see what I can do for you.

Citizen: - There was a man whose house was stolen by the State to build the airport. They put him and his family in a council flat. After many years, on a sunny day, he was forced to move from that building too - him and his family - because of never ending renovations. He picked up what people threw away at the dump and built a house from garbage, even things often harmful to the environment. He built a house from junk, just like that.

Municipal Offices

Gianni: - Good morning. I've come to get the list of documents I need to renovate a property. I'm converting it into an apartment with a restaurant in the basement. All the documents I have are in this folder. I can show you if you'd like...

Chief: - Here is the name of the surveyor. Call him and ask him how to proceed. He will tell you which certified engineer to use and where to buy building materials.

Gianni: - What about the council approval? Do I start the work without any official permission? I told you that I want to be within the law this time.

Chief: - Certainly. Everything is within regulation. Your application has been approved. Building can start and the total cost is € 20 000.

Gianni breaths deeply and then explodes.

Gianni: - How is it possible that my application has been approved if I haven't presented it yet? What work can start? What's going on? I told you that I wanted to do everything legally, and you keep speaking to me like this… Do we really want to continue like this? Institutionalized and legitimized cheating? How long will it last? It will only last a for a little while longer, until we won't take this anymore… But you, you should be the first to set the example, implementing the law, and putting an end to this abusive system. It's convenient to let us be in violation, turning a blind eye to us breaking the law! Then you can extort us later, right?

Chief (really calm): - Shall I give you the number of the surveyor?

Schools

Child: - I went to school like every other afternoon. A while ago, they decided to let us study in shifts, because there aren't enough classrooms for all the pupils. Our turn is in the afternoons, after lunch at around 14:30. Instead of going to school, I would rather sleep or play at that time; my tummy is so full!

Mayor (*glowing*): - We will transform Lampedusa into a child- friendly island! We need to start with the school. Our first goal: a new school.

Child: - It was a normal afternoon, like many other afternoons. We went upstairs and started our lesson with the Italian teacher. While we were reading a fairytale the walls started shaking, the floor felt as it was about to give way under our feet and a loud boom jolted everything. The teacher's face went white. She started shivering, making the sign of the cross and shouted at us to get under our desks. My classmate Daniele, who has a heart problem, peed in his pants. My friend Carla started crying and couldn't stop sobbing. Everyone was terrified! The teacher shut the door as a huge dust cloud came from the corridor. It came from the walls, the ceiling, everywhere just dust. Time stopped, suddenly… nobody dared to move, to breathe, then after what seemed like forever, the bell finally rang. We ran from the building, relieved but still trembling and stunned. Outside it was already dark, and fresh winter air stung my cheeks and nose. When I saw mom, I hugged her like never before, almost crying with relief that I was safe and unhurt by the horrible earthquake.

Mayor (*with some hesitation*): - We will transform Lampedusa into a child-friendly island! We need to start with the school… Our first goal: a new school.

Child: - When I told mom what had happened at school, she looked at me with suspicion. She was doubting, pacing up and down, asking me a barrage of questions. Tired and skeptical of my story, she called the other mothers and after a while, she understood exactly what had happened.

Teacher (*on the phone*): - A beautiful tent. Can you imagine me teaching in a tent, Antonia? You know, like those at the fair. Oh no, I mean, a beautiful tent like the ones we had at the Unity Festival in Pavullo. And instead of sandwiches, tortellini, sausages and beers,

you have a class full of pupils. Can you imagine? Yes, in Lampedusa. I am telling you, they want us to work in a tent, because we've run out of classroom space. No, no, nothing surprises me anymore. What did you say? No, on the beach would be too much. You know, the migrant boats… but they've moved us quite near to the airport runway. Of course, with the arrivals and departures. The noise? Well, it is nothing compared to the dust. You should speak with the school's cleaning lady. She tells me that when she sweeps the floor everything is black. What did you say? Well, yes, you are right, the tent could work on the beach… It's not a bad idea, you know! I should suggest it to the director, just as a provocation. You never know, maybe one day the powers that be in Rome will call it *The Good School* or *School 3.0*. Well, I have to run. Lots of books to mark. Speak soon.

Mother: - I asked to see the municipal deeds of the school because I wanted to know whether the building was fit for use or not. I needed a clear and unambiguous answer. They didn't allow me. So I wrote to the Prime Minister's office. Yes, I wrote to Rome, because we couldn't stand this situation any longer. Because living like this is not normal. And they answered me. They said I was within my rights to enquire. It took me three days to decode their letter. Every sentence was at least six lines long: full of Latin, riddled with complicated legal jargon… and I thought: Do we really need to get a lawyer every time, even to read a simple letter? I understand that official letters are written in a formal way, but this was too much… Anyway, they said that I was within my rights, though I didn't quite get what they meant with *endo-procedural* or *eso-procedural access*. Anyway, I was within my rights. And I went to the Municipality with their letter in hand, I was beaming, and I said: *show me the Municipal Deeds now! I want to know if the school building is safe or not*. No way. Not even the Prime Minister's letter convinced them. Probably they hadn't understood the letter either, and that's why they wouldn't allow me to see their documents. They didn't trust the letter. What was their motto a couple of years ago? *For a transparent public service*. So we are back to where we started. Every morning our children go to a school building which is safe, perhaps, or not. If living like this is normal…

Child: - Some men came to school to check the roof, to check how much weight the building could stand. The lady from the municipality, the one who always speaks too long when we have some party at school, assured mom that those checks had been done in accordance with safety regulations. *Safety regulations?!* my mom was repeating on the phone, furious. *Safety regulations?!! Safety regulations and part of the ceiling collapsed? Safety*

regulations and nobody knew anything about it? Safety regulations and the pupils were frightened to death?! And you dare to call it safety regulations?!

I will never forget that afternoon, I will never forget that with safety regulations you could have died from fright.

Mayor (*almost stuttering*): - We will transform Lampedusa… into a child -friendly island! W…we need to… to start with t…he the ssss…school… Our first goal…? …ehm… a new school ...

Hotels

The scene is in the dining room of a small hotel. It is late evening, almost middle of the night. The hotel keeper is with his friend the baker who has stopped by for a chat, after having done his bread deliveries for the following day. Despite his fatigue, the host is packing away some glasses, speaking to the baker who is seated at a table.

Hotel keeper: - If I think how we used to work a couple of years ago… It feels so long ago. Do you remember? From April till October, and then we had November all to ourselves. We used to make plans for the winter, spend time with our families, go fishing, even swimming in Saint Martin on sunny days… Why have things turned out this way…? I could have finished my studies, travelled abroad, or simply lived like any other Lampedusan. No, instead I chose to become a businessman… I don't mean to complain, work is sacred, you know what I think about it, but…well, if I think about it… Do you ever ask yourself if things were better before?

Baker: - Before when, what do you mean?

Hotel keeper: - I mean before all this gendarmerie came, all these guards and guards of guards… Yes, I know, we've always had military people here, it is true… but look at the numbers now… their presence here has become so matter-of-fact that we don't even notice them anymore, but…

Baker: - What's the matter? Are they bothering you somehow?

Hotel keeper: - Before ´95 my hotel was closed during the winter. Things have changed a lot since the 90's: taxes have gone up, electricity and water are so expensive now. The water is not even drinkable. Do you remember the 90's? Things were not so expensive, and I could easily go visit my sister in Liguria for few months. The kids stayed here with their grandparents, and my wife and I were free to do some other things.

Baker: - Well, you also went there for work!

Hotel keeper: - Yes, you are right. I helped my brother-in-law in his bar in La Spezia, but it wasn't a job, it was something different… more casual. Something I happily did in my spare time. I didn't do it to make money, it was just our way of hanging out, spending time together in a different way. We were a family. Now it's different. Now we are

constantly consumed with the pursuit of money, how much we make, how much we spend. As if money was the single most important thing in life. (*He stops thinking about what he had just said*) Piero, what about beauty?

Baker: - What?

Hotel keeper: - Beauty, I said. The tourists have been replaced by the military, the police, the military police, the financial police, NGO's… and we have lost track of beauty. We have allowed beauty to be eclipsed by all this. We have diminished it, and now it is mortgaged to some tone-deaf and blindfolded political purpose, which imposes its will on everything. Piero, are you listening to me?

The citizen and the sea

Version 1 and 2 of this scene can be placed in different moments of the play. Further, the director is at liberty to workshop additional scenes based on this structure with different endings, actors and characters.

Version 1

Claudio is walking on the beach. He stops to look at the sea, this sea he knows so well, this sea he loves so much and which is often ungrateful. Claudio watches the sea and speaks to it, as if it had eyes to see him and ears to hear his words. As he speaks, he wrist-flicks stones on the water's surface, as if the action would make his words travel further.

Claudio: - Of what use are you to me? Yes you, you are beautiful, so beautiful. But to me... of what use is your beauty to me? You and them... you are the same: you hear without listening. You don't listen to my words, and you never respond; you are like them. Those whose mouths brim over with declarations and promises… You are like them. You hear without listening, and then you abandon me. Yet you are so beautiful, you are so beautiful, my dear sea, enchanting me with your smile. And I am such a fool speaking to you, hearing without listening.

Claudio sits just out of reach of the breaking waves. He has the empty gaze of those who have lost everything. A frothy wave washes up a bottle on the beach. Absentmindedly he picks it up and notices a piece of paper inside. It requires some effort to extract the paper and then he reads the message it carries.

Claudio: - My name is Aisha. I am writing this message because I am looking for a husband. I want to get married to a man of the Muslim faith. If you are interested call me to…

We are all desperately looking for a way out. Moaning with anguish, we beg for answers from the sea. But it doesn't listen to us, it doesn't. Poor girl, compelled by hope to send a message in this way. Who knows the horrors from which you want to escape? We're all desperate, and from here we can see only the sea, the infinite, emotionless... beautiful sea.

Claudio takes the bottle and the paper, and exits.

Version 2

Anna is walking on the beach. She stops to look at the sea, this sea she knows so well, this sea she loves so much and which is often ungrateful. Anna watches the sea and speaks to it, as if it had eyes to see her and ears to hear her words. As she speaks, she wrist-flicks stones on the water's surface, as if the action would make her words travel further, as if she could inflict pain and punishment on the sea.

Anna: - What the fuck do you want from me? What do you want? Ah, I see, you want to intimidate me… fine, fine… yes, go ahead, bully me with your big waves… what about me? I have to take your flotsam and jetsam, submit to your rhythms, your tides, your moods, while you consume all my time, my space… and take all my people with you. Freedom?! You are a prison, you are a limitation, you are a border… you are a condemnation: whenever I go you are there, always… you are everywhere, you have imprisoned us in these twenty square kilometres of land. Lash the rocks, do it, do it! You don't frighten me! You don't care about me, about us, about anybody. You speak and say nothing, you coward! Yes, you are a coward. I can't stand you anymore!

Anna sits just out of reach of the breaking waves. She has the empty gaze of those who have lost everything. A frothy wave washes up a bottle on the beach. Absentmindedly she picks it up and notices a piece of paper inside. She gently takes it from the bottle, and reads the message written upon it. Reading the message moves her. She takes the bottle and paper with her and exits.

Asparagus

A young woman is picking asparagus near the military fence in Ponente. She is in a good mood. It is a fine day and there is much asparagus. After a while, she feels observed. She looks around and notices a soldier watching her from behind the fence. At first, she pretends not to see him, looking somewhere else. But then, he speaks to her, sternly. Eventually she looks straight at him, disdainfully.

Girl: - Good morning, by the way. (*She goes back to the asparagus*) Why should I? (*She laughs sarcastically*) Oh, really? I didn't know that the asparagus also belongs to you… ah, that's not what you meant… (*back to the asparagus*). No, I won't show you my ID, because I can't, I don't have it with me now. Yes, I don't have my ID with me. Is it a problem? So now we can't even go for a walk without our passports in our pockets? Isn't it enough that you riddle the island with your radar installations, and now you tell me that I should also carry a bar-coded ID around with me, eh? Why's that? Are we not people anymore... have we all become merchandise to be scanned? I don't think I am doing anything wrong here. We have been doing this forever, and we will keep doing it: picking asparagus on our land. Don't you see? Your fence is over there, and my asparagus is here…

Curious about the voices, a lady comes closer; she lives in a nearby house.

Lady: - What's going on here?

Girl: - It seems that we can't pick asparagus here anymore. On this island, anybody can come and do whatever they want: to build, to buy, to install radars, to build, to buy… but we can't pick asparagus anymore!

Lady: - I see! But isn't you… you who are protesting against the authorities…?

Girl: - Excuse me…?

Lady: - If the commander here, the captain, well… gave an instruction, it means that it's necessary and has to be obeyed…

Girl: - Ah?! So, just because someone wearing a uniform says something, it must be obeyed? You believe it?

Lady: - Of course.

Girl: - Aren't you angry? Your house is surrounded by radar installations, they are poisoning you…and you are not mad as hell?

Lady: - Why should I be? What's the harm in that? You are so against these radar installations, I don't understand why… (*with admiring look at the soldier*) I wouldn't be surprised if these installations actually improve one's health ….

Girl: - What? Improves one's health? Don't you know, no one dies of old age in Lampedusa anymore! How many young people haven't died because of tumours or cancer…? And you know what? Isn't it a coincidence that those who have died had been living near the radar installations, or working in it? And there weren't only a couple of cases, for your information! Did you know that Lampedusa has the highest incidence of cancer in the entire Sicily? Nobody has told you that, right! And people have had to sell their houses to pay for travel expenses, hospitalisation, medical treatment… because the State imposes its will, forces these radar installations upon us, and then doesn't lift a finger to help the sick who don't have enough money to pay for medical treatment…

Lady: - Oh please! You are exaggerating…

Girl: - Don't you believe me? Don't you understand what I'm saying? Then tell me, what will happen if they decide to expand the military base? Let's say one day one of these guys come knocking on your door telling you, Well, thank you for everything, but we need more land, so the time has come to vacate your property…?

Lady: - Well, it means that I'll have to leave then.

Girl: - What?!

Lady: - Well, if that's what they decide, it will be because of legitimate reasons. They know what they're doing! They are always right.

The girl looks silently at the other woman, trying to make sense of a deeper meaning and understanding.

Girl: - Have you ever asked yourself how much all this costs? Fences, buildings, radar installations, all these men who come here, for short or long stays… have you ever asked yourself how much money the State spends on maintaining all of this?

Lady: - But it's for our protection, and…

Girl: - And what about our needs? Have you ever thought that the same amount of money could have been used for something else? Are you happy that when you need a dermatologist, for example, you have to choose the right Wednesday, because she comes only once every two weeks? And if you have a problem with your thyroid – do you know how many women have thyroid problems these days? – you'll need some luck in remembering which Monday of the month the endocrinologist is coming: is it the first, the second, the third…when does he come exactly? Ok, we aren't so many, we are only six thousand souls living on this island, but do we or don't we have the right to medical treatment? Do we or don't we have the right to be taken care of? Tell me, are we only allowed to get sick on fixed days? You have to write it down in your diary: on Wednesday from 11:00 to 13:00 I can have a rash on my skin. Do you think that this is normal?

Lady: - How do you make the connection to the army? What do they have to do with it?

Girl: - You are right, they are not personally involved in that, but those who financially support them, those who have sent them here, are behind it, of course. Those same people could have decided to implement different policies. They could put that money into a reliable healthcare system, guaranteed clean water for the population, and not have left us at the mercy of the consequences of this war. At least after the Second World War, the people of Lampedusa were united, and if there was a need to fight, nobody would have shied away from their duty…

The camping area

Activist: - (…) He tells me: We've also suggested removing these piles of rock, using them to build a barracks later on… These piles of rock?!

Do you know General Fuckface what those rocks are? They are dammuso. You thought they were just ruins and rubble to be removed, the perfect spot to build a seaside hotel one day, as many others have already done. But the dammuso is something much more, dear General Sir. It is a symbol of the meeting of the educated, mathematic Arabic culture and that of rural Sicily. Yes I know that to you Arabic brings to mind Arab – Muslim – Islam – Terrorist. But you know what, my dear General? Here, deep down, we are all Arabs in the end. You too. Yes, you too, whether you admit it or not. Un mare, un popolo: One sea, one people. And we just happen to find ourselves in the middle of this sea. So, I really don't understand, Mister General, I really don't understand how you can distinguish between yes, you can, and no, you can't. You can enter, and no, you don't have enough horrors to escape from. I am sorry, please go home, go back to where you came from.

Come on, Mister General, we are all responsible for these women and men who are fleeing from their countries. I say we, but I am not speaking about myself, I'm speaking about the rich countries, those which became rich by colonizing, and fomenting wars since time immemorial. First we instigate the troubles in their nations, and then we say Oh no, there is no space for you here, go back home! What a wonderful species of the human race we are.

Anyway, Mister General, the dammuso are untouchable. You won't colonize them too. As for this encampment that you have built - congratulations - may your visit here be short- lived.

Because - you know - tourists scare so easily. And military people are more frightening than migrants.

Children

Dante: - When I grow up, I want to join the carabinieri. I want the charisma of a man with a head on his shoulders. A man in a black uniform with red stripes and a hat with a coat of arms, exactly like my friend Mauro, handsome and tall. All the girls are crazy about him.

Lucia: - When I grow up, I want to become a woman, a woman with courage, lots and lots of courage which I can pack into my backpack and carry with me all the time! I want to help the earth, all the people, and also the sea to be free!

Dante: - I met Mauro through my cousin at the cafe behind our home. I was eating an ice-cream when he came in and said hello to everyone. Then he looked at me, straight into my eyes, and he said hello, I am Mauro, what's your name? It was the first time that an adult had spoken to me without that stupid tone of voice that all the adults use with me. I was eight years old.

Lucia: - I want my precious little island to be beautiful and bright. And all those iron things which look like giant monsters – mom told me they are called radars and they make people ill – I want to delete all those ugly monsters with my magic eraser, and in their place I want to have many, many trees.

Dante: - When I grow up, I really want to become the perfect carabiniere. I want to serve the community and help people in all matters of life and also those in danger of death. I will enforce the law, and I will catch all the criminals, like thieves, killers, hooligans, tramps…

Lucia: - …and I don't want to see those frightening people with their uniforms and guns anymore... I don't want to see them in the streets of Lampedusa. In these streets... only children playing, children laughing and eating ice cream… That is what I want! When I grow up, I want to be an activist!

Dante: - Since I've met Mauro, I've understood how to do my best to make my dream come true. I will get the best marks at school and become a good carabiniere, with a big C, even better than Mauro!

Epilogue

Chorus: - In Lampedusa, no births anymore;

it is an island born elsewhere.

Lampedusa has become a little baby, a weak baby, who cannot make it alone.

Has Lampedusa always been this way?

Was there a time she could walk on her own?

To progress, there has to be a change of direction,

a return to mother's milk.

Lampedusa is the nursing bottle from which many are fed. Lampedusa is the warm meal, from which the multitudes know to eat.

In Lampedusa, no births anymore;

it is an island born elsewhere.

Lampedusa is a baby born elsewhere,

and in that elsewhere all the decisions are taken.

1 PROLOGUE – INTRODUCING LAMPEDUSA AND THIS RESEARCH

Lampedusa is like a small child who has to be breastfed.

Lampedusa is like a weak baby, who cannot survive alone.

If they do not take the nursing bottle from her, how can Lampedusa develop and grow up?

How can she follow the will of her people if there is always someone from the outside who gives her the bottle?

Lampedusa is like a small child who has to be breastfed.

Lampedusa is like a weak baby, who cannot survive alone.

That's why the Island is always sick.

How can the Island grow to adulthood?

Lampedusa is like a small child who has to be breastfed.

Lampedusa is like a weak baby, who cannot survive alone.

They give her the minimum to get a move on.

She's like a sick child who wants to become an adult, but never take away the bottle.

Lampedusa is like a small child who has to be breastfed.

Lampedusa is like a weak baby, who cannot survive alone.

('Prologue', *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border*, 2017)

The prologue of the play *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border*[1] poetically introduces the fragilities embedded in the European border of Lampedusa. The play is the outcome of a community-based theatre experience, that I facilitated with the Lampedusan association Askavusa in Lampedusa, during November 2016 and October 2017. Askavusa is a small, but influential and well networked association, that works in conjunction with other European organisations at the grassroots level, to engage critically with debates around militarisation, borders, and activism. Together with

[1] The original title in Italian is *La Bellezza Ipotecata: un'isola che nasce altrove.*

activists and supporters from all over Europe, their collective aim was to contrast mainstream narratives about the border and migration hub embodied by Lampedusa, and its place of transit for many people seeking to reach Europe by sea.

Consistent with the aims and the mission of Askavusa*,* the theatre experience explored, and subsequently developed, the multifaceted theme of the militarisation of the island of Lampedusa, reflecting the contradictions that the migration industry inflicts on the daily lives of the local people. Our exploration recalled the decennial debate in mobility studies, and the complex socio-political and economic relations among different social actors embedded in the phenomenon of international migration (Harney, 1977; Salt and Stein, 1997; Kyle an Koslowski, 2001; Castles and Miller, 2009; Hernández-León, 2008; Walters, 2010; Gammeltoft-Hansen and Nyberg Sørensen, 2013; Andersson, 2014). Governments, migrants and their networks, humanitarian organizations, NGOs, and employers are all interconnected in the migration industry which "exists and develops in intimate relation to enhanced border controls, legal immigration policies, and migration management procedures" (Gammeltoft-Hansen and Nyberg Sørensen, 2013:6). The migration industry finds its highest expression in the "humanitarian border" (Walters, 2010), where the "uneasy alliance" of *inter alia:* police, the coastguard, the Red Cross, the IOM, and UNHCR, "… mixes reception and rejection, care and coercion" (Andersson, 2014:72).

The considerable deployment of economic resources in border management, detention centres and humanitarian actions has become something tangible for the residents of Lampedusa, who witness the daily "policing and patrolling, caring and rescuing, and observing and knowing" (Andersson, 2014:13) about migrants, their journeys and existences, enacted by police, coastguards, humanitarian NGOs, academics and journalists. As sharply pointed out by Ruben Andersson, "the management of irregular migration is a particular expensive – and lucrative – field within the larger migration industry" (Andersson, 2014:14). One example among many was in 2019, when IOM received only $586 million from the European Commission, to support programs of reintegration, assist border management, and migrants' protection.[2]

Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border comprises not only the substantive research subject, but also one of the outcomes of this thesis. The play opened a window on the daily lives of local people on the border of Europe and revealed otherwise unspoken aspects of the public debate about Lampedusa. The argument running through the play captured the unspoken, and contradictory, aspects of living at the southern border of Europe, and in so doing generating a counter-narrative about life on the border. The play reflects the marginalised, unseen, and underrepresented voices of those whose lives are intimately

[2] Financial Report for the year ended 31 December 2019 - https://governingbodies.iom.int/financial-reports.

connected to the dynamics of the border. Moreover, it presents a deep, and sometimes painful, request to go back to the 'roots' of the island community, to a nostalgic past that probably never existed, but somehow represents for many Lampedusans an imagined golden age of peace and harmony. Ultimately, the request is to go back to mother nature, to be reconnected with the natural elements of life, to once again be respectful of the rhythm of the seasons. The thesis explores this request by reflecting on the feminist appeal to update, expand and reconceive the discussion about peace "in ways which centralise feminist insights into the interrelationships between women, nature, war and peace" (Warren and Cady, 1994:5). For the sake of brevity, and in recognition of its importance to understanding the research, the play is collocated at the beginning of this thesis. My recommendation to the reader is that they read the play first, then the thesis, and only refer back to the play if necessary.

The main argument of this thesis is both conceptual, and methodological. First, the thesis makes visible those features of the border zones which are usually hidden and gives voice to matters unspoken about in public debates. Secondly, in revealing these facets of life at the border, non-traditional research methods of arts-based research were employed through the platform of community-based theatre. In essence, the thesis explores the possibilities granted by community-based theatre, to contribute to the field of peace studies, by facilitating a research process where the subjects of the research itself are engaged in making their voices tangible and heard. In this context, the researcher does not work for, or merely write about, the participants, but rather with them, in a collective and participatory setting that strives to overcome the risk of hierarchical relationships within the research process (Močnik, 2018; Leavy, 2018; Wibben et al., 2019). Consistent with feminist peace research methodologies, this research explored alternative ways of inquiry through the participatory, and arts-based engagement of people, in their everyday corporeal and social experience at the militarised border of Europe (Björkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic, 2021, McLeod and O'Reilly, 2019; Premaratna and Rajkobal, 2021; Väyrynen, 2019; Wibben, 2021). Thus, the account of doing community-based theatre at the border of Europe, reveals in a more grounded way, how social conflicts in complex settings can be understood, analysed, and transformed through a collective participatory artistic approach which enables multiple and inclusive perspectives.

The outcomes of this thesis show that community-based theatre practice is a valid contribution to feminist peace research.[3] As a methodologically feminist and nonviolent practice for exploring conflicts, theatre acts as a dialogical and transformative tool in the hands of communities. In important and nuanced ways, participatory theatre has the capacity to poetically and metaphorically overcome the asymmetrical power relations that a small grassroots association like Askavusa can experience. In addition, its practice can create platforms for opening dialogues, making visible the requests of local communities, strengthening the sense of community and envisaging future scenarios. This research, I would argue, has enhanced arts-based and participatory practices and approaches, and is methodologically consistent with extant feminist scholarship on peace (Wibben et al., 2019; Wibben, 2021; Björkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic, 2021; Premaratna and Rajkobal, 2021; Seppälä et al., 2021). Moreover, this thesis contributes to Finnish feminist peace research (and IR) that draws from arts-based methodologies (Puumala, 2012; Särmä, 2014; Hast, 2018; Vastapuu, 2018; Jauhola, 2020; Seppälä, 2021). There is also an epistemic distinction in such a contribution; I began my journey from an artistic perspective. Thus, I am not a peace scholar who applies arts-based methods, but a professional theatre maker who landed on peace research. Within, and from the vast field of peace research, I chose and applied theatre as a means of methodological exploration.

1.1 Lampedusa, a contradictory hub

In order to understand the context in which this research was conducted, it will be helpful to explain the geographical and historical features of Lampedusa. The municipality of Lampedusa is the southernmost inhabited environment of Italy, including three islands - Lampedusa, Linosa and Lampione, which together form the Pelagie Islands. Although the biggest island of the archipelago, with 20 km² of surface, Lampedusa is a relatively small territory located in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, in the Strait of Sicily, 70 maritime miles from the shores of Tunisia and 140 maritime miles from the Sicilian main island. As the map shows (Figure 1) the Pelagie Islands are closer to African shores than to the main Sicilian island.

[3] The term Feminist Peace Research was revived by Tiina Vaittinen, in her doctoral thesis *The Global Biopolitical Economy of Needs* (2017), in relation with global health and feminist ethics of care. When re-establishing the term, Vaittinen's work drew on the pivotal feminist contributions of Barbara Roberts (1984), Elise Boulding (1989), Sara Ruddick (1990), Berenice Fisher and Joan Claire Tronto (1990), to mention a few examples. Concurrently, she initiated and established the Feminist Peace Research Network (FPRN) which has been flourishing as a new emerging field within peace and conflict studies, involving scholars from all around the world.

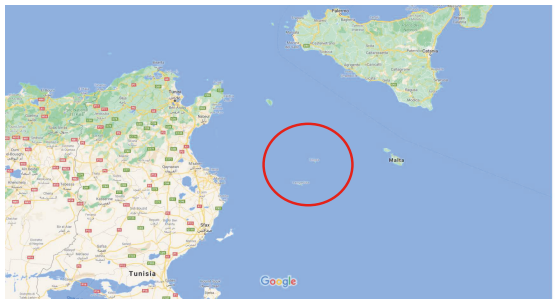

Figure 1. Strait of Sicily, North-East Tunisian coast, Sicily, Pelagie Islands (in the red circle) and other islands (source GoogleMap)

The name Lampedusa does not mean anything precise and has uncertain origins; it is perhaps related to the Italian word *lampo* (lighting) and to the effects of lightning in the frequent storms in the Mediterranean Sea. In those weather conditions, the lightning may have made the island visible even from long distances, thus becoming a safe landing place for sailors in troubles (Nesti, 2016). Similar ambiguity surrounds the 'identity' of Lampedusa. Many authors have underlined that geologically the island belongs to the African continent, while politically, it is part of the Sicilian Region and belongs to the Italian State and thus the European Union. However, as Joseph Pugliese has sharply pointed out, the whole Italian "South and its islands must be seen as also culturally North African [and Middle Eastern]" (Pugliese, 2009:665). This dual contested status of the island has played an important role in its history and destiny (Taranto, 2016; Nesti, 2016; Orsini, 2015). Limiting the identity of Lampedusa into a Euro-political and Afro-geological dichotomy, however, fails to grasp the complex cultural features and influences that Lampedusa, and the whole Italian South, have inherited during millennia of history and encounters (Pugliese, 2009).

When Ludovico Ariosto published his well-known poem *Orlando Furioso* at the beginning of sixteenth century, he decided to collocate the long and crucial battle between Christians and Saracens in Lampedusa, as if, already in that time, the island represented a place of encounters, a symbol of intercultural conflict and a gate between different worlds (Ariosto, 1966). In fact, archeologic discoveries in the 1970s, revealed how the island was already inhabited during the Neolithic Age, and for many centuries had been a trading hub for those populations of Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans living on the opposing shores of Mediterranean Sea. Trade and war have been companions in the history of these populations, all of which left their impression in the history of Lampedusa (Taranto, 2016).

The identity of Lampedusa has thus been marked by its strategic position for military actions. Since its colonization by Ferdinand II of Bourbon in 1843, the island, a long

history of detention began among many military and political strategies later in the second half of the 19th Century after the national unification plan of Italy (Pugliese, 2009; Vecchi, 2016). During the Fascist Era, Lampedusa was a detention island for political enemies, while during the Second World War it was fortified, and equipped with numerous naval and anti-aircraft batteries (Taranto, 2016). Within the Italo-American military alliance from 1972 to 1994, Lampedusa was host to a NATO base, and during the 1980s it was directly involved in the American-Libyan conflict. Fabrizio Coisson noted in his newspaper article in 1982, that Lampedusa was sarcastically called with Pantelleria[4] "the Italian Falklands".

During this period, thanks to the emerging political and mediatic attention on the island, Lampedusa became known by a broader audience, for whom images, reportages and interviews magnified the island located in the southernmost point of Italy. Mass tourism came to the island, causing several changes in the traditional economies based, until then, on fisheries and sponge fishing industry. Many Lampedusans converted their activities to serve tourism, and in a few years the profile of the island had radically changed (Orsini, 2015). The lack of a clear plan for infrastructural development and for commercial activities had permitted the free appearance of buildings and new constructions without any concern for the risks posed to the local ecosystem of the island. In response, a Natural Reserve was established in 1995 with the scope to preserve the territory from the pauperization and full exploitation of resources (Taranto, 2016).

On my way to Lampedusa in October 2015, I had several expectations about the look of the island and how being there might feel. Since I was familiar with other small Italian and Sicilian islands, I was expecting to find a place where humans were able to interact with nature in harmonious ways. I was probably also influenced by Lampedusa's reputation as a land known for its beautiful beaches and natural landscapes. However, those expectations were soon dispelled. The urban structure and general environment I found upon my arrival was more than disappointing, in fact, I felt an overwhelming sense of unease, which at first, I could not decode.

The entire town of Lampedusa is basically concentrated on the South-eastern side of the island, between the airport and the two harbours. The urban structure is made up of a succession of anonymous blocks of low houses divided by narrow streets; many of the buildings are abandoned or in decay.[5] I did not find anything charming in the centre of the town, at least from an architectural point of view. Furthermore, despite the short

[4] Pantelleria is another Sicilian island located in the Strait of Sicily in the Mediterranean Sea, 62 maritime miles southwest of Sicily and 37 maritime miles east of the Tunisian coast.

[5] Afterwards, I discovered that Lampedusa had (and still has) a severe problem with building regulations. Since there is no zoning plan for the town, many people have built their houses without following any rules, freely, and those who wanted to build legally had to face contorted and unclear bureaucratic procedures.

distances across the island, everybody in Lampedusa travelled by car or motorbike, creating heavy and polluted air. When I arrived, the tourist season had already ended, and I could only imagine the air pollution when the island was full of over 12,000 tourists,[6] who consequently increased the number of in-use vehicles. In contrast to the travellers' reviews which elected Lampedusa as one of the most beautiful touristic destinations in the world, my sense of the urban setting of the island echoed the one Joseph Pugliese reported in 2009 (Pugliese, 2009). His disorientation was grounded in the heterotopia[7] that Lampedusa embodied; being simultaneously a detention island for refugees from the so-called Global South looking for a better future in Europe and a paradisiac tourist destination for wealthy tourists from the so-called Global North (Pugliese, 2009; Vecchi, 2016). My research, situated across this dualistic and contradictory identities, further explores certain contradictions about the well-known Mediterranean island.

In 1998, as migration policies became stricter towards the flow of migrants trying to reach Europe, the Italian government established its first reception centre for migrants located in the airport area, called Cpta (temporary reception and support centre). Thereafter, the territory of Lampedusa witnessed the rapid development of military forces and infrastructures, all related to migration policies, and the reinforcement of patrols in the Mediterranean Sea. Thus, in roughly two decades, the reception centre in the island had changed its location, its name and functions, all reflecting the decisions framed by the logic of national and European policies on migration issues, and the consequent patrolling and migration policies at the border of Europe (Cuttitta, 2012). During this period, the centre was moved to different locations, always peripheral and marginalized from the centre of the town, always remaining invisible to the urban setting (Mountz, 2015a; Brambilla and Pötsch, 2017; Catania, 2015). Beyond the different names and functions – Cpta[8] (1998), Cie[9] (2008), Hotspot[10] (2015) – the existence of a centre

[6] The official resident population in Lampedusa at the beginning of 2016 counted 6,569 inhabitants – "Demography in Figures", Istituto Nazionale di Statistica (ISTAT), last modified January 1, 2016, demo.istat.it/pop2016/index.html.

[7] Heterotopia is a particular concept developed by philosopher Michel Foucault to describe specific spaces and representations that entail simultaneously different meanings or relationships to other spaces and representations. These relationships are not intuitively connected, and instead are disturbing, incompatible, contradictory, or transforming. Examples of heterotopias are ships, cemeteries, bars, brothels, prisons (Foucault, 1980, 1986).

[8] In conformity to the so-called Turco-Napolitano Italian Law, n 40/1998.

[9] In conformity to the Legislative Decree n 92/2008.

[10] In conformity to the European Agenda on Migration 2015-2020, which had the aim "to address immediate challenges and equip the EU with the tools to better manage migration in the medium and long term in the areas of irregular migration, borders, asylum and legal migration" - https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration_en.

for migrants has had a central role in reinforcing the border in Lampedusa and differentiating between Italian/European citizens and noncitizens/refugees/migrants. This amplifies the fact that for many, Lampedusa is not Italian territory, but a geographical and social limbo between two statuses and identities (Cuttitta, 2012; Dines, Montagna and Ruggiero, 2015).

Due to its peculiar geographical and political location, Lampedusa embodies an iconic space of encounters and a symbol of borders - at least from a Euro-African perspective. According to Paolo Cuttitta, the process of borderization of Lampedusa – in which militarisation and securitization play a significant role – have been tangible since 1990s, as a "relational disposition of bodies and objects (…) in specific places of the island and in the surrounding waters" (Cuttitta, 2012:18, translated from Italian). More recently, European and national politics as well as media rhetoric, have chosen Lampedusa as one of the stages that simultaneously represents the securitization of Europe from the migratory influx, and the humanitarian actions to protect those escaping from the atrocities of wars and misery.

Securitization at the European border has been characterised as a reaction towards the 'threat' represented by flows of migration (Wæver and Buzan, 2000; Buzan et al., 1998) whilst the militarisation of the social and environmental texture of society is its consequent strategical aspect (Enloe, 2004). However, securitization at the border produces the counter-effect of creating insecurity in society (Bigo, 2014; 2001; Katz, 2007), without solving the perceived 'problem'. As Anitta Kynsilehto puts it, "… despite the increasingly technologized attempts to govern and control human mobility" (Kynsilehto, 2014:142), migration flows cannot be stopped, and militarising territories offers little chance of providing security (Bigo, 2014). Moreover, in Lampedusa, the militarisation process is accompanied by the parallel phenomenon of an increasing establishment and settlement of humanitarian organizations (NGOs) which prioritize migrants' rights (Andersson, 2014; Gammeltoft-Hansen and Nyberg Sørensen, 2013; Walters, 2010). This phenomenon amplifies the perception of a large presence of outsider workers at the border of Europe, while contributing to the nurturing of a project-oriented-job system which increases economic dependency and precarity for workers (Pascucci, 2019).

The most visible effect of militarisation is undoubtedly the permanent presence of nine different military units on the island. Alongside the 'ordinary' presence of the Coast Guard, the Carabinieri, the Italian Police and the Fiscal Police, Lampedusa also hosts bases for the Italian Air Force, the Centre for Interforce Intelligence,[11] the Italian Army,

[11] Which produces military and security information for the Air Force, Army and Navy.

the Italian Navy and Frontex.[12] Additionally, when an emergency or an exceptional event occurs, other specialist units operate sporadically in Lampedusa. All these bodies own, or use, military infrastructures and means of transportation around the island. Nine radar devices have been installed as part of the security strategy at the border of Europe and within the militarisation process of Lampedusa, which serve the same purpose of scanning the surrounding waters of Lampedusa, but they are not coordinated by the different military forces.

While the militarised border narrative has been broadly recorded, little attention has been paid to the residents' views. For some parts of the local community, the militarisation of the island resonated with growing concerns about possible health effects linked to electromagnetic waves, that was further amplified by the scarcity of health services, and the difficulty of accessing specialized healthcare on Lampedusa. The over production of electromagnetic wave emissions was already matter of concern among local people, when during the spring 2017, a plan to install three new radar devices in West Cape was presented to the community of Lampedusa. For many years, the main voice of this citizens' discontent has been the Askavusa collective. As the next chapter will show, the collective has been critical of the situation on the island, not only the military presence itself and the radar installations' emissions, but also of its connection to the severe lack of public services and infrastructure that the local community has suffered from for many decades. Moreover, the military occupation has taken over land usurping the natural rights of locals to walk freely and enjoy nature; a state of affairs which fairly rapidly became a new norm, changing the local economy and creating economic distortions and dependencies in the society. All these issues are the focal topics in the collective play *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border*, which is explored throughout the thesis, whereas the migration industry is in the background of the picture, ever present but not explicitly mentioned as such.

1.2 Conducting research in Lampedusa

On the 3rd of October 2013, a boat with 550 people on board capsized about one maritime mile from Lampedusa's shores. 366 persons mainly from Eritrea lost their lives. This disaster was visible in the global media; for the first time, hundreds of dead bodies were seen on the European shore, not just rumoured or spoken about. Media and public political discourse amplified this event transforming it into an iconic tragedy. After that

[12] Frontex is the European Border and Coast Guard Agency established in 2004 by the EU members States to assist and patrol the external borders of the European Union and "safeguard the area of freedom, security and justice" of the internal territories of the European Union (https://frontex.europa.eu/).

disaster, several researchers, writers, artists, and curious tourists visited the island for professional and non-professional reasons. I was one of them. In October 2015, I went to Lampedusa with Dr. Karina Horsti as her research assistant on her project about the commemoration of deaths at the border.[13] During that first field trip, I had the opportunity to discuss the tragedy, and the general living conditions for the inhabitants of Lampedusa, with local people and Askavusa members. At that time, the outsiders' presence of journalists and researchers was so considerable, that it was impossible not to speculate on it, and I began to wonder about its effect on the island and the islanders.

Undoubtedly, Lampedusa has become a privileged observatory for analysing and discussing human rights, border patrolling policies and migration phenomenon at the border of Europe from different disciplinary perspectives (Cuttitta, 2012; Andersson, 2014; Pugliese, 2010; De Genova, 2017; Nicolosi, 2016; Proglio and Odasso, 2018; Kynsilehto, 2014; Mountz, 2010; Tazzioli and Walters, 2016; Horsti, forthcoming). The strategic position of the island, and its role in European border policies, have contributed to its existence as an over-researched and over-performed site. Recently, both academic output and artistic productions about Lampedusa have considerably grown. Between 2014 and 2020 alone, more than ten books have been published about this Mediterranean Italian island, and this excludes academic work.[14]

Generally speaking, "places become over-researched as an outcome of the over-research of a particular population" (Neal et al., 2016: 493). In the case of Lampedusa, the local community, *in stricto sensu*, is not the main cause of its magnetism for researchers and artists. Instead, it is the presence of migrants – as a peculiar transient community, whose character is ever changing – which has been the focus of attention for humanitarian activists, NGOs, political personalities and parties, artists, and researchers from all around the world. In addition, the local community of Lampedusa has been involved in public rhetoric for its role as a good host; one that fell to, and has been publicly played, by the same few people for several years (Baracco, 2015; Orsini, 2015).

The breadth of artistic creation has served to amplify the image of Lampedusa as a 'welcoming island', by celebrating the hospitality and humanitarian soul of its inhabitants. In this sense, *Fuocoammare* (2016) and *Terraferma* (2011) are exemplary movies. These films sensitively depict local people with all their contradictions and paradoxes, as a people caught between a rising tourism economy, the desperation of migrants, the humanitarian attitude towards the Other, and the wildness of the surroundings. Among many other books, Marco Aime's, *L'Isola del non arrive* (2018),

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[13] 'Remembering Migration: Memory politics of forced migration in mediated societies' (2014-2019), funded by Academy of Finland.

[14] Aime (2018), Bartolo (2018), Bartolo and Tilotta (2016), Camarrone (2014), de Kerangal (2016), Enia (2017), Gambino and Fava (2020), Kirby (2016), Mosca Mondadori, Cacciatore and Triulzi (2014), Nesti (2016), Nicolosi (2016), Palmieri (2016), Taranto (2016).

writes of the Lampedusan inhabitants views, and how they perceive the migration phenomenon and handle the related issues that confront them. The focus and reason which provokes and underpins these writings is the migration issue, and the recent disaster. Somehow, people have been visiting Lampedusa for investigations, but their focus has not been those living with the contradictory border. In this respect, the over-research has had an impact on the local inhabitants of Lampedusa as well, ensuring they have been over-exposed to a permanent external presence on the island.

Over-research creates significant difficulties when seeking to actively involve local people in projects. The volume of unwanted intrusion elicits reluctance from local inhabitants, stemming from a not unreasonable scepticism of how they will benefit from the project (Clark, 2008). As the next chapter will show in greater detail, I also found it initially difficult to connect and find a common understanding with the collective for a collaboration. Even when some of the Askavusa's members agreed to participate in the project, it was not easy to organize workshops remotely from Finland. Later, during the first workshop, one of the participants told me about a project she had been thinking of for a few years, and how the municipality took her idea and made it with another (not local) association. Her experience made room for understanding the reasons behind her fear and suspicion towards 'outsider' projects. A common perception was that local proposals were first neglected, but often later stolen by some outsider actors, who had the economic and political power to usurp a local, less powerful, association such as Askavusa.

Being over-researched can nevertheless bring some positive consequences on the lives of local people: when the light is on, a variety of unexpected landscapes can also be illuminated. As the migration phenomenon became more tangible on the island, mostly because of its mediatization, several people with different purposes visited Lampedusa, and got to know the collective. Researchers, activists, journalists, and alternative tourists began collaborating with Askavusa members, who were now more eager to receive them and to share knowledge, praxis, and plan new projects together. In the words of one of the activists: "even if Askavusa would have decided not open its doors to the world, the world came to knock on the door of Askavusa". Over time, Askavusa's network grew, and their projects, actions and activities also began to spread outside the island, reaching places and people around Europe.

> You can have an initiative which happens in Zurich, where we will have a series of companions with whom we have already organized several deeds, and then when there is something in Brussels, there will be few of them present (interview with Maurizio, November 2015, translated from Italian).

Obviously, when a community is overly requested to participate or talk, it might be difficult to engage them with new projects or collaborations, especially if the previous experiences have not contributed to achieving some social, economic or personal benefit.

> A more systematic exploration of the issue is likely to be crucial to the future of the research relationship as the relationships that researchers form in the present will shape the relationships that they are able to develop in the future (Clark, 2008:954).

That problem was palpable in the beginning of my relationship with Askavusa members, and I began to appreciate the heavy burden they carry because of the continuous interest and attention on Lampedusa.

Before I started to work with Askavusa, many questions resonated in my mind. I explored my thoughts, both individually and collectively with the activists, in order to critically define and understand my role as researcher and theatre practitioner (Wibben et al., 2019). Uppermost in my reflections were: what consequences of my research would impact upon the local people and their lives? How would the collaboration with Askavusa impact upon me and my research? What, if any, cultural, economic, and political benefits could local people expect by participating in this research? Does research confer any benefit at all to the local community? Would my research help them take Lampedusa in the direction they aspire to?

The concept of social change itself is sensitive: how far can it be claimed that a particular change benefits local people? In the case of the local economy, for example, this has changed drastically in recent decades, from one based on fisheries and tourism, to one based on a permanent military presence. In my experience with Askavusa members the problems of being over-researched, over-projected, over-exploited arise quite often. Nevertheless, some of the material produced hitherto by artists in Lampedusa have not left the locals untouched, the implications of these earlier experiences are also underlined by the choice to participate a project. Therefore, one must consider the engagement of local people as a rare and precious resource. When I decided to embark on this research project, I expected that creating a safe space for mutual understanding and trust with the activists would have been difficult. It is arguable that the over-researched and over-performed site, the 'over-ness' if you will, has produced a tiredness in Lampedusa.

Conducting participatory research, in the form of a community-based theatre workshop, competed with the participants' desire on occasion to spend a day off when the days were warmer and sunnier. Thus, I needed to acknowledge that field trips were, by necessity, going to be characterised by uncertainty and flexibility – that the research process was complex and non-linear. In general, working with activists was not easy to organize; activism was carried out during their free time and on top of their everyday

jobs, and was both voluntary and time-and-energy consuming. Doing theatre was thus going to be a luxury for many of them. During the course of my stay, I learnt the importance of having respectful and open communication with the participants, to negotiate continuously about the process, the direction and the meaning of doing theatre together; and I also discovered how flexible and patient I can be.

1.3 Research questions

In the mainstream media, the Lampedusan people are usually mentioned only in relation to migrancy, and are commonly depicted as welcoming folk, ready to help with acts of solidarity and humanitarianism. I was intrigued by what kind of issues were behind these idyllic media portraits, and what the daily lives of the Lampedusan people looked like behind the constant attention of media, researchers, and artists. Because of the way the media projects some narratives over others, pre-conceptions might be held about certain places and communities. It is often the case, however, that people have different perspectives. When I met Askavusa members, I got to know their opinions, activities, and proposals for the island. Accordingly, I started investigating how the 'spectacularizing' of the island obscured conflictual issues about the everyday lives of people living in and visiting Lampedusa. Thus, I questioned if those unseen and unspoken conflictual issues – what we later called contradictions in our community-based theatre experience – could be (re)rendered and transformed through theatre practice, whilst avoiding media or political exploitation. I asked myself and Askavusa members whether there was a space for a grassroots, alternative and independent theatre creation that could follow such a trajectory. The common answer was 'yes, let us try!'

The thesis, theoretically and methodologically, addresses the primary question:

> *1. How can community-based theatre be used to critically explore militarisation at the border?*

Empirically, it considers the normative question:

> *2. How can community-based theatre as a feminist practice of co-production of knowledge and conflict transformation bring a new perspective to Peace Research?*

In relation to these questions, this thesis explores how theatre can poetically and metaphorically transcend asymmetrical power relations in border zones. It shows that community-based theatre practice has the capacity to reveal the invisible features at the border of Europe that have been created by the migration industry and the process of

militarisation. The act of revealing is the core craft at work in this thesis, and it is visible throughout the chapters.

The thesis makes a meaningful contribution to the discipline of Peace and Conflict Research, by providing an innovative research methodology that combines the use of theoretical and practical values in the field of conflict transformation. Conflict transformation here is taken to mean the importance of looking at the relational aspects of parties involved in a conflict and focusing on the process towards dialogue, change and imagination of new scenarios. In this context, conflict becomes an opportunity for learning and changing reality around us. While conflict is sometimes unavoidable and impossible to solve, transformation can occur in the form of community-based art practice. In this sense, the accent of conflict transformation is in the process itself. The conflict that this thesis takes into consideration is the heterotopic everyday life at the European border, which is simultaneously a highly militarized context, humanitarian border, detention island and paradisiac touristic destination (Pugliese, 2009; Cuttitta, 2012; Mountz, 2015a; Orsini, 2015). This paradoxical identity of Lampedusa becomes a conflict in everyday life that can be transformed by virtue of becoming visible.

Through a participatory theatre experience, the meaning of violence(s) in the context of a militarised society is expanded by co-producing collective knowledge and understanding. Further, the proposed contribution is methodological, as I developed a shared model of producing knowledge in a cooperative setting, that I call 'co-production of knowledge', referring to the feminist researcher Sophie Harman (2019). The innovation lies in the fact that the voices and perspectives of local people were at the centre of this research; their corporeal, emotional and intellectual presence made visible what occurs at the border of Europe. Moreover, the contribution opens perceptions on what violence is and how it acts in the social, economic, and cultural setting of Lampedusa.

1.4 Research material

During three trips to Lampedusa (2015, 2016, 2017), I collected and produced various research materials which reveal how the ongoing militarisation process, and the migration industry, have created a social concern for the island's community. However, the material is complex, multifaceted and not homogeneous, and has varying degrees of importance.

The primary material for this research, and one of the results of it, is the collective play *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border* (the original title in Italian *La Bellezza Ipotecata: un'isola che nasce altrove*). The play guides the thesis. Fragments taken from its scenes introduce every chapter and the voices from which underpins the narrative of the following

discussions. The collective play shapes the structure of the thesis, and with the support of the other research material, allows me to read back and consider the research questions. My analysis focuses on the main topics that emerge in the play, which are discussed in combination with the different disciplines I refer to, and the methodological approach I have applied during the workshops.

The second set of research materials are my field and work notes written in the form of diary. In 2015, I stayed in Lampedusa for two weeks and worked as a research assistant to Dr. Karina Horsti. During that field trip, I was able to observe and participate in several activities and events organized in Lampedusa. We primarily attended the program related to the commemoration of 3rd of October disaster, when many of the survivors came from Northern Europe to participate in collaboration with several schools as well. As it was my first visit in the island, it was a great chance for me in terms of research insights, experiences, and discoveries. Later, in 2016 I stayed in Lampedusa on my own for three weeks, mainly to facilitate our first theatre workshop. During those weeks, my diary was a mixture of observations about the experience itself and about the artistic process. In 2017, during my third trip, I worked again on Karina's project, not only as a research assistant, but also as a production assistant for the 'Remembering Lampedusa' film project, which was partially shot over that period. When the film crew left, I stayed a further week for our second theatre workshop and completed the writing process of our collective play. During this last trip I also wrote a work diary and field notes. Research material in the context of theatre-based methods may "include drawn and written notes, audio and visual recordings of theatre practices and theatre-making processes, and other co-produces outputs from development" (Raynor, 2018:2). In addition to this, the thesis explores the arts-based research process also through the lens of the 'expanded research material' that I/we produced. Moreover, my observations in the work diary are also written in the form of poems; thus, the artistic approach emerges in my way of writing notes as well (see Rajan et al., 2021).

The third set of research materials are semi-structured interviews and informal discussions with Askavusa activists and supporters. These were conducted during the field trips to Lampedusa as well as online from Finland through Skype. The interviews focused on the ongoing militarisation process in Lampedusa, the activities organized by Askavusa and the participation of the local community in the activities of the association. The interviews were all conducted in Italian. Many of them were taped and transcribed by me. Then, I translated in English the extracts I use in the book. Very few discussions were not entirely recorded, in those instances notes were taken.

1.5 Structure of the chapters

This dissertation eschews the traditional structure for this type of thesis. Instead, the eyes and ears of the reader are taken to the border embodied by Lampedusa in a continuous dialogue with the collective experience of community-based theatre. It is through this, that the analysis of the research material provides answer(s) to the research questions. In so doing, *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border* shapes the structure of the thesis by drawing on salient elements of its scenes. At the beginning of every chapter, an extract from a scene introduces the topic(s) that are discussed in the body of the chapter alongside the extant scholarship and relevant sources of evidence. Concomitantly, the chapter titles echo the titles of scenes from the play. Not all the scenes are used for extracts and the titles – although all are included in the discussion throughout the thesis.

The titles are multi-layered metaphors and serve as gates to this piece of arts-based research. Simply by the association of ideas, the use of metaphor can evoke different meanings without any simultaneous intercession, they are also nests of multi-meanings, where opposites can coexist and share space in the imaginary and real world. Citing Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Patricia Leavy recalls the power of metaphor as something that, "… is not characteristic of language alone, but it is pervasive in human thought and action" (Leavy, 2019:6). Metaphors perform like collages or quilted fabrics, giving us opportunities to look at things with a different eye, connecting and rearranging elements together in unexpected ways (Sylvester, 2009; Rajan et al., 2021). Perhaps more significantly, they are windows to realities; they can be half opened and peeked into, or they can be flung wide open and lead us to a deeper level of cognitive exploration. They do operate in the structure of the book, as they are "not simply poetic or rhetorical embellishments, but powerful devices for shaping perception and experience" (Owen, 2001: xv).

Taking account of the above, the titles of the scenes are used as titles and metaphors for the chapters, to represent, and show to the reader, how the process has opened different gates within and between layers. On one hand, there are themes perceived as concrete, real, and tangible such as habitations, sea, food, nature, and childhood, which are the themes from the daily life of Lampedusan people (like anyone else), and ones we faced throughout the collective theatre experience and long discussions. On the other hand, those themes embody wider visions and aspirations. What is housing? What does habitation mean? What does having the opportunity to live in a house mean? In English, home and house have different meanings, while in Italian language the same understanding does not exist: *casa* means both the place where one lives and one's 'home'. Throughout the book, the reader will encounter discussions, blurred definitions,

and paradoxes, as the core theme developed during the community-based theatre experience was the nature of 'contradictions in Lampedusa'.[15]

For each chapter, the reasons for choosing a specific title/scene with that particular chapter, which may be intuitive, imaginative or more elaborated, are explicitly spelt out. Thus, in every chapter, I discuss the key topics of that scene and the main function the chapter serves in relation to the research questions. A continuous dialogue is woven into the discussion between the analysis of the process of co-production of knowledge through the community-based theatre experiences, and the analysis of the play and its contents. This dialogical way of proceeding will underline the relevance of collective practice and exploring certain topics through theatre. In fact, the play speaks to those issues that arose in the workshops. Without the participatory workshops, writing the play, would have been extremely different.

This chapter has given a brief overview of the research project, the context of Lampedusa, my positionality in that saturated field, and the research material produced and collected during the research that forms the main chapters. The extract which opens this chapter, as I mentioned at the beginning, is the 'Prologue' of *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border*. There is a self-evident connection between a prologue and an introduction in that they both consists of similar functions and actions to accomplish the task of introducing and opening a reader or viewer to something else. Moreover, the main topic of the 'Prologue', which is written in a form of poem, is Lampedusa, depicted as a dependant and fragile baby. Similarly, in this chapter, I have dedicated two sections to presenting the reader the context of Lampedusa and its fragilities as an over-researched site.

The opening extract of Chapter 2 is from the scene 'The camping area', where a young activist bravely faces a General who is establishing a military camp on top of an archaeological area. The asymmetrical relationship between the activist and the General reflects the asymmetry of power embodied in the militarisation of the border, where the local inhabitants perceive that they are losing control of their own land to military colonisation. Chapter 2 presents the cultural association Askavusa and discusses how this asymmetry impacts upon their activities and decisions. Askavusa members and supporters, those who participated in the community-based theatre experience I facilitated during my visits to Lampedusa in 2016 and 2017, are also introduced. The blurred meanings of activism and citizenship, alongside the contradictions inscribed at the border of Europe, are filtered through the term 'camping', which is used as a metaphorical exemplification, arguably referring to three interpretations: military training, leisure activity and survival practice. Askavusa members and supporters are presented as pseudonyms, reflecting the ethical issues surrounding anonymity

[15] And that was also the first provisional title we chose for the play.

(informant consent, sharing produced information) and the roles I adopted during the whole project.

The three chapters that follow (3, 4 and 5) form the core conceptual and methodological grounds for the thesis. They work together in explaining how community-based theatre can be used to critically explore militarisation at the border. The third chapter begins with a monologue by the teacher from the scene 'Schools'. In the play, this scene is primarily focused on the critically poor infrastructural conditions of the public schools in Lampedusa. The whole scene, inspired by an accident that occurred in 2014, is quite dramatic. Without any preliminary communication, either to families or teachers, the municipality organized a charge proof on the roof of the school while the pupils were inside the building. As the test consisted of shaking the building to check its resistance, some pieces of wall fell in the classrooms, creating panic and concern among pupils and teachers. This event is captured in monologues, presented as fragments from each of the character's lives, and spoken from a non-specific time and space.[16] Once again, metaphors matter. The voices of the characters raise different perspectives about the same issue, and the chapter reflects the interdisciplinary approach that combines the three concepts, drawn from different disciplines, yet all under the umbrella of Peace Research. Indeed, the conceptual pillars of the research are introduced and discussed in this chapter, namely: 'military geographies' (from Critical Geography), 'slow violence' (from Environmental Justice and Humanities) and 'moral imagination' (from Peace Research). While military geographies and slow violence are substantially thematic pillars, in related concepts throughout the play and in the research material more generally, moral imagination becomes a theoretical and methodological pillar, which is used to connect arts-based research and feminist peace research. It is the final key with which to unlock the methodological innovation that is presented in Chapter 5.

A short monologue from the scene 'Houses' introduces chapter 4. A citizen is telling of a man who, after being forced to leave his home on multiple occasions, decided to build his own place from the junk he found. This chapter defines the methodological framework as one within the realm of 'feminist arts-based peace research', where art-based methods are fused with the tradition of feminist peace research. It is in this methodological space where our collective work, and specifically my place in it, is situated. While in general our community-based theatre experience can be collocated in the field of applied theatre, the research methods belong to the realm of arts-based research. Moreover, the way applied theatre practices correspond with feminist peace research, especially regarding their potential in activism, encouraging reflection, and promoting dialogue, are considered in greater detail. This allows the argument that

[16] We decided not to identify any specific places and times, and there are no precise stage directions in the scene.

community-based theatre is a feminist practice of conflict transformation at the militarised border of Europe, to be developed. Chapter 4 closes with a return to the metaphor of dwelling from the scene 'Houses', in connection with the praxis of co-production of knowledge.

The stage directions from 'The citizen and the sea' open Chapter 5, which focuses on the specific methodology developed for our community-based theatre experience. The genealogy of this scene is emblematic for our collective experience of co-production of knowledge. Thus, Chapter 5 clarifies what, and how, our co-production of knowledge was developed and produced. This chapter outlines the main methodological contribution to feminist peace research through a detailed elaboration of the 'four steps strategy'. It shows how community-based theatre and peace research can be combined, and how community-based theatre can work as a conflict transformation tool.

All the chapters in the book use empirical evidence. However, Chapter 6, 'Asparagus', converses on the (in)visibilities behind and within the militarisation of Lampedusa, by interlacing the community-based theatre experience, the collective dramaturgy in dialogue with the relevant literature. It discusses the presence-and-not-presence of military personnel, the connotations of space, the occupation of the land and its consequences.

The final chapter, 'Epilogue – Lampedusa (to be) re-born', presents the findings of this research, by summarizing the key outcomes in relation to the two research questions and exploring my reflections for further explorations. I outline the problems and potentialities of conducting feminist arts-based research in the highly militarised context of Lampedusa, explaining how the four steps strategy contributes to the realisation of conflict transformation through the lens of the four disciplines of moral imagination. Finally, suggestions are explored about how applied theatre practices can contribute to the field of peace research as an arts-based approach in general. Advocating for greater interdisciplinary developments across theatre and conflict transformation, I argue that this can make a difference in everyday contexts, where the richness emerging from other fields provides sustenance rather than threat.

2 THE CAMPING AREA – PARTICIPANTS, INFORMANTS AND RESEARCHER

> Activist: - (…) He tells me: *We've also suggested removing these piles of rock, using them to build a barracks later on*… These piles of rock?!
>
> Do you know General Fuckface what those rocks are? They are *dammuso*. You thought they were just ruins, and rubble to be removed, the perfect spot to build a seaside hotel one day, as many others have already done. But the *dammuso* is something much more, dear General Sir. It is a symbol of the meeting of the educated, mathematic Arabic culture and that of rural Sicily. Yes, I know that to you *Arabic* brings to mind Arab – Muslim – Islam – Terrorist. But you know what, my dear General? Here, deep down, we are all Arabs in the end. You too. Yes, you too, whether you admit it or not. *Un mare, un popolo*: One sea, one people. And we just happen to find ourselves in the middle of this sea. So, I really don't understand, Mister General, I really don't understand how you can distinguish between *yes, you can*, and *no, you can't. You can enter*, and *no, you don't have enough horrors to escape from. I am sorry, please go home, go back to where you came from.*
>
> (Extract from 'The camping area', *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border*, 2017)

This chapter introduces those who participated in the two workshops in Lampedusa and outlines the relational context of our journey together. More specifically, the positionalities of Askavusa members and supporters are explored in relation to the institutional and military powers they confront. Aware of the asymmetrical powers they face in their struggle, Askavusa members have attempted to overcome them by creating international, delocalised - glocalised - networks of collaboration with other associations and organizations for variant projects and actions. The concern here is the context of the thesis from the viewpoint of Askavusa in relation to the main research questions. This dynamic informs how the asymmetrical power relations are depicted and embodied at the border of Europe, and constitutes the background against which the play unfolds, and how the research findings are interpreted in the following chapters.

First, Askavusa is considered through its genealogy and composition in connection with the militarised context of the island. Then the participants in the community-based theatre workshops are introduced, the main informants, and an account of the relationship that was established between myself and the group. The variety of their positions and roles, and their contribution to the co-production of knowledge is discussed in a collective context. For clarification, when I use the term 'the community',

I am referring to those people around Askavusa, who are drawn from a wider spectrum of people than those living in Lampedusa. Consequently, the community I refer to here, is not representative of the entire community of Lampedusa, and should not be taken as such, nor do they themselves have homogeneous positions regarding every issue related to Lampedusa. I decided to assume their gaze, only to reveal the daily contradictions in their positionalities, which are marginalised and often blurred by other issues in relation to the island (e.g. the migration phenomenon) framed as they are in the militarised context of the border. However, the positionalities of Askavusa also present differences and multitudes, the essence of which has been captured collectively, through the lens of *Flotsam and Jetsam and the Border*.

Secondly, I consider the development of the association, the activities and the local collaborations they have participated in, and in particular the 'strategies of activism at the border' that Askavusa have initiated. Significant amongst these is the symbolic practice of collecting migrants' lost items from the beaches and the dump of Lampedusa. The positions taken by some Askavusa members changed markedly during the course of the research. The discussion reflects the lack of homogeneity and coherence, and to some extent their involvement with the networks they worked with, and the activities they were engaged in. The notion of activism at the border necessarily coalesces with other issues, such as visibility and empowerment through networking with other associations and organizations. However, Askavusa were not only interested in engaging with border issues, but also in understanding and challenging the structures of power that life at the border entails. From the critical perspective of Askavusa, the migration industry produces distorted and contradictory daily realities in Lampedusa. For instance, the presence of a highly surveilled and securitised border simultaneously co-exists with the free flow of tourists. Similarly, the migration management neglects the needs of the local community, by choosing to allocate funds to some issues and not others. Thus, the daily realities of the local community both co-exist with these mentioned dimensions but are simultaneously independently of them.

Thirdly, the creative process which gave rise to the scene 'The camping area', is considered in terms of the actual dialogue and an analysis of the scene itself. In contrast to other scenes, 'The camping area' developed from informal conversations with Askavusa members who did not actively participate in the workshops. The genealogy of this scene illustrates the fact that the artistic process of co-producing knowledge is not one that can be stretched *a priori* in a linear and rigid framework, but instead is nurtured by unexpected and spontaneous moments like chats, or relaxing moments where the meaning attached to everyday life in Lampedusa emerges from the words of lived experience. As noted above, the threefold meaning of 'camping' - as leisure time activity, military training, and emergency solution – emerges in this section as emblematic of the frictions that were entangled in the humanitarian border of Lampedusa.

The discussions concerned with the activities of Askavusa are drawn primarily from the period when the fieldwork for this research was conducted: between 2015 and 2017. The materials referred to in this chapter are largely related to the interviews conducted with Askavusa members, my own observation during the field trips, and the scene 'The camping area'. While many of the participants have given full consent to use their real names, others did not openly express a preference. Whilst some publications are referred to with names visible, to avoid any ethical conflict all remaining identities are protected by the use of pseudonyms and, where necessary, disguising elements of their testimony to protect their privacy. It is important to vulnerable organisations like Askavusa, that the privacy of its members and supporters are protected. As I recognize myself as a feminist peace researcher, it is crucial for me to treat "research participants and subjects with utmost respect throughout the research process from topics selection to the dissemination of research results" (Wibben et al., 2019:96).

2.1 Getting to Askavusa

In the late evening of November 8th 2016, after a journey of fifteen hours and three separate flights, I finally arrived in Lampedusa. It was my second trip. Gianna came to pick me up from the airport with her city car. We were both tired but happy to see each other and we shared a warm Mediterranean hug and made our way to the bar-restaurant where she works. I was quite tired, probably hungry, but in a state of exhaustion where I didn't know exactly if I was hungry or not. Anyway, eating proved to be a good option after such long journey, especially in the company of familiar and new faces: Askavusa members and other people working and volunteering in one of the NGOs based in Lampedusa. They were all celebrating Sara's birthday, and the atmosphere was friendly and warm. I felt somehow protected by this group, but at the same time I was also an outsider who had just arrived and was somewhat unfamiliar with the sense of humour and slow to pick up on their jokes. However, I felt good to be there, so far from my daily life and setting, and excited to start a new adventure.

Chiara approached me and we started talking. It was the first time I had met her. She was curious to know about me, and how I was doing. "How is your pregnancy doing?" I blushed. A sudden warmth on my cheeks, as if a fire had just started just in front of me. "Do you know that I am expecting?" "Oh yes, here everybody knows it!"

I was indeed in the third month of my first pregnancy, just after the nausea period had ended. It was amusing, yet frustrating, that upon my arrival few knew about the theatre workshop, although everybody from the Askavusa environment knew that I was pregnant. Initially, I felt quite disappointed, and a touch discouraged: I had been working

on this trip for months, trying to make sure that all the activists and supporters knew about my workshop and were happy to be part of it, but when I arrived, nobody spoke of the workshop. Instead, they were full of talk for the little life growing in my belly – which was not visible at all – which had become common knowledge even though I had asked to keep the information confidential.

After the initial disappointment, I began to reflect upon how the theatre workshop might have been perceived as just another invasive proposal from outside. 'Again somebody who wants to come here and do something with us, maybe even teach us…' might have been the sentiment behind the refusal to even talk about it. Similarly, a pregnancy is a fact that should be taken into consideration in an island setting, because some help and assistance might be needed, which everybody in the group/community should be aware of in case of any emergency. What I understood was that in Lampedusa, the kingdom of emergency, being pregnant is a status that should not be hidden or covered, in case of urgent need. Being pregnant revealed to me what local people in Lampedusa described as 'The island where no one is born'. This expression alludes to the lack of a hospital, which forces women to spend weeks away from the island, in Sicily or somewhere else, in order to give birth (Grotti, 2017). While I wanted to be professional and not bring my private issues to the fieldwork, that revealing moment was a lesson for me on what feminist peace research entails in practice. 'Despite' my status as a pregnant woman, I could travel alone and work in the militarised and highly masculinised context of Lampedusa, where women often have marginal positions and limited visibility. The fact that Chiara was naming my pregnancy let me to reflect on my right of conducting research in Lampedusa. It also gave me the chance to re-examine the complex power dynamics between me – the researcher – the context and the informants of my research, in line with the reflexive methodologies promoted by feminist peace researchers (Enloe, 2017; Wibben, 2021). During the second workshop in 2017, motherhood became one of the matters which deeply connected me with some of the participants of the workshops.

During my first field trip in 2015, I had openly asked two core members of the Askavusa collective if they would be interested in getting involved in theatre actions. Their answers were extremely positive. Gianna told me that Askavusa had already had some theatre experiences with at least two different directors, but that there was no established theatre tradition, even though she would have loved to have one.

> We tried to start a theatre group some time ago, but it is not easy, because everyone is busy with their own things, there is no continuity… We receive a lot of proposals, but then we would need to find a group which is motivated enough… (interview with Gianna, October 2015, translated from Italian).

The reaction of Maurizio was equally positive. Despite his scepticism and criticism of the spectacularization that Lampedusa had already received, and suffered from, at the mediatic level, he told me:

> The problem is not only about the contents, but also about the relationship that you build with the community, with the potential audience (…) Who is doing the theatre experience? How is done? And overall which kind of relation not only during the rehearsals but also during the staging does it build with the hosting community? (Interview with Maurizio, November 2015, translated from Italian)

His words reflected the risk evoked by Ruth Raynor as "dramatic devices can re-enforce established social conditions" and "re-assert norms and conventions which become embedded in particular circumstances if care is not given to how scenes are organised, presented or received" (Raynor, 2018:5). He told me that several artists, including theatre practitioners, had visited the island as though they were on 'safari', arriving with their own ready-made ideas and unwilling to change anything about their pre-conceived ideas about Lampedusa. "I come from Australia" he told me as a hypothetical example "and I want to make this show about Lampedusa. And my previous idea does not change, even after my trip to Lampedusa". In contrast, my proposal was to work in cooperation with Askavusa, and collectively create our theatre experience based on the stories and images participants were eager to share. I wanted to use theatre practice "to develop story collaboratively (…) towards action and advocacy for social change" (Raynor, 2018:5). I wanted to see through their eyes, and not set the agenda or the topics of our collective experience in advance (Vastapuu, 2018). In fact, since the beginning, I had approached them and presented our artistic collaboration, mindful of the importance of considering "embedded power relationships and hierarchies" (Premaratna and Rajkobal, 2021:266). I was not representing any institution or NGO; nor did I have any political agenda or sponsor that could make Askavusa members feel uncomfortable. I was an independent artist and researcher, interested in co-creating with them with no interest in representing or affirming any preconceived or fixed ideas. Thus, since the beginning, my position had always been clear for me and for them: I proposed myself as a facilitator of the artistic process, not as a director who would dictate the artistic process. It was to be a participatory endeavour based on the experience of Askavusa.

2.1.1 History of Askavusa

At the beginning of 2009, Roberto Maroni of the *Lega Nord* (Northern League), Italian secessionist right-wing party, and at that time Italian Minister of the Interior, publicly announced plans to build a second Centre of Identification and Expulsion (CIE) for

migrants on the island of Lampedusa. In response, the Lampedusan community unanimously organized general strikes and participated in public protests against the decision. The mayor at that time proclaimed, "the rescue and first reception center of Lampedusa, which was supposed to be used for the first identification, has recently become a concentration camp".[17] Thus, all the citizens decided to collectively protest, and raise public awareness by drawing attention to the situation. Among the citizens protesting, was the nucleus of the cultural association Askavusa, which was founded in the wake of that protest, in Spring 2009. When I refer to Askavusa, I use both the terms "collective" and "association". In terms of its decision-making processes, Askavusa is a collective; however, formally, according to the Italian Civil Code articles 14 – 42, it is a cultural association. Moreover, in the early years of its journey, the association was officially affiliated with the national cultural association *Arci* (Cultural and Recreational Italian Association). By 2013 however, Askavusa decided to leave the national association and proceed independently.[18]

In the local dialect, the word *askavusa* literally means 'without shoes', barefoot. In Mediterranean culture, shoes represent a constriction, while being without shoes implies mobility and freedom.[19] Without shoes, one's feet are in direct contact with the ground, and hence closer to nature. It means the absence of filters, being genuinely next to the natural environment, and being free and unconstrained by the schemes that society might impose.

[17] https://www.meltingpot.org/Lampedusa-Tra-accoglienza-e-rifiuto.html#.X4AbuOdRVaQ – translated from Italian.

[18] For a deeper analysis of the experience of Askavusa Association, their genealogy, activities, and the relationship with *Arci* see Ilaria Vecchi, 2016.

[19] Conversely, in the Nordic tales and cultures, the symbol of shoes is a surviving symbol of psychological protection (Pinkola Estés, 1992).

Figure 2. Askavusa's logo

The logo of the association (Figure 2) portrays the soles of two feet and a five-pointed solid red star above them. In the context of Lampedusa, the image of 'free feet' is also connected to the right of free movement across borders, and thus implies a clear political position regarding migration policies. The star is reminiscent of the communist ideology and the idea of internationalism it harbours, while the five points have respectively been interpreted as the five fingers of a worker's hand and the five continents.

Between 2015 and 2017, the core team of Askavusa consisted of six persons, all engaged at different levels in the activities of the association. Three of them were settled in Lampedusa, while the remainder were located between Sicily, and other Northern and Central Italian regions. However, an additional sixteen people, all Italian citizens, were intermittently active members – reaching Lampedusa for special occasions or participating to remote meetings and online assemblies. Whilst not reaching the five continents represented by the red star of the logo, the geographical composition of Askavusa members was widely spread around different regions of Italy (Sicily, Tuscany, Emilia Romagna, and Lombardy) and several European countries (Belgium, France, Spain, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland). Therefore, Askavusa activists ironically call themselves "the International Askavusa" and recognize that their geographical composition is "a model on a smaller scale of the contemporary situation of European

mobility".[20] At the time of my field trips, the Askavusa members were aged between 30 and 40 years and had varied education and backgrounds. Some of them were PhD students or young scholars, some worked in the restoration sector, whilst others were unemployed or permanently working in temporary jobs.

Besides the active members, Askavusa counts a few hundred supporters, who follow the activities of the association from Lampedusa, Europe, or remotely from outside Europe. Thus, the associations' supporters are not only drawn from Lampedusa, but also from other cities or countries; they became familiar with their activities and have followed and supported them remotely. This specific localisation of Askavusa members and supporters has induced me to define the collective as a 'glocal'[21] actor: locally based in Lampedusa but extended to those who are geographically distant. This glocalization is also expressed in the interests of the association: the contingent local situation of Lampedusa (e.g. the militarisation process, the migration industry, and the lack of decent public infrastructure) is analysed and discussed by Askavusa members in connection with the global trend of migrations, wars, and international relations. However, this complex positionality was only reached after years of learning by doing and collective reflections about ongoing activities.

Askavusa was founded in the form of a cultural association, with the aim of promoting cultural initiative about, for and in Lampedusa (Vecchi, 2016; Mazzara, 2018). Very soon, however, it became clear that its engagement as a socio-political actor was not limited to the context of Lampedusa only, but also encompassed the broader environment of the Euro-Mediterranean area. Being interested in what was going on locally in relation to migration issues, the collective soon began engaging with the phenomenon in a broader frame and looking at it within the militarised context of the whole Mediterranean area. According to Maurizio, one of the Askavusa core members, the collective has always focused on the same issues. However, as their awareness about the interdependencies between the so-called "migrant crisis" and the intentional political strategy grew, their perspective gradually became more critical of the underlying issues which made Lampedusa a military outpost. For him one of the turning points was in 2011, after the so-called 'Tunisian invasion', when

> it was clear to the eyes of Lampedusan inhabitants, not only for Askavusa, that such emergency was consciously made up, in an absolute grotesque way, with devastating economic consequences for the whole community, since that year occurred 70% of loss in the touristic business (interview with Maurizio, November 2015, translated from Italian).

[20] From my interview with Maurizio in November 2015, translated from Italian.

[21] I borrow the term glocalization from the sociologist Zygmunt Baumann (2013).

For Maurizio, that critical event altered the way Askavusa approached the local community of Lampedusa. They created a new relationship with the islanders based on the mutual understanding of the common needs on the island's life. From that moment, the focus for Askavusa was not only the migration phenomenon and the broader militarisation of the Euro-African border, but a deeper reflection on the consequences of all the phenomena affecting the local system of Lampedusa. Moreover, they tried to contrast, whenever possible, the dynamics of the new colonialism that the island was suffering, represented *in primis* by the overwhelming militarisation of the island. It soon became clear that "(Askavusa) was fighting against an extremely powerful enemy: the infrastructures and the structures of military powers, not only of the Italian State" (interview with Maurizio, November 2015, translated from Italian). Being just a small association, this confrontation explains why Askavusa needed to create networks. In fact, Askavusa has started numerous partnerships with other associations located in Lampedusa, in Sicily, and in other Italian and European regions to increase their visibility and generate more activity all around Europe.

The political identity of Askavusa is diverse and cannot be easily labelled under one category. One might define it as an 'anarchist/anti-capitalist/Marxist collective', or more generally, as a "collective that rejects any form of hierarchical structure" (Vecchi, 2016:166). Similarly, the individual positions of its members differ with regards to the militarisation of Lampedusa. While there were members who completely support an anti-militarist position, others were simply more in favour of a reduction in the military presence on the island. As Cynthia Cockburn noted, within the realm of peace activism tensions and contradictions are often present. Coherence in activism does not mean "identicality, sameness, but rather the ability to converse and shift, to understand others' meanings, to acknowledge and work with difference, to actively seek bases for agreement" (Cockburn, 2012:4).

In its infancy, Askavusa was "intrinsically linked to the political parties and politicians that manage Lampedusa" (Vecchi, 2016:174), because of its strong connection with the local territory of Lampedusa, both in opposition and cooperation. During their journey, however, Askavusa has reached a collectively conscious positionality regarding their independence from external political and economic influence.

Until 2016, Askavusa members had never been engaged with a theatre workshop focused on their daily lives as islanders at the European border. The only exception had been a concert-play that was about the history if the island, the migration phenomenon, and the policies that have played a relevant role in building the collective memories of the island, reflected through original songs, written and performed by one of the members.

2.1.2 Workshop participants, informants and place

Involving anyone in a theatre project is like entering the living room of someone else on tiptoes. It took time and energy to get my idea of a community-based theatre project accepted by Askavusa collective. After several phone calls and email exchanges with Gianna, the first community-based theatre workshop began in November 2016, followed by a second one in October 2017. Those who participated in these workshops were Askavusa members, as well as supporters who were visiting the island in those periods. In total, eight people took part during those two years. Most of the participants lived in Lampedusa, but two were visiting the island for a relative short period – around a month. Despite my attempts to have the group of participants established prior to reaching the island, I had to connect with people in person to get the group together. Although this required extra work in creating the group, it was also an important chance to familiarise myself with the context before beginning the workshop. It was also an opportunity to establish a more meaningful connection with people, and to create the necessary mutual trust before starting our collective theatre experience. Gianna was my gate opener in Lampedusa. She contacted potentially interested people and invited them to join our workshops and helped me to find accommodation. In short, her precious contribution was crucial for the realization of the whole project.

Although they did not participate actively in the workshop, some members hung around during the workshops, and through interviews or informal conversations, they contributed to the artistic co-production. For instance, they shared stories, that we then used as inspirational starting points to develop some scenes of the play. In this way, they were involved by their stories becoming incorporated in the play. The most important 'non workshop' informants were Fabio, Maurizio and Sara. I will leave them in partly obscured background. Their contributions informed the discussions throughout the whole thesis, including some scenes of the play, which they inspired.

Thanks to Karina Horsti and the stories she told me about Lampedusa, I knew something of Gianna before meeting her. After the 3rd of October disaster, Gianna was welcoming the relatives of the victims at the airport and helping them to orient themselves in Lampedusa. Before meeting her, I knew already about her gift in connecting with people and her warm attitude to relationships. She lived in Lampedusa and worked at a bar-restaurant with her family and was one of the most active members of the association. Between 2015-2017, she was my key contact with Askavusa and who I engaged with to organize the workshops; Gianna was my closest confidante about the local context of Lampedusa. Being highly motivated to get involved in theatre activities, she was my first ally during the community-based theatre workshop, when we started to develop the group and the common project, in 2016. Gianna participated in both workshops, in 2016 and in 2017.

The second person who became deeply involved in both the workshops and was crucial during my time in Lampedusa was Eleonora. Whenever there were issues with the workshops – when for instance *Porto M*, our main premises for the workshop, was occupied by other activities – she would propose other solutions and think where we could move and work. She is a photographer based in Lampedusa, mother of three children and an active member of Askavusa. She was one of the initiators of the Lampedusan Mothers Committee, that has been active for many years in defending the rights of children to have safe and functional school buildings. She was another important ally in building the group and in completing the project.

In 2016, Guido was in Lampedusa for his second or third time. He planned to stay at least for one month, and he was interested in collaborating with Askavusa regarding their ongoing project of creating a sustainable network for tourism on the island. He was active in the sustainable tourism business in Tuscany, where he worked as a local spokesperson for an association engaged in tourism and international cooperation. His contribution during the workshop was interesting, since he had a vision of the island from the perspective of an outsider, but at the same time, his familiarity with the island meant his words were pertinent and meaningful. He participated only in the first workshop in 2016.

Lucas was visiting Lampedusa for the first time, but he was well acquainted with other Sicilian islands. In 2016, he was working in the filmmaking business as a cameraman. He was one of those politically engaged tourists who is keen to get involved in different kind of activities with local inhabitants and got to know Askavusa association through mutual friends; he was invited to join the workshop by Gianna.

Mario was a young man living in Lampedusa; in 2016 he was working as a waiter. I heard that he was a supporter of the Askavusa collective, but not an active member of the association. He was enthusiastic about the workshop, interested in esoterism and magic. It was his first experience in a theatrical setting and made several relevant contributions during our workshop together. In October 2017, he was away from the island, so he could not participate to the second workshop.

I had met Chiara during my previous trip in 2016, but she joined the second workshop in 2017. At that time, she was an entrepreneur, mother of two children, and an active member of Askavusa, who was especially engaged with topics such as naturopathy, homeopathy, yoga and children's activities.

This was the community I briefly worked with during two theatre workshops in 2016 and 2017: a group of people, who in different ways and on diverse levels, connected with the Askavusa collective, as either members or supporters, inhabitants of Lampedusa, citizens of various countries or a combination of those things. In recalling who participated in the workshops, and who did not participate but contributed to the artistic

process in other ways, the actual meaning of 'community' in our community-based theatre experience more pertinently arises. The participants of the workshops and the informants all represented Askavusa: a de-localized group of people who share a common love for the territory of Lampedusa, a common concern about how things are governed on the island, and the desire to be independent from any kind of economic or political hierarchy (Vecchi, 2016). Being a resident or visitor is undoubtedly different, but somehow this diversity represents the everyday Lampedusan experience, people are coming and going all the time, just as there are people staying. In a way, the participants of the theatre experience represented the diversity of positionalities and geographies typical of Lampedusa. Taking this into consideration was a key factor in our community-based theatre experience and central to the process of co-production. As disagreements and frictions can co-exist within the same group or movement, the challenge of feminist peace research is to include, embrace and hold those contradictions without endorsing one in favour of the others (Cockburn, 2012; Wibben et al., 2019; Lyytikäinen et al., 2021).

I obviously recognize that a gender dimension persisted during both workshops, as the groups were clearly female driven. Two women, Gianna and Eleonora, had pivotal roles in the process of co-production, as they were always present and guaranteed the continuity of the workshops from the first to the second. Their status as women and mothers was an important element that connected us. It is not a surprise that in the highly militarised and male context of Lampedusa, those willing to be involved and to participate in a creative process, whose core point was the inclusion of vulnerable, unseen, and marginalized voices, were mainly women (Cockburn, 2010; Lyytikäinen et al., 2021). Throughout the thesis, the significance of this women-led group in the co-production process is clearly tangible. This is especially the case in our collective play, where the terms of the characters, the images, and the words chosen represent the everyday life at the militarised border of Europe.

Both workshops took place in *Porto M,*[22] the premises of Askavusa, which is the basement of a two storey apartment building and in its previous life was used by shipwrights. The owners of *Porto M* are siblings who are both members of Askavusa. The entrance is divided by a counter, on the left side is a smaller room which functions as a kitchen when the association organises public events. The main workspace is composed of a large, long room which is organised like two rooms joined together. In the first one is a permanent exhibition about the association, and a table with some informative material about Lampedusa and the activities organised by Askavusa. This is

[22] *Porto* means harbour, *M* stands for Migration, Militarization, Memory, Movement, Mediterranean, Sea (*Mare)*, World (*Mondo). Porto M* is collocated between the Coast Guard and the Finance Guard offices, facing to the southern seacoast.

usually the place to gather, discuss, have meetings, and so on. The second space is more dedicated to temporary exhibitions and different activities; for example, one night it was the performing area for a concert.

Figure 3. The entrance of *Porto M,* picture taken by a workshop participant

The entire premises are quite dark, with low ceilings and a strong smell of damp. While the space was not quite the standard requirements for a theatre workshop, I decided to accept it and focus on its potential. As a younger practitioner, I would have been more sensitive about the specific requirements of a working space, and stricter about the conditions: enough air, clean floor, warmth, the possibility to work barefoot, for instance. As time has passed by, I have learned to accept any place for the soul and characteristics they have, and in this instance as part of the mutual agreement of hospitality and guesting. Consequently, the workshops in/on the given location, were tailored with respect to the peculiarities and features of the surroundings. Initially, I conducted the workshop in the first room, because of its proximity to the open air; but after a week, I realised that the space was too small for the participants to concentrate properly, so I used the entire space, including the second room. Using more space and

enabling more distance between bodies helped them find the necessary concentration to do what they were doing.

Porto M was not only the premises of the collective, it was also a space where people might come to discuss matters related to migration policies, attend an event, or even to take photographs. Its nature as an open space, ensured many people visited us during the workshop, which challenged our levels of concentration but was also inspiring at the same time. One day, for instance, Tommaso Sandri, a young artist from Friuli Venezia Giulia, came to visit *Porto M*; he had planned to travel from Lampedusa to Rome and visit all the reception centres for migrants on his way. He had a long paper roll, which held drawings made by migrants he had collected, that told of their collective experiences in an artistic form. His tour had just started, and he had paid a visit to *Porto M* like so many other visitors.[23]

In some respects, *Porto M* was a fragile space where anything could happen. Once, in the middle of a storm, a window crashed to the floor because of the strong wind. We were in the middle of our activity, and the crashing window was quite shocking. The wind was looking for an escape path in the airstream of the narrow alley next to *Porto M*, and ended up slamming the little window so violently, that it finally blew it off its hinges. The window, and all the items which were on the shelf disastrously fell, making a horrible and chaotic noise. For me, the incident represented the fragility of the place. *Porto M*, behind its rough appearance as an anarchist provocative place, was vulnerable, in the contradictory and 'windy' context of Lampedusa.

Different and asymmetrical powers coexist at the borders of Europe, which, in the case of Lampedusa, make it difficult to establish the common ground necessary for an open dialogue. The practice of community-based theatre, however, opens different types of space, opportunities where dialogues about these asymmetrical powers can be engaged with in an artistic frame. Although it is not possible to create an equal dialogue or discussion about them, the representation of clashes and frictions can be seen and experienced. It crafts chances to initiate discussions about possibilities, and scenarios, which, for instance, grassroots level actors, such as Askavusa, can envision the present and the future of their territories. Thus, with the whole group of participants, we had the common interest of exploring what life is at the border of Europe, considering the frictions entailed in a territory which for decades has been the stage for the

[23] The project was part of a broader initiative called Migrart Festival https://www.mentilibere.org/migrart-festival.

"spectacularization of the border" (Cuttitta, 2012; De Genova, 2017) and depicted as a 'borderscape' (Brambilla, 2014).[24]

The practice of community-based theatre creates the space to consider the paradoxes that people live within in their everyday lives. For instance, during one meeting, Eleonora told how her commitment to the Lampedusan Mother Committee and Askavusa, placed her in a difficult position with one of her best friends, who was married to a military man permanently settled in the island. In the small social environment of Lampedusa, any strong political alignment has the potential for great consequences on a person's private life. The workshops, and the co-production of the collective play, gave us the opportunity to explore such emotions in their "everyday corporeal experience" (Premaratna and Rajkobal, 2021; Väyrynen, 2019; Wibben et al., 2019) and make visible those contradictions by embodying them in the characters and the emotional situations depicted in the scenes.

2.2 Strategies of activism at the border

Askavusa is a glocal actor, for which global and local issues are interdependent and intertwined in a complex picture, and which consequently acts both on the local and global level. The local level is epitomised by the struggle over the quality of life in Lampedusa and the lack of available public services and opportunities. The global action works through the multiple connections of the association with other groups, individuals and movements around Italy and wider Europe. Both levels are relevant to the definition of the collective identities of Askavusa.

The history of Askavusa is interlaced and connected with the activities they have undertaken over many years. To some extent, the sentence 'we are what we do' represents Askavusa well. To better understand the context Askavusa has been through as a group, I consider the activities that have been organised by the association. In relation to their activities, it emerges that the positions of Askavusa, and their approaches to certain issues, reflect meaningful changes. This shows how activism is a process which is continuously changing. Being an activist organisation at the European border initiated a process of constant networking with actors with similar missions and interests. At the same time, it has embodied a new model of citizenship, where the "rehabilitation of the

[24] The notion of a borderscape has been described by Elena dell'Agnese and Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary (2015) as "an area, shaped and reshaped by transnational flows, that goes beyond the modernist idea of clear cut national territories…" It is as much a mental picture, a border in the mind, an imagined border, as much as it is a geographical or physical feature.

border" became a core mission (Mazzara, 2018:157). The following explores how this rehabilitation occurred through the different activities carried out by Askavusa.

2.2.1 Collecting items

One of the first activities that Askavusa was involved in was collecting items brought by the tide to the beaches, and from the dump where migrants' boats were abandoned before being destroyed by the authorities. A few scholars have investigated this practice (Horsti, 2015, 2019; Vecchi, 2016; Mazzara, 2018), which bounced the collective into international fame (see Vecchi, 2016). The practice of collecting the items was initially started by one of the founders, and arguably one of the most charismatic members of the collective. The collected objects were mostly migrants' belongings, personal items lost by people during their journey across the Mediterranean Sea. They were private photographs, religious texts, shoes and clothes, pots, and other personal items. For many years, the items were used to create art works related to the migrants. This practice was recalled in a collective contribution published in 2014; such reflections on the items are representative of the vision and approach that Askavusa had in those first years of activities:

> …what was happening on the island in relation to the immigration for me stayed at an emotional level: I felt closeness and compassion for the migrants, I had the political seeds of a global fight against a system which commodifies things and people, but this was still hidden and unexpressed in me… (Sferlazzo, 2014:133, translated from Italian).

For many years, Askavusa kept collecting the migrants' (lost) objects without any initial specific clear aim. At some point, they realized that the items were carrying a deep meaning, as they embodied "political ruins of Europe". With their mere existence, they represented "the (European) domination of the Others throughout first the cultural acknowledge and construction, and then throughout the military and economical subjugation" (Sferlazzo, 2014:134, translated from Italian).

When in 2011 the amount of collected items was enough to organise an exhibition, Askavusa members decided to display them in their premises. For some time, Askavusa also speculated about the opportunity to create a traditional museum, in cooperation with the Municipality of Lampedusa and other associations and organisations. One of those was the Archive of Migrant Memories (AMM), which is a 'community of practice' engaged in sharing "stories, self-narratives and dialogue between people wishing to share their experience of migration with others interested in learning about what they went

through and their feelings and reflections".[25] Various attempts to start the project failed, interlaced with misunderstandings and diplomatic incidents, mostly because of incompatible approaches and economical-political disagreements (see Gatta, 2016).

By facing the institutions and trying to find common ground with them, Askavusa members quickly learned from their own ethical strategies and the boundaries they wanted to respect in terms of collaborations and actions. For instance, in trying to initiate a Museum of Migration with the municipality, one potential sponsor would have been the Open Society Foundation of George Soros, which is considered a highly controversial foundation, allegedly involved in influencing politics and being the architect of coups d'état around the globe.[26] In light of this, Askavusa members decided to step away from the project, as they felt they may might find themselves embedded within a 'colonialist structure' and financial dependent on external funds of dubious origin. They also wanted to avoid the risk of exploiting, and using the items, in a disrespectful way towards those who lost their lives in the Mediterranean. However, some of the objects were kept by the Municipality of Lampedusa, which later organised a temporary exhibition in a public space in the urban centre.

For Askavusa, the items and the cultural appropriation of them became a clear and exemplificatory opportunity to reflect, not only on the complex phenomenon of migration, but also in a broader way that considers the role of Lampedusa in the Euro Mediterranean geopolitical landscape. Thus, Askavusa decided to independently, and without any institutional support, organise the collected items into a permanent exhibition. In contrast to the common approach of media narratives and the accompanying political rhetoric that portrayed them as passive 'poor guys', Askavusa sought to rehabilitate the image of the migrants as active subjects. Fabio's words, for instance, echo the ongoing discussions among scholars about migrants' agency and the autonomous migration perspective, which emphasizes the capacity of migrants for action:[27]

> … we should re-link the migrants' items to a historical condition and to the reasons which generate migrations… Then you can say 'It is true that these people need to drink, to eat, but why do they escape? What is our role in this? (interview with Fabio by Karina Horsti, October 2014, translated from Italian)

Eventually, Askavusa organised their own permanent exhibition of the items on their different premises during the time; they are still sporadically collecting items and showing

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[25] From their official website www.archiviomemoriemigranti.net.

[26] DC Leaks Network published work plans, strategies, priorities, and other activities of Soros. 'Soros DCLeaks,' accessed April 10, 2017, soros.dcleaks.com/.

[27] See for instance Rygiel, 2011; Rinelli, 2015.

them in different venues and occasions around Italy and Europe. When I visited Lampedusa in 2015, the association was already settled in *Porto M*, an old cave once used by shipwrights, in the old harbour, facing to the south. At that time, many of the collected items were visible on the shelves, as an integrated element of the premises. The items were organised and displayed for typologies.

Figure 4. Kitchen tools, shelves in *Porto M*, picture taken by the author

Thanks to the presence of those items, *Porto M* served as a polyfunctional space for memories and reflections on the phenomenon of migration, and the historical and political role played by Lampedusa in it. Specifically, Askavusa wanted to question visitors and make them reflect on two crucial, but at the same time simple, questions: "why are people obliged to leave their home countries? And, why is it that the majority of the world's population cannot travel legally without putting their lives at risk or without being criminalised?".[28] Posing these simple questions created the opportunity for Askavusa to disclose and critically discuss complex issues, such as inequalities across the EU border, wars, militarisation of societies, people power. 'People have the power' says a famous old song by Patti Smith. That is probably the main point of *Porto M*, to give people the chance to believe they hold that power and understand what it is possible to achieve. At the same time, Askavusa members knew about the importance of connecting with other associations, and people, to make their voice louder to harness a greater collective power. This is one of the ways to face the acknowledged limits of the asymmetrical powers Askavusa faces at the border of Europe.

[28] From the interview with Maurizio, November 2015, and from Askavusa blog, translated from Italian.

The items spoken of above have a relevant role, when our co-production of knowledge is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5. The items were critical to the development of many of the stories that underpinned *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border*.

2.2.2 Actions in/about Lampedusa

According to Maurizio, the migratory phenomenon was the most "direct and hardest contradiction that the island had experienced in the last twenty years",[29] clearly a topic that Askavusa was unlikely to avoid since its inception. For example, an important activity in which Askavusa was a main organiser in collaboration with *Re.Co.Sol.* (Solidarity Network of Municipality) and *Asgi* (Law Studies Association for Immigration) was the *LampedusaInFestival.*[30] The festival was an international film festival about the migration of animals and human beings which took place annually for several years between 2009-2015. Askavusa members organised the festival remotely from different cities around Italy and Europe through Skype calls and emails. The organisational structure reflected the geographical positionalities of Askavusa members and their approach toward decision-making process, with final decisions requiring unanimity. As pointed out by Ilaria Vecchi, "the festival has contributed with its work to increment interest in Lampedusa's local history and folk stories thanks also to the collaboration with Archivio Storico di Lampedusa" (Vecchi, 2016:171). However, the continuous attempt for being independent and autonomous drove the collective to limit its collaboration, especially with sponsoring bodies. Consequently, the festival became increasingly dissident in relation to the Italian and European migration policies. Somehow, the contradictions perceived in Lampedusa also became tangible in the experience of Askavusa. While they increasingly sought political and financial independence, and attempted to stay "local and small", the festival meant that the collective was crossing the borders of Italy and attracting the attention of several groups around the world on similar issues (Vecchi, 2016).

For the last Festival in 2015, Askavusa decided to extend activities beyond a few days in October. They wanted greater involvement with the local community (islanders) and sought to do several things during the year for the whole community. The plan was to organise different activities, such as book presentations, public debates about certain topics germane to Lampedusa, and workshops in schools (from interview with Gianna, October 2015). When I discussed this with Gianna and Sara in 2016, they explained that it had been hard to involve the schools. After they had overcome the initial difficulties

[29] From the interview with Maurizio, November 2015, translated from Italian.

[30] https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lampedusa_In_Festival.

with the educational authorities to elicit permission to enter schools, they found engaging with students to be far from easy. Students were unfamiliar with being in a movie theatre, so whenever the lights went down, they just screamed and laughed, so it was not possible to watch a movie properly or to discuss it.

Since 2015, Askavusa has also been a member of a network of associations called *Forum Solidale Lampedusa* (Forum Solidarity Lampedusa), a citizen's assembly whose aim was to give support to migrants, but also to help Lampedusan inhabitants "by creating local networks and collaborations which can promote access to cultural initiatives, respect of environment and social inclusion of marginalized people" (from the website of Mediterranean Hope, translated from Italian). The *Forum* was initiated by Mediterranean Hope, a federation of the Evangelic Churches in Italy, which has had a Migration Observatory in Lampedusa since 2014. Thanks to donations, the *Forum* was able to create a fund, which over time has been used to instigate cultural activities in Lampedusa, and to support the right to health care that is often a critical issue for many islanders.

In collaboration with the *Forum* and the platform *Brigata di Solidarietà Attiva* (Brigade of Active Solidarity), Askavusa initiated the network *Lampedusa (R)esiste* in 2018, with the main goal to protect the natural environment of Lampedusa. The network strived to become a model of good practice for the whole Mediterranean area, and the border territories, which are "places were rights have always been suspended, both for those who are living there and for those who are crossing them".[31] On the website of the network there are two maps of Lampedusa, which together report every critical presence on the island, in terms of their potential for environmental pollution: commonly, open illegal dumps and military infrastructures. Using this information, the network proposed concrete practices "to break the mechanisms of workers' exploitation, environment devastation and cultural impoverishment,[32] created by the military occupation and by neoliberalist policies" (from the website, translated from Italian). These practices were called Revitalise (*Rivitalizza*) and Demilitarise (*Demilitarizza*). Revitalise refers to actions that create something new for the island, like planting new trees, cleaning up the dumps, launching a campaign against the use of plastic in the Mediterranean area, and promoting a culture for the commons. Demilitarise refers to actions aimed to resist and minimize the impact of the military presence on the Lampedusa environment. Specifically, the network demanded a scientific epidemiologic study about the effects of electromagnetic waves and their interrelation with increased incidence of tumours on the island. They

[31] From the website of *Lampedusa (R)esiste,* lampedusa-r-esiste.webnode.it/il-progetto, translated from Italian.

[32] During the last years, workers' unions were protesting because the agreements between the waste recycle companies and the municipality were not renewed; thus, workers were not paid for several months, creating a vicious financial circle with serious consequences on families' wealth and wellbeing.

also insisted that the Municipality of Lampedusa, remedy the lack of official regulation with regard to the extant military infrastructure, and the sources of electromagnetic waves.

The health effects of electromagnetic waves per se are not in themselves an issue for the thesis. It was, however, a considerable *foci* of an everyday contradiction and struggle at the militarised border of Lampedusa, and a serious concern for members of Askavusa. The role of this research is to show how such issues became visible, and how voices that were inspired by such struggles, became articulated through the collective practice of community-based theatre. While the migration industry attracts the predominant attention of the media and academia, the humanitarian border of Lampedusa possesses other features, often left hidden and unspoken of, in public debates.

Since its foundation, Askavusa has posed many requests for more transparency and greater local control several times. They have pursued numerous legal actions to obtain official information about the substantial presence of radar installations on the island. In fact, many of the radar installations were not officially mentioned in the Municipality real estate registry, and their construction was not carried out with the appropriate building permissions generally required. Moreover, neither technical details of the devices, nor any public information about potential consequences of the electromagnetic waves on the health of local inhabitants and on the ecosystem of the island, were easily available. The lack of transparency, and questionable levels of malfeasance, concerned both the members of Askavusa and other islanders. In 2014, they presented a petition to the Public Prosecutor's Office in Agrigento, requesting more information about the eight radars at that time located in the island, and the removal of the radar from Grecale Cape, because of its assumed danger to human health.

The strategies of Askavusa, especially the national and international networking, the continual attempts to find allies and build dialogue with the civil society actors, reveal much about coping with asymmetric power relations, national and supranational institutions, and the difficulties of making one's voice heard. The community-based theatre workshops materialised at a crucial moment of the association's journey when much was changing. During my last field trip in October 2017, the association did not organize any public protests against the commemoration of 3rd of October disaster, to avoid play the role of "those who, in the collective show of Lampedusa, are always protesting". Thus, between 2016 and 2017, the collective's activities and strategies took a different direction and continued to do so in the years following our theatre workshops.

2.3 Camping area in Lampedusa

The extract which opens this chapter is from a scene of the play called 'The camping area'. A young activist passionately speaks to a nameless General about a project to build a military barracks on top of a disused archaeological site. The intense and provocative tone of the activist's monologue is reminiscent of the passionate tone that Askavusa members often used in the pamphlets they published, or the posts they wrote in their blog and on social media. Besides the provocative mood, this scene redolent of the activism at the EU border and its conceptually problematic meaning. In this sense, the notion of activism tends to get blurred at the humanitarian border of Lampedusa, where the "uneasy alliance" of NGOs, humanitarian organisations, military forces and common citizens are all participants in the contradictory actions of "reception and rejection, care and coercion" (Andersson, 2014:72; see also Walters, 2011; Gammeltoft-Hansen and Sørensen, 2013). In the eyes of Askavusa members, the distortions created by the migration industry became intensified in the heterotopia of an island which was simultaneously a paradisiac tourist destination, a detention island and a colony (historically) not only for those crossing the sea, but also for its inhabitants (Pugliese, 2009; Proglio and Odasso, 2018; Orsini, 2015).

The monologue of 'The camping area' was inspired by a story shared by Sara, who did not participate in the workshops, but during an informal discussion was eager to tell the group some anecdotes about military personnel living in the island. Working in a shop in the central urban area, she often encountered military personnel. She shared with us how some of the men working for the military were unhappy about her request to not enter with guns inside the shop. We also discussed how Lampedusan society, and younger generations in particular, have been becoming increasingly interested in militarism and military culture. For some, this has been influenced by years of TV series, documentaries and programs aimed to rearticulate "the relationship between the military and the humanitarian aspect of the intervention" at the militarised border of Lampedusa (Musarò, 2017:17). Sara further discussed the militarisation of local tourism and how the hotels and restaurants, which are usually empty during the winter months, have benefited from the permanent presence of military personnel, who have provided a dependable source of custom. I recall being surprised, having been told that a restaurant was closing ordinarily for the winter season, had opened its doors again after only a few days of closing, to serve myself and a separate group of military guys.

For that moment, I was experiencing my own everyday life of the complex relationship between the migration industry and the local economy (Gammeltoft-Hansen and Sørensen, 2013). I was discovering how "Lampedusa exists solely because of the border which has been established on it" (Orsini, 2015:522). With the establishment of the migration industry on the island, the border became, not only "the

main — if not the only — lens through which the world looked upon Lampedusa", but also a social and physical reality whereby "locals found themselves expropriated of their land, sea, culture, and history" (Orsini, 2015:522). Arguably, the process underlying these kinds of events, reflects a migration industry that has been significantly reshaping the local conditions, as a means to replace elements of the local economy that have hitherto been important, such as fisheries and seasonal tourism (Orsini, 2015; Friese, 2012). Thus, according to Giacomo Orsini "as a subaltern and defenceless audience, Lampedusans have come to live outside the margins of the narrative and working of the border that now frames the island's existence" (Orsini, 2015:522).

Among the stories told by Sara, one in particular grabbed my attention which I decided to develop further for the play. She recalled a day when she went to visit a temporary camp of some military squadron and approached the head of the group. She was quite surprised and shocked about the fact that the officer in charge was happily showing her the devices and installations in use and sharing with her the future construction that was being planned. She had noted the area they were in, was attached to an archaeological site, and thus under a special protection with limits on what could be built or established there. The paradoxical nature of the encounter was quite striking. Her story was a perfect illustration of the extraordinary, contradictory and absurd circumstances that can be encountered in Lampedusa. In our play, Sara's story became the inspirational starting point for a monologue where an unnamed 'activist' approaches an unnamed general and tells him what she thinks about their 'grand project' of building a military barrack on top of an archaeological site.

Looking closer at the scene, after having provoked the General about the project, the activist goes further, commenting and criticising the role of military action in Lampedusa, and in the Mediterranean area in general.

> Come on, Mister General, we are all responsible for these women and men who are fleeing from their countries. I say we, but I am not speaking about myself, I'm speaking about the rich countries, those which became rich by colonizing, and fomenting wars since time immemorial. First we instigate the troubles in their nations, and then we say *Oh no, there is no space for you here, go back home!* What a wonderful species of the human race we are.
>
> (from 'The camping area', *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border*)

2.3.1 Threefold meaning of camping

At the beginning of the second workshop, we had a focus group to assess the first versions of scenes previously written, with the aim of completing and refining the material we had. When we read the scene 'Children', which depicts two Lampedusan children dreaming about their future, Gianna raised a crucial issue regarding the meaning of 'being activists'. In the scene, Lucia wants to become a "woman with courage" so she can delete, with her "magic eraser", all those ugly monsters which are the radar installations. "When I grow up, I want to become an activist!" she finally says in her monologue.[33] For Gianna, that final sentence was controversial. She explained that many NGOs working in the humanitarian sector are called activists, regardless of whether they collaborated with military organisations.

> Now, they hire activists as they hire military personnel. For instance, they are preparing the camps in Libya, and there will be the open call to choose which organisation will go…But of course they need to have the full requirements. Which kind of people do you think the Ministry of Interior would send to Libya? Me, or Fabio, or Sara?
>
> (Focus group, October 2017, translated from Italian)

This was a pertinent point, precisely because the concept of activism can become blurred depending on which contexts the term is mentioned in. Until that moment, activism, for me, was necessarily related to anti-militarism, but I was compelled to acknowledge that the diverse reality of NGOs and humanitarian organisations in Lampedusa, required a more nuanced understanding than my first naïve distinction.

Without diminishing the salience of that conversation, we decided that Lucia might have said those words, as a child's representation of an ideal 'idealist' activist; a citizen whose passion is directed toward environmental issues and sustainable local development. Lucia, the girl who dreams of a future Lampedusa, wishes that her island will become child friendly and freed from the military. Her simple and fresh words crystallised complex discussions that have long concerned feminist peace activists (Warren and Cady, 1994; Boulding, 1989, 2000). It is worth noting that Lucia's words do not resonate with the weak and gentle stereotypical representation of girls; instead, her character challenges the gender-based categorizations and expectations with a vibrant and powerful verve, consistent with normative claims common to feminist and gender studies (Sjoberg and Via, 2010; Cockburn, 2012). This dramaturgical choice, which spontaneously arose within the artistic process, was deeply interconnected with the dimensions of our women-driven group.

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[33] See page 40 in this document.

A similarly contradictory and sense of multiple meaning also resonates in the notion of 'camping'. While camping is symbolic of a holiday for many, it is also reminiscent of a temporary, precarious and dangerous solution to living on the move; arguably connected with military practices and training, where notions of survivalism in nature and sleeping in tents are intimately connected. At the risk of ignoring the scholarship that has developed around the concept of 'camp',[34] here, I am simply attentive to underlining how the metaphor of camping specifically represents the heterotopia of Lampedusa as a contradictory embodiment of the migration industry, where a military barracks can coexist with holiday resorts and reception/detention centres for migrants (see Foucault, 1986; Pugliese, 2009, 2010; Friese, 2012).

The title of this chapter, and the scene 'The camping area', functions as a metaphor of those contradictory aspects which cohabitate in the touristic paradisiac/detention island of Lampedusa. The use of metaphor here, reflects their status as "powerful devices for shaping perception and experience", as they can carry across or transfer one set of concepts to another set of concepts (Owen, 2001: xv). In this way the scene allows for intuitive, inclusive, and holistic understandings which cannot be possible following using linear reasoning, instead one can allow the seamless leap from one concept to another. Used in this way, metaphors are great methodological tools for feminist peace research and conflict transformation, as they operate within intersectionality, enabling multiple meaning and inter-connecting individual stories with wider pictures and phenomena (Lyytikäinen et al., 2020; Rajan et al., 2021).

2.4 Summary of the chapter

This chapter explored the genesis and journey of the Askavusa association through its genealogy and some of the activities in which it has been involved. This necessarily included a discussion about its glocalised character, the particular biographies of those who I worked with during the two workshops, and the relational context in which we were embedded in during our journey together. These relationships, and the power dynamics between myself as a researcher/facilitator and the participants, were discussed through the changing aspects of the collective experience, showing how potential disparities in power and influence over the production were overcome. Through the scene that was considered in this chapter, the nature of potential difficulties that might be encountered in the co-production of knowledge were embraced and the limitations,

[34] I refer here to the contribution of the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben and his seminal book *Homo sacer: il potere sovrano e la nuda vita* (1995).

in so far as they pertained to this example, were argued to have minimal impact on the collective quality of the play.

The relational dynamics were primarily conditioned by the meaning we afforded to the everyday lives of the participants, and this is shown in the analytically consideration of the rich social and political landscape. This analysis was necessary to the interpretation of voices in our collective play and established the foundation for the analysis in the forthcoming chapters of how the dramaturgical trajectory was shaped by in/visibilities and contradictions and written using metaphor.

The chapter was also attentive to a specific theme that arises throughout the thesis, namely that the creative process is not, and cannot be, linear. To illustrate this, the explication of how the scene 'the camping area' was devised, makes clear that the stages of production are ones which necessarily overlap, are revisited, and redesigned. Further, such non-linearity only makes sense within a collective environment where all participants are considered as moral equals in the course of the creative process.

The significance of non-expert knowledge is able demonstrated by the participants' use of items that had been collected from the shore or even thrown away in the dump. These items, e.g., babies' bottles, teapots, saucepans, lifejackets amongst others, were assumed to be the possessions of migrants. The individual stories of the migrants are largely unknown but ultimately, they would have found themselves in the reception centre or been lost to the sea. The careful and sensitive cultivation of these artefacts demanded no academic or artistic expertise, yet were essential to the development of the scene, and ultimately the play.

3 SCHOOLS - BETWEEN PEACE RESEARCH AND ARTS

> Teacher (on the phone): - A beautiful tent. Can you imagine me teaching in a tent, Antonia? You know, like those at the fair. Oh no, I mean, a beautiful tent like the ones we had at the Unity Festival in Pavullo. And instead of sandwiches, tortellini, sausages and beers, you have a class full of pupils. Can you imagine? Yes, in Lampedusa. I am telling you, they want us to work in a tent, because we've run out of classroom space. No, no, nothing surprises me anymore. What did you say? No, on the beach would be too much. You know, the migrant boats… but they've moved us quite near to the airport runway. Of course, with the arrivals and departures. The noise? Well, it is nothing compared to the dust. You should speak with the school's cleaning lady. She tells me that when she sweeps the floor everything is black. What did you say? Well, yes, you are right, the tent could work on the beach… It's not a bad idea, you know! I should suggest it to the director, just as a provocation. You never know, maybe one day the powers that be in Rome will call it The Good School or School 3.0. Well, I have to run. Lots of books to mark. Speak soon.
>
> (Extract from 'Schools', *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border*, 2017)

This monologue from 'Schools' was inspired by the memory of an accident in a primary school in 2014. During the school day, and while pupils were inside the building, the municipality organised a charge proof test on the roof of the school with no preliminary communication to the families or teachers. The test consisted of shaking the building to check its resistance, and the effect was similar to an earthquake. In the classrooms, some pieces of wall fell, creating panic and concern among pupils and teachers. Despite the scene 'Schools' being dramatic and highly tense, this extract is quite ironic and uses sarcasm to denounce the otherwise serious situation of the generally poor condition of public infrastructures on the island and implicitly censure the lack of transparency in the public system.

This chapter has a dual purpose: to define my position in the research, while introducing the interdisciplinary conceptual framework used to explore and understand the context of Lampedusa and the place of our community-based theatre experience in it. The framework is composed of three pillars, each with a different function to the research. The first two pillars are military geographies and slow violence which emerge from the research material as topical issues (3.2). They work conceptually, in exploring what militarisation means at the border from a critical perspective. The metaphor of

moral imagination is the third pillar of my framework and binds the conceptual and empirical elements of my methodology (3.3). Moral imagination is the lens through which the implementation of the community-based experience is magnified and discussed. This is explored fully in Chapter 5, where community-based theatre as a co-production of knowledge is shown to have an effect on conflict transformation processes and inspires moral imagination.

Finally, section 3.4 revisits the genesis of the scene 'Schools', where the presence and power of the multiple voices which emerge from the scene is discussed in the context of the chapter with reference to the meaning of the creative process.

3.1 My position

Theatre has the nature of developing multiple skills: communication skills, the practice of active listening and professional empathy, watching our own image(s) in the mirror and taking advantage of the necessary distance to calm down and reflect deeply on our own actions (Oddey, 1994; Heddon and Milling, 2006). It is also a powerful tool for the political, metaphorical, and bodily exploration of humankind, society, individuals and relationships between people (Nicholson, 2005; Thompson, 2003; Boal, 2008). For these reasons, it can be argued that theatre offers much to processes of conflict transformation where they share much conceptual common ground. In particular, theatre can be used in mediators' training to develop tools to improve mediators' skills and to practice those ideal transformations "of social relations in the direction of emancipation" (Wibben et al, 2019:88). The link between theatre practice and conflict transformation is a vibrant presence that weaves through the methodological techniques that are employed in this thesis.

Within the field of peace research, this thesis is positionally aligned to those feminist peace researchers who advocate nonviolence, and support conflict transformation theories that echo "transdisciplinary, intersectional, normative and transnational" approaches (Wibben et al, 2019:86). Drawing upon traditions of peace and conflict research and feminist security studies, feminist peace research "tends to further challenge disciplinary (and other) boundary-making, allowing for conceptual and methodological crosspollination to occur" (Wibben et al., 2019:86). Within the various ways of describing Feminist Peace Research, the broad definition proposed by Laura McLeod and Maria O'Reilly, who combine critical peace and conflict studies with feminist interventions, is followed here. For them, "feminist PCS research seeks to develop and apply feminist theory and/or methodology to produce insights about issues of peace and conflict" (McCleod and O'Reilly, 2019:128). From this perspective, the application and development of alternative approaches to conducting research are the distinguishing

elements of feminist peace research (Premaratna and Rajkobal, 2021; Björkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic, 2021).

A further aspect to feminist peace research is the desire to create positive social change (Boulding, 2000) while making the effort "to decolonise the modes of knowledge production" (McLeod and O´Reilly, 2019:129). Feminist peace research methodologies favour bottom-up and participatory approaches, as a means to challenge the hierarchical gendered structures of society by including marginalised and 'out of sight' throughout the research process (Vaittinen, 2017). In this respect, the focus on everyday aspects of peace and conflict (Väyrynen, 2019; Björkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic, 2021), prioritises "lived experience at the centre of the research process" (McLeod and O'Reilly, 2019:128).

For feminist peace research, conflict is an unavoidable aspect of life and an opportunity for creative learning (Boulding, 1989). Looked at in this way, conflict becomes a chance rather than a challenge, and has the potential to shine a light on new understandings about humankind's relationships, societies and lives (Lederach, 2005; Wibben et al, 2019). Theatre, I would argue, follows a similar trajectory. In specific circumstances, theatre can become the means for practicing conflict transformation, and a challenge to structural inequalities which transforms "human relations in the direction of justice" (Wibben et al, 2019:87; see also van Erven, 2001; Bell, 2015; Bell and Pahl, 2017; Durose et al., 2012). Moreover, it constitutes a tool for enhancing learning opportunities. It allows unknown spaces and perspectives to be discovered in locations where complex and paradoxical contradictions coexist (Lederach, 2005).

In the context of this research, theatre is more than an exploration of the possible, it is a gate that entices individuals – researcher included - into an emotional, physical and mental collectivity. It provides a scaffold which supports them, not only in matters of disclosure, but also through participatory approaches that enable individual and collective empowerment. Taken together this plays a crucial role in enhancing the relationship between researcher and participants (Premaratna and Rajkobal, 2021). Theatre practice is a metaphorical laboratory, physical space where people can push (to a greater or lesser extent) their own boundaries, and experiment with uncomfortable feelings in a safe setting. In the world of theatre, it is possible for participants to learn something new and unexpected about themselves and others, and where the practice of self-reflection and sharing are explicitly encouraged (Nicholson, 2005; Taylor, 2004; van Erven, 2001). Theatre is a holistic form of art. As such, it sits comfortably with research techniques, and practitioners, where peace and conflict research are embraced as a necessarily interdisciplinary and holistic realm, with the awareness of the limited potential of an individual to unilaterally grasp the myriad shapes that such complexity

implies (Arielli and Scotto, 2003; Galtung, 2004; Lederach, 2005; Patfoort, 2006; Rosenberg, 2003).

This interdisciplinary positionality finds fulsome and clear expression in the following sections, where I explore the two pillars of my conceptual framework intertwined with the context of Lampedusa: 'military geographies' (Woodward, 2004) and 'slow violence' (Nixon, 2011). These two concepts are at the core of the analysis in Chapter 6, regarding the topical issues emerging from the community-based theatre experience, indeed key elements of their conceptual DNA filter through the entire thesis. This is especially apparent in the discussion and analysis of *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border*, where interviews, fieldnotes and online data about Lampedusa are placed in the appropriate theoretical and conceptual context.

3.2 Conceptual pillars

The first conceptual pillar that I use to explore the effects of the military presence on Lampedusa is military geographies, developed by human geographer Rachel Woodward (2004) in the field of gender and military studies. Consistent with the feminist tradition, Woodward notes that militarism, defined as an ideological tendency, is commonly distinguished from militarisation which generally understood as a socio-political process (Enloe, 2004). Approaching the distinction somewhat differently, she develops a concept which broadly embraces the two phenomena, focusing on "the geographies constituted and expressed by the material practices of military activities and the discursive strategies of militarism" (Woodward, 2004:4). The next section considers the history of the military presence in Lampedusa through the conceptual lens of military geographies. This is considered within the feminist peace research tradition and its methodology of looking at militarisation as a phenomenon which involves societies in their mundaneness (Enloe, 2004; Cockburn, 2012).

The second conceptual pillar explored in this chapter is slow violence. Slow violence is best understood as a hidden and gradually increasing violence which has long-term damaging effects on the environment, on society, and on its inhabitants. This concept was developed by Rob Nixon (2011) in the context of environmental violence and has only been marginally used in peace research.[35] However, the following discussion, contend that the importance of the concept has been hitherto unrecognised in the wider discipline. As the previous chapter asserts, and as Tiina Vaittinen points out, feminist

[35] See, for instance, the contributions of Tiina Vaittinen (2017) and Nicole George (2014). Also, in migration research Karina Horsti and Päivi Pirkkalainen (2021) have examined deportations and deportability as a form of slow violence.

peace research takes into consideration different forms of violence in variant empirical contexts; crucially, it pays "attention to what is going on at our own doorsteps too" (in Wibben et al, 2019: 98).

Including slow violence in the field of peace research, implies an interdisciplinary engagement in revealing the hidden and long-lasting process of environmental or societal intoxication. The importance of considering slow violence as a conceptual pillar of a peace research dissertation is in the interdisciplinary perspective that brings; it connects environmental issues with social conflicts, not only among the poorest societies in the so-called Global South, but also in the richer and wealthier contexts of the Global North.

While revealing how slow violence emerges in "the form of neglected care needs" in the apparent privileged and well-organised context of the Finnish elderly care system (Vaittinen, 2017:46-48), with concrete examples, Vaittinen shows how intersectional injustices are underpinned by slow violence, regardless of the societal context in which it occurs. Drawing on the insights of slow violence, in conjunction with peace research, demands an interdisciplinary approach to research that can reveal the hidden, and long-lasting, process of environmental or societal intoxication.

Nixon, for example, urges the acknowledgement of the challenges that writer-activists face in overcoming the contemporary environmental crisis. In this respect, the concept of slow violence enables a more thoroughgoing discussion of the militarisation of the border of Europe, by allowing unravelling a complex and slowly evolving socio-political and environmental conflict. As Nixon puts it, slow violence is "…a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all" (Nixon, 2011: 2). In addition to the above, it also helps to locate myself in the research, and the thesis, as a scholar activist (or writer activist), an element that is conspicuous throughout the thesis, especially in Chapter 6, where in/visibilities are discussed.

3.2.1 Military Geographies

With the locution 'military geographies' Rachel Woodward evokes

> how militarism and military activities create spaces, places, environments and landscapes with reference to a distinct moral order (and) how wider geographies are touched and moulded, more indirectly, by militarism and the activities of military forces (Woodward, 2004:3).

The history of Lampedusa, then, can be uncontroversially regarded as an exemplar of military geographies. Due to its strategic location in the middle of Mediterranean Sea, the island has, for many centuries, been a site of contention for several populations. As noted in the previous chapter, but worth repeating here, ancient Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians and Romans all had strategic interests in the commercial and military potential of this small island between the Italian peninsula and the shores of North Africa. After the crisis of the Roman Empire, at the end of the 3rd Century AD, Lampedusa was disputed between Vandals, Byzantines and Saracens, and later, between the 7th and 8th Centuries, it was populated by Arab Muslims who controlled the territory around the Mediterranean Sea. By the 10th Century there were 973 inhabitants on the island, all Muslim, dedicated to fishing and trading (Taranto, 2016). However, for much of the period beyond the 10th Century, the island was abandoned, only sporadically seeing short visits from travellers and adventurers. In other words, the historical records show that for long periods there had been little, if any, interests in settling on the island (Palmieri, 2016).

The picture gets somewhat more detailed from the 15th Century, when Alphonso V of Aragon, the King of Naples, nominated Giovanni de Caro to be the governor of the island (Nesti, 2016; Taranto, 2016). Thereafter, the name of the island appeared in several agreements and trades as land for agrarian cultivation until the middle of the 19th Century, when the Bourbon family, as the first colony of inhabitants settled there permanently (Nesti, 2016; Palmieri, 2016; Taranto, 2016). The role of the military then, is a recurrent theme in the island's history. This is not just a reflection of battles prior to the 20th Century, but also as a place of detention for political enemies during Italy's Fascist Era (1922-1943), and later in the early 1970s as a reimagined military theatre during the Cold War, and a base for NATO as a pre-emptive action against the perceived (and unmaterialised) threat of missile attacks from Libya (Cuttitta, 2012; Nesti, 2016; Nicolosi, 2016; Taranto, 2016). As Joseph Pugliese suggests, this military identity has been constructed over decades of "colonial genealogies of penal colonies and gulag

archipelago" which was settled during the Italian unification, when Southern Italian regions were colonialised by the Northern Italian authorities (Pugliese, 2009: 665-69).

Woodward's notion of military geographies uses themes which conjure geographic control over space, military-economic geographies, military environmentalism, militarised landscapes, and challenges to variant military geographies (Woodward, 2004). Woodward's militarism is not collocated within the geographic scope of armed conflicts, rather, it is related to the ways in which states continuously "shape wider economic, social, environmental and cultural geographies, and produce their own ordering of space" and prepare themselves "in order to be able to wage war and engage in military operations" (Woodward, 2004:4). In other words, while it does not directly imply war or armed conflicts, military geographies are expressions of the practices of military activities and are compelled by the military strategies that lead to war(s). Whilst the local conditions in Lampedusa are not those shaped by direct engagement with an armed conflict, the reshaping of the island over five decades, specifically the growth and expansion of military infrastructures and activities, is part of what Woodward would recognise as a wider military involvement in which wars and violent acts are included.

According to many peace activists and scholars, NATO's involvement on Lampedusa is considered as the "sentinel of the Mediterranean Sea",[36] and lies at the heart of the continuous intelligence and strategic conflict dynamic. Recent decades have seen a shift "from war fighting to crime fighting at the borders" (Andersson, 2014:71), reflecting how the security forces in places like Lampedusa have increasingly combined military and humanitarian functions. In this respect, the militarisation of the border becomes officially justified under the umbrella of the humanitarian mission of saving and protecting lives in potential danger. This, however, disguises other significant reasons behind this process: preventing new migration; potential terroristic attacks; installing and supporting private and public fund systems to strengthen the security forces at the border. In addition to these, and arguably one of the most powerful symbols of the military-humanitarian nexus at the border, is the cultural and political affirmation of a particular conception of European identity through its frontiers (Andersson, 2014; Cuttitta, 2012). Notwithstanding the evident denial of the island's diverse history, and Europe's increasingly diverse present, many of those crossing the Mediterranean Sea and landing in Lampedusa were fleeing from wars or conflicts, the origins of which, were paradoxically European and/or American involvement in their home countries. In almost every case, the protracted violence they have been suffering from, did not begin or end with a precarious journey in a flimsy boat to reach Europe (Catania, 2015). In fleeing from conflict and persecution, what migrants unfortunately found in Lampedusa

[36] See, for example, Antonio Mazzeo's contribution in www.mosaicodipace.it.

was not always characterised by safety, security and respect for human rights (Camilli, 2018).

Considering Lampedusa through the lens of military geographies, demands a consideration of the moral implications of the military footprint that is stamped on it. Using Woodward's words:

> the study of military geographies involves a moral decision. (…) Studying military geographies means making a moral judgement about the need to think critically about militarism. (…) military geographies are not politically neutral (Woodward, 2004: 9).

This urgent call for a moral imperative to raise the issue of how certain phenomena are not only related to armed environments. In fact, using the term 'military' in a mundane context where there is neither direct violence, nor armed conflict, suggests the opportunity for a deeper and more conscious reflection on forms of violence and conflict that the militarised border of Europe presents (Jutila et al, 2008; Bernazzoli and Flint, 2010; Enloe, 2004:220; Wibben et al, 2019).

The impact of the military presence can be also felt in the economic and social changes at the local level. Military economic geographies refers to the "shaping of space by economic forces exerted by the military presence and its activities, and the consequent impact on social relations" (Woodward, 2004: 39). In Lampedusa, the reaction to the augmented presence of military personnel on the island has seen a marked increase in economic activity around accommodation and restoration, which has transformed the traditional economy based upon seasonal rhythms (Orsini, 2015; Baracco, 2015; Cuttitta, 2012). At first glance, these might be considered positive changes, breathing new life into the local economy, however, as shown in similar places, such changes quickly created new social relations and economic dependencies with yet unknown, and underestimated, impact on local people's lives (Woodward, 2004).

Lampedusa has already experienced notable changes to its economy. For example, the main economic activity for many decades was fisheries, and later, in the early 90s, tourism became the most relevant source of income for the island (Nesti, 2016; Taranto, 2016; Baracco, 2015; Orsini, 2015). The military presence, however, is regarded by many as a considerably more intrusive change, one that is slowly shaping and permanently affecting the local life in the island in ways previous adjustments did not. What if all the military personnel and the NGOs staff working in the migration industry abruptly left the island? What would happen if all those lodging infrastructures were suddenly not required? Would those working in those sectors be able to convert their economic activities into new ones? Whilst such questions are unanswerable with any certainty, the doubts point to significant uncertainty surrounding the future of Lampedusa's economy. These ambiguities, residing within mundane camouflage exerting control over space,

demonstrate how "military control (…) requires attention just as much as big dramatic events like armed conflict" (Woodward, 2004: 40).

3.2.2 Slow violence

Rob Nixon (2011) coined the concept of slow violence by employing a transdisciplinary perspective that embraced environmental justice, climate change and environmental humanities. Slow violence accounts for gradual, differed, and invisible violence with long-term effects not initially considered as violence (Nixon, 2011). Due to its invisibility, slow violence is critically connected to the concept of structural violence, but at the same time differs from it by adding the dimensions of time and space. In fact, while structural violence is fixed and firmly established, slow violence is always shifting, gradually changing all the time. As Thom Davies sharply noted whilst discussing slow violence and toxic geographies, there are "intimate connections between structural and slow forms of harm", since "structural inequality can mutate into noxious instances of slow violence" (Davies, 2019:1). Since the consequences of such a form of violence evolves so gradually, it may take generations to for its effects to be meaningfully perceptible; slow violence is unseen, even for those living in polluted places.

If slow violence happens "out of sight" the crucial question is, "out of sight to whom?" (Davies, 2019:6). This necessitates an excavation of asymmetric positions between the communities who live in polluted geographies and inhabit the "power structures and politics that sustain the uneven geographies of pollution" (Davies, 2019:6). In this regard, Nixon notes that the theory of structural violence implies the need to reconsider "different notions of causation and agency with respect to violent effects" (Nixon, 2011:11). In contrast, slow violence, while sharing key features with structural violence, allows for the consideration of several open issues that go beyond the thorny question of agency. In this respect, it embodies an appreciation of the "more complex descriptive categories of violence enacted slowly over time" (Nixon, 2011:11).

Cynthia Enloe echoes elements of slow violence in her pivotal work *The curious feminist: Searching for Women in a New Age of Empire*:

> Militarization is a sociopolitical process. Militarization is the multitracked process by which the roots of militarism are driven deep down into the soil of a society—or of a non-governmental organisation, a governmental department, an ethnic group, or an international agency. (…) Most militarizing processes occur during what is misleadingly labeled 'peacetime' (Enloe, 2004:219-220).

Thus, considering the militarisation of the border as a process, rather than a series of random and isolated decisions, presents the opportunity to "monitor, explain and

challenge" the patterns through which militarisms gain legitimacy and popularity, not only among the elites, but also within the local communities (Enloe, 2004:219). While militarisation at the border might be not initially seen as violence at all, its manifestation over time does represent an example of slow violence. More specifically, slow violence occurs in Lampedusa through the invisible action of ten military radar installations settled in the island, their electromagnetic pollution and their unpredictable health consequences on lives.

Slow violence also has perceptible environmental consequences, such as the way in which the patterns of migrating birds have changed and the obvious degradation of the island's biodiversity by militarised land consumption (Engels et al, 2014; Coraddu, 2015). It is also evident, when access to the land is increasingly limited by military powers, whose activities gradually change the landscape, as well as the local culture and economy (Woodward, 2004). In addition to environmental issues, slow violence is also expressed at the socio-economic level, where the integrity of the island's social fabric, in the form of health services, public infrastructure, drinkable tap water, and necessary educational provision, has been in long term decline.

The notion of slow violence presents the peculiarity of being neither spectacular, nor highly visible, like the explosive eruption of a singular event. It is not a phenomenon that acts in immediate time, rather, its effects occur over the long-term, in a creeping and hidden space that is "incremental and accretive", and whose "calamitous repercussions (are) playing out across a range of temporal scale" (Nixon, 2011:2). In this regard, Lampedusa embodies a paradox between hyper-visibility and invisibility; the hyper-visibility of the border contrasts with the invisibility of those who cross the border or permanently live there (cf. Chapter 6).

During the period 1990-2010, the island was the focus of mediatic attention, and became a stage for a spectacularization of the borderization of Europe and the alleged migration emergency (Cuttitta, 2012). With the support of the media, recent decades have witnessed interventions by policy makers, military forces and humanitarian organisations in Lampedusa to reinforce the image that Europe – and its southernmost border – was facing a serious and dangerous emergency, embodied by flows of migration.[37] The migration phenomenon through the Mediterranean Sea towards Europe was rhetorically and consciously labelled as an 'invasion', despite the fact that the majority of Europe's irregular migrants were those who had overstayed their visa,

[37] However, the emergency has been alternatively tackled as both temporary and permanent; temporary emergency has meant short-term politics, which tend not to look forward in the future, but instead try to accommodate things in a short range of time, to clamp down on the immediate problem without taking into consideration its complexities. The migration emergency should also be considered as a dimension of trade with the European Union so as to obtain something from negotiations, which opens a possibility to benefit business at the local, regional and national levels (Nicolosi, 2016).

and people crossing the borders legally by land, rather than the sea. The migration to the island by boat has been, and remains, of considerably less statistical importance than is reported by mainstream sources of the media, governments, or other political authorities (Andersson, 2014; Cuttitta, 2012). Such political and mediatic construction, especially since the bureaucratised humanitarianism had reached its highest visibility and testing ground (Dines et al., 2015; Cuttitta, 2012), induced the feeling that military intervention was necessary. However, what the media left unspoken and hidden were the other aspects of the European border: not only the individual stories and identities of those risking their lives crossing the Mediterranean Sea, but also the stories of those living at the border.

Before migration became an officialised and bureaucratised issue dealt with by authorities, migrants were often accommodated by local people, and organised autonomously through communitarian practices of solidarity (Taranto, 2016; Nesti, 2016; Rinelli, 2016; Friese, 2010). By 2004, the deep sense of solidarity that Lampedusan people had been demonstrating for so long, was officially recognised by the award of a *Medaglia d'oro al valor civile* – the Gold Medal of Civil Valour - by the then President of Italian Republic (Cuttitta, 2012). Even during the critical situation of Spring 2011, when thousands of Tunisians arrived in Lampedusa, the local inhabitants demonstrated their solidarity by opening their homes or holiday houses (see Orsini, 2015; Nesti, 2016). Such local stories of solidarities, however, were blurred, and to some extent forgotten, amidst the desire to overwhelm them with the vociferous publicity of a few cases of frustration and tiredness, which were also exacerbated by the presence of military forces (Nesti, 2016). The more recent mediatic noise on Lampedusa has similarly shifted attention from the cases of local solidarity, to the bureaucratisation of the humanitarian action, where military personnel 'rescuing' migrants became a performance to eulogise their 'heroic' efforts.[38]

The narratives about humanitarianism in Lampedusa, then, created distortions and omissions about what happens in the island on the daily basis. In the midst of a political spectacle being conjured (Edelman, 1988), the basic needs, concerns and agendas of Lampedusan people were underrepresented, misrepresented, and ignored, in favour of the image dominated by the mediatisation of militarised humanitarianism, where the military personnel appear as armed saviours. In Lampedusa, the hidden slow violence becomes even more imperceptible as other representations and narratives became hyper-visible.

[38]See, for example, the Italian tv productions regarding the Coast Guard working in Lampedusa broadcasted by the national tv channel Rai: *Lampedusa* (2016), *La scelta di Catia – 80 miglia a sud di Lampedusa* (2014), *Frontiera* (2018)

A further dilemma that arises from the complexity of slow violence is its connection with casualties.

> Casualties of slow violence – human and environmental – are the casualties most likely not to be seen, not to be counted. Casualties of slow violence become light-weight, disposable casualties, with dire consequences for the ways wars are remembered, which in turn has dire consequences for the projected casualties from future wars (Nixon, 2011:13).

Slow violence emerges in dramatic form when looking at the increased rate of adult deaths from cancer in Lampedusa.[39] Although it is not possible to scientifically confirm causalities between deaths and electromagnetic pollution in Lampedusa, the representational challenges are in themselves significant, especially when activists explore "how to devise arresting stories, images, and symbols adequate to the pervasive but elusive violence of delayed effects" (Nixon, 2011:3). In this regard, Davies suggests that "it is the communities who are exposed to slow violence who are best placed to witness its gradual injuries" (Davies, 2019:2-3). Engaging with "the challenges posed by the relative invisibility of slow violence", namely, "representational, narrative and strategic" (Nixon, 2011:2), and structural (Davies, 2019:3), slow violence can be made intelligible and visible by working with the communities who are affected by it and possess the knowledge and long-term memory of changes in their geographies (Davies, 2019).

As indicated earlier, this research explores novel methodologies, which utilise the above concepts as a means to reveal the "out of sight" violence at the border of Europe, through the (re)presentation of the everyday observations and voices of the local community. The collective practice of making theatre and co-producing a play led explicitly and intentionally to give life to those "narratives, images, and symbols already present within the communities affected by pollution" (Davies, 2018:1549).

[39] For the annual report of Sicily Region *Atlante Sanitario della Sicilia 2016* (Health Atlas of Sicily 2016), *Assessorato della Salute* (Health Department of Sicily Region), Lampedusa had the highest rate of deaths for cancer of the whole Sicily.

3.3 A third pillar - moral imagination

The study of military geographies "involves questioning the moral authority of militarism, the rights and the wrongs of the use of violence in pursuit of political and economic ends, and the morality of the consequences of military preparedness" (Woodward, 2004:9). Moreover, it explicitly demands action that involves, "making a moral judgement about the need to think critically about militarism" (Woodward, 2004:9). This demand is underpinned by the fact that "military geographies are not politically neutral, and the study of military geographies should not pretend otherwise" (Woodward, 2004:9). Woodward's claims resonate with Nixon's (2011) argument for innovative engagement so as to represent emerging forms of violence by asking how slow violence is revealed. The response is to galvanise the pivotal power of writer-activists; those who can play a political, imaginative, and strategic role in making accessible, visible and tangible what has been kept hidden and invisible (Nixon, 2011:15).

The alignment of activism with research finds epistemological kinship with the notion of moral imagination (Lederach, 2005). The metaphor of moral imagination provides a prescriptive tenor to research by evoking what happens when violence gets transcended, and by giving ethical ballast to anticipate the creation of conditions for peace. Although Lederach grounded his views in his lengthy experience in settings of protracted conflict, where violence was visible and tangible, his notion of moral imagination has much to offer where violence is characterised by invisible and slow patterns. My claim is that practices of participatory theatre act as the fifth gear to these concepts, providing a unique space where the hidden can be made visible, and the silent can be heard. With Askavusa I developed a specific methodology of community-based theatre encompassing facets of the concepts above which I call the four steps strategy (cf. Chapter 5), to reveal the unseen features of the militarised border of Europe.

In his formulation of moral imagination, Lederach makes extensive reference to the realm of art and to the process of artistic creation as a parallel metaphor to transcend violence, transform situations of conflict, and develop peacebuilding processes. At the root of the transformation of violence, Lederach envisages four disciplines,[40] all of which entail imagination to establish the essence of the peacebuilding process. In his words:

> The moral imagination requires the capacity to imagine ourselves in a web of relationships that includes our enemies, the ability to sustain a paradoxical curiosity that embraces complexity without reliance on dualistic polarity, the fundamental belief in and pursuit of

[40] Lederach uses the word discipline in its normative sense, to mean rule.

> the creative act, the acceptance of the inherent risk of stepping into the mystery of the unknown that lies beyond the far too familiar landscape of violence (Lederach, 2005:5).

Moral imagination is intrinsically related to the methodology of this research. The four disciplines are the core of the metaphor of moral imagination and found full expression in our community-based theatre experience. Every step of the four steps strategy (mentioned above) is related to the four disciplines of moral imagination and represents a key task in the process of transforming conflict. Conflict transformation occurred in the collective theatrical practice through revealing the daily invisible features at the border of Europe. The following sections show how the four disciplines resonated with our community-based theatre experience.

First, the centrality of 'relationships' in overcoming sharply polarized conflicts, recognises the interdependence between conflicting people in their web of interactions. The ability to overcome resistance to seeing ourselves in a dialogical scenario which includes our enemies, gives the needed motivation and 'fuel' to engage practically ourselves in its fulfilment. The essence of relationships is that they necessarily embrace aspects such as communication, interaction, change and reciprocity, which draw the parties into a process of interaction that inevitably will bring them to a change.

What matters in this respect, is not so much the relationship itself, or even if it happens or not, but rather the exercise of imagining, putting ourselves in the condition of the change. Although turning points (of change) cannot be controlled or planned by the mere application of a technique or a recipe, Lederach affirms that "they must be explored and understood in the context of something that approximates the artistic process, imbued as it is with creativity, skill, serendipity and craftsmanship" (Lederach, 2005:29). Critically, for this thesis, Lederach's understanding of the relationship means that it can be stimulated, explored, and imagined, or lived through a theatre experience which portrays others' points of view and authentically crafts multiple voices. The theatre workshops experimented extensively with such practices, including the creative discussions which devised narratives of those with different opinions and positions than the participants. As a result, where appropriate, the scenes presented a multiplicity of voices and views, and also reflective moments that allowed the potential for the audience to "think critically about militarism" (Woodward, 2004:9).

Despite the on-stage absence of military characters[41] within the whole dramaturgy, the presence of military infrastructure and personnel is perceptible. Throughout *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border*, all the speaking characters acknowledge the military presence and the unavoidable fact that they are imbricated in the same web of relationships. Even scenes where opinions are passionately displayed, the underlying tone is one of

[41] For more discussion about the in/visible presence of military personnel in the play, see Chapter 6.

meaningful exploration of the complex network of relationships in Lampedusa. Thus, the play explicitly recognises the interdependency that occurs between people in society in general, and within their specific contexts. As Lederach puts it,

> The centrality of relationship provides the context and potential for breaking violence, for it brings people into the pregnant moments of the moral imagination: the space of recognition that ultimately the quality of our life is dependent on the quality of life of others (Lederach, 2005:35).

Secondly, the discipline of paradoxical curiosity invites contradictory elements to coalesce in order to embrace a greater and more complex multitude of truths. Thanks to the paradoxical coexistence of contradictions, the simplistic and simplified dualistic polarisations between right and wrong, victim and perpetrator can be transformed. Such contradictions must be clearly explored in all their different dimensions without judgment: face values, "the way how things appear and are presented", and heart value, "the way how things are perceived and interpreted by people" (Lederach, 2005:36-37). According to Lederach, paradoxical curiosity allows the emergence of what is hidden and "holds apparently contradictory and even violently opposed social energies together" (Lederach, 2005:36). The practice of community-based theatre creates the opportunity to collectively experience and teach what Lederach calls paradoxical curiosity. In fact, the practice of theatre provides the ideal space to "develop and live with a high degree of ambiguity" (Lederach, 2005:37), which is what happens when judgement is suspended, and face and heart values are explored in conflict situations. For example, through the magic rule of "what if", theatre practice allows the embodiment of other personalities, but still remain themselves. The exercise of being in a role, or putting oneself into another's shoes, is basic training for empathy and active listening; the two crucial elements to paradoxical curiosity. Similar exercises, practices and dedication are necessary for the artistic process and for the training of curiosity. The tools of curiosity are questions, specifically the so-called "licit questions". These are questions that are not answerable as right or wrong, instead they elicit opportunities to explore reality in all its different features, paradoxes and complexities.[42] Similarly, our community-based experience practically engaged with what Cynthia Enloe called "feminist curiosity" (Enloe, 2004), by paying attention "to things that conventionally are treated as if they were either 'natural' or, even if acknowledged to be artificial, are imagined to be 'trivial', that is, imagined to be without explanatory significance" (Enloe, 2004:220).

[42] The idea of licit questions (*domande legittime*) was developed by the Italian pedagogist Daniele Novara (1997).

Thirdly, Lederach suggests that "the moral imagination finds its clearest expression in the appearance of the creative act" (Lederach, 2005:38). Space for creativity is a necessary condition for the exploration of something new and unexpected from the everyday, and the essential requirement for the transformation of reality and the birth of a new world. Throughout the theatre experience, the participants explored something hitherto unknown about Lampedusa, and wrote collectively with their bodies, minds and emotional universes, about the fears, the nightmares, the dreams and the wishes that they harboured. As result, *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border*, amongst other things, called for the urgent requirement to give birth to a new Lampedusa, one reconnected to mother nature, and better equipped with health and social services for the community of the island.

Fourthly, the creative act works together with the willingness to take risk, which requires a "step into the unknown without any guarantee of success or even safety" (Lederach, 2005:39). To fully realise moral imagination, Lederach suggests that we need to immerse ourselves into the known geographies of violence in order to "explore (…) the nature of risk and vocation, which permits the rise of an imagination that carries people toward a new, though mysterious, and often unexpected shore" (Lederach, 2005:39). His call is akin to a faith. Indeed, a belief in the power of art and creativity can be like a religious acceptance, in that it shares a belief in the possibility of participating in a mysterious miracle. And, yes, practising the arts teaches us to accept the mysteries that lie behind the visible; sometimes we can touch it, sometimes we cannot reach it, but still, we pursue it, taking the risk of failure but partaking nonetheless in the invaluable experience of creation.

Chapters 5 and 6 explore in greater detail how the artistic process in our community-based theatre experience relates to moral imagination; transforming the invisibilities of slow violence and military geographies embedded in Lampedusa, into something new and unexpected. By proceeding along the four disciplines of moral imagination, the experience revealed and made visible hidden and unspoken features of the militarised border of Europe. In both the structure of our theatre workshops, and our creative outcome in the form of a play, the different but connected calls from Woodward (2004), Nixon (2011) and Lederach (2005) were accommodated by the experience.

Taken together, these three conceptual pillars enabled the examination of militarisation at the border from a critical perspective, and the process of co-producing knowledge through a community-based theatre experience. They unlock the opportunity of contributing to the field of peace research with a new interdisciplinary perspective. Indeed, military geographies and slow violence allow the critical analysis of the invisible features at the border of Europe, and moral imagination acts as a metaphor, that explains our community-based theatre experience as a practice of conflict transformation.

3.4 The power of different voices

In placing the conceptual pillars in context, the richness of multiple voices is explored, through the genealogy of the scene 'Schools', showing the variant ways in which the artistic and research processes are intertwined.

The opening of this chapter with the short monologue from the scene 'Schools', was specifically chosen to illustrate the powerful role irony plays in both theatre and peace research. Especially in conflict transformation, irony has a great power, despite scarce attention it has received in literature.[43] Irony is part of the process of seeing a situation as an outsider, but nevertheless close enough to distinguish the meaningful details essential for an artist as a peace worker. It allows a step back from the conflict to see our own position with new eyes; to step back from our own creation and revise it from the beginning. When opposing parties have the chance to see their conflict from a different angle, it is possible for them to see opportunities for change and learning that arise. Conversely, irony also has a powerful ability to give uncomfortable truths to the mundane which challenges cosy boundaries, a crucial element of the good in theatre and successful practices of conflict transformation. Moreover, irony makes possible the handling of complexities by evoking different layers of meanings at the same time; it allows for the combination of diverse elements that coexist in the same setting. This informed the use of specific extracts from scenes at the opening of every chapter; such a structure allows for the engagement with the multiple layered metaphors that lie behind the scenes' (and chapters') titles.

This applies equally to the research as a whole, and especially in this chapter where concepts from peace research, applied theatre, critical geography and environmental studies were blended to design my conceptual framework. Irony requires honesty, and attitudes of self-criticism and self-reflection, which are not goal driven, but rather processes of knowledge production (Lederach, 2005). As I consider myself involved in such processes, and on a journey towards peace research that has involved many years, this is one small instance; one story about how community-based theatre can contribute to peace research.

For this chapter, schools are taken as places where people learn who they want to be, what social identities they share in the collectivities they inhabit, and how they are supposed to learn to cohabit with diversity. In the scene 'Schools', different points of view, and voices take positions in their diversity and fragilities. 'Schools' was one of the scenes written during the second workshop in 2017. During that phase, collective writing

[43] See for example the contributions of Marianella Sclavi (2003), John Paul Lederach (2005) and Majken Jul Sorensen (2008).

was a challenging task, for several reasons. First, reconnecting with the process after a one-year hiatus required more effort than when beginning the process in the previous year. Secondly, a key participant was not as engaged as she earlier was, appearing to be unmotivated, possibly related to a deep frustration or even a form of depression. Thirdly, the group was smaller and there was a new member, who despite bringing new and fruitful insights to the artistic process, necessitated the recalibration of power relationships within the group. Finally, I was no longer alone in the field, but with my family, including my five-month-old baby, which impacted upon my flexibility with participants' needs relative to the previous year. Instead, I had to be more flexible with myself, and accept that I was needed by my child too.

At the beginning of the second workshop, we collectively read and explored what we had written during the previous workshop. Eleonora openly stated that something important was missing in the play: the critical situation with the public-school buildings.

> What I would like to add is that maybe isn't much here about the school. In my opinion, we should add something about the school, because it is a reality that has not changed: even in relation to the concept of militarisation. We have all these barracks… but we can't have a safe, usable school. The airport was done quickly, so there are funds, there are projects, and still it is not possible to build a decent school building... how can I explain, it worries me, because I think it's impossible, that there is a conscious will to not do it, do you understand? Because after so many struggles, we managed to get a school building project from Rome, we were... they organised a conference for the inauguration, they showed the project in public, they said that there were funds, and that soon the works would begin. That was in May, now we are in September – October; in May they said that in a week or two they would demolish the Maccaferri building and build again... (Eleonora, 7 October 2017, translated from Italian).

She was distressed about the fact that Lampedusan children did not have a decent safe school building, and moreover our play made no mention of it in a scene about schools. It was revealed that for many years, Lampedusan students had been required to go to school in shifts, in order to not over occupy the school building. The few existing buildings that may have been used had been designated as unsafe and so lacked the official authorization required for use. Eleonora shared her belief that the lack of attention was deliberate, inspired by a political desire to make ordinary living on Lampedusa challenging.

This was a recurrent theme amongst Askavusa members. I had many conversations with activists that touched upon the view that there was a 'conscious political strategy' to transform Lampedusa into a military island, a big detention centre, where only the people who worked for the migration and the military industries would be welcome. Not implementing any improvements in school buildings was widely perceived as a tactic to discourage people from staying permanently on the island (see also Orsini, 2015; Friese, 2012). Eleonora's experience as an active member of the Lampedusan Mothers'

Committee (*Comitato Mamme*) gave the workshop information about the facts and the details related to the 'school problem'. Thus, Eleonora shared with the group, official documents, letters and minutes, amongst which was a record of an accident that had occurred in the primary school building. The key facts of the incident in 2014 was outlined at the beginning of this chapter, but the consequences follow here. During the test, the school building began to shake, causing materials, including some of the stone structure to fall in the classrooms amongst the children. Having no prior knowledge of what was going to take place, the children began to panic, fearing that the island had been struck by an earthquake. Unsurprisingly, some children wet themselves in fear. It's worth noting that the previous 12 months had seen global news coverage of natural disasters with disastrous effect, including earthquakes in Central Visayas, The Philippines and China. After the accident, parents complained to the local authority, looking for at least a public excuse and transparent confrontation about the situation. Eleonora told of the journey through the island's bureaucracy that the Mothers' Committee had to embark on to defend the pupils and their families' rights. Their efforts, however, were unsuccessful, and the details surrounding the incident were never clarified, and families received no assurances about the safety of the school building.

In the scene 'Schools', this accident was symbolic of the frustration that citizens faced in dealing with the public authorities over many issues, the contradictions between political promises and policy outcomes, which was, and remains, underpinned by the perceived lack of transparency on the island. As the case was so serious, the scene dramatically reflects the collective concern. On the basis that no tragedy occurred as a consequence of the test, we decided that the scene would be best developed with a rich vein of irony as well.

There are no relevant stage directions in 'Schools' which describe specific places, environments, or the movements of the characters. The scene includes four characters: a pupil, a mother, the Mayor and a teacher. Each one speaks autonomously from four different places, and with no direct reference to each other. The structure of the scene is built around the pupil, whose monologue is frequently interrupted by the other characters' speeches. The child talks of life at school, of pupils who have to go in shifts because of a lack of space; then, s/he recalls what happened on a specific afternoon at school, when the building suddenly started shaking and all the pupils and teacher got so scared, they thought the school was going to collapse on top of their heads. As a counter refrain, the Mayor belligerently repeats the same sentence from the beginning of the scene to the end: "We will transform Lampedusa into a child-friendly island! We need to start with the school. Our first goal: a new school".[44] Her tone of voice is at first

[44] The motto was our interpretation of the one used by the mayoral candidate Giusi Nicolini in her campaign during the elections in 2012. She was subsequently elected Mayor of Lampedusa.

glowing, as she pronounces words full of willingness and determination. Then, as the scene develops, and the grim reality of that day is revealed, her tone becomes increasingly insecure and hesitant, and her words, now less ebullient, are exposed as an empty and hopeless political promise. The parts of the teacher and the mother calibrating the child-Mayor duo, with shades of irony, (the teacher) and drama (the mother). The teacher is speaking with a friend on the telephone. S/he tells of the location of the new school at the airport,[45] and about the new plan to have lessons under tents, like the ones used in the local fairs in Emilia Romagna, her region of origin. Choosing a teacher who came from another Italian Region was our way to claim once again that whilst Lampedusa is at the border of Italy and Europe, it is not so peripheral. The residents of Lampedusa are not only locals who were born there, but also citizens who decided to become locals, people who moved from all over Italy to stay there, on a little piece of land in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. Moreover, the region where the teacher comes from, Emilia Romagna, is considered one of the best Italian Regions in terms of public services implementation, especially regarding education, social services and culture. In contrast to the teacher, the tone of the mother is one of profound concern and sporadic fury. Her monologue represents what the mothers committee had tried to do after the accident. The key sentence of the mother's monologue was "living like this is not normal".

3.5 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has defined the interdisciplinary conceptual framework of the thesis as one which occupies intellectual space in the emerging discipline of feminist peace research. Three specific approaches were outlined and explored as key theoretical elements to my methodological approach. While each traverses disciplinary boundaries, they do share a common epistemological premise; the recognition that alliances between researchers and research participants to challenge systemic violence and injustice that at first glance appear partly elusive are valid. Concepts of military geographies, slow violence, and especially moral imagination open the spaces necessary to consider more radical forms of participation that gives voice to the voiceless, and explores hitherto unnavigable narratives, through the co-production of knowledge. In this case, using the medium of participatory and collective theatre experiences to explore and understand the context of Lampedusa. The final section draws the conceptual and theoretical toolkits into the scene from the play that the chapter opened with. It was described how the collective

[45] After the accident, the school was moved to one building located next to the landing strip at Lampedusa airport.

process, and the co-production of knowledge it elicited, had a profound impact on the direction of the scene. The chapter gives a substantive insight into the ways in which collective theatre can provide opposition to hidden facets of life on Lampedusa.

4 HOUSES – METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

> Citizen: - There was a man whose house was stolen by the State to build the airport. They put him and his family in a council flat. After many years, on a sunny day, he was forced to move from that building too - him and his family - because of never ending renovations. He picked up what people threw away at the dump and built a house from garbage, even things often harmful to the environment. He built a house from junk, just like that.
>
> (Extract from "Houses", *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border*, 2017)

The interdisciplinary nature of the framework employed here is explored by focusing on the connections and the common patterns, that coexist between theatre practice and peace research, and how these are operationalised within the paradigm of Arts-Based Research. I show how arts-based methods address the challenges and requests posed by feminist peace research, as being consistent with "inclusive approaches [that] encourage reflexive practices grounded in the everyday, the body, and the emotion" (Premaratna and Rajkobal, 2021:261). Looking through the lens of our collective play, the strengths and limitations of this methodological framework (Leavy, 2017; Premaratna and Rajkobal, 2021; Seppälä et al., 2021) are considered. This is followed with a general overview of the vast universe of applied theatre, showing how the unconventional practices of theatre intersect with feminist peace research, especially regarding their shared commitment to activism, encouraging reflection and promotion of dialogue (Hepplewhite, 2020). Having developed a framework of synthesis between the two, I am now attentive to the ways in which the sub-field of community-based theatre can be considered a coherent basis for undertaking feminist peace research. In particular, the practice of community-based theatre is explored with regard to conflict transformation within a specific community, and the claim made that community-based theatre at the militarised border of Europe provides a critical example of it. Central to this claim is that community-based theatre provides the tools, and the opportunity, to engage with local people within a participatory and inclusive environment, and to co-produce knowledge germane to topics critically related to their everyday, corporeal and emotional experiences at the militarised border of Europe.

The final section revisits the opening theme by relating the extract from the scene *Houses*, showing that its exploration of dwellings is a metaphor for conflict transformation. Moreover, it reinforces the claim that community-based theatre as a

feminist practice of co-production of knowledge, enables researchers to conduct participatory research (Harman, 2019; Seppälä et al., 2021).

4.1 Arts-based research and feminist peace research methods

As "calls for more participatory, horizontal and democratic research practice have become widespread" (Seppälä et al., 2021:1), so too has the interest for arts-based research methods. Given that arts-based approaches have the unique ability to involve greater numbers of communities through variant media (Seppälä et al., 2021; Badham, 2013; Bishop, 2006; Wyatt et al., 2013), it is unsurprising that they have increasingly become an option within the social sciences (Barone and Eisner, 2012; Chilton and Leavy, 2014; Gerber et al, 2012; Leavy, 2017; Rolling, 2010), particularly as a form of practices for participatory research (Seppälä, et al., 2021; Mikkonen, et al., 2020). Conversely, the academic community of peace and conflict research, has shown increased interest in the application of arts, and especially in connection with the potential use for peacebuilding, reconciliation practices and peace education (Cohen, 2019; Cohen et al., 2011; Jennings, 2012; Premaratna, 2018; Shank and Schirch, 2008; Alexander and LeBaron, 2013; LeBaron, 2014). This has also been visible in the context of Finnish feminist peace research, which in the last decade has produced poetry and collage-based research (Puumala, 2012; Särmä, 2014), participatory photography-based research (Seppälä, 2021; Vastapuu, 2018), dance-based research (Hast, 2018), peace research based on documentary films, analysis of ceramics and poems and also quilting (Jauhola, 2020; Seppälä et al, 2021).

This research is thus situated within the tradition of those receiving and perpetrating the heritage of "researchers with arts backgrounds leading the charge in delineating the synergies between artistic and qualitative practice" (Leavy, 2017: 8). Leaning on my artistic background and experience, this thesis consciously contributes to the discipline of feminist peace research, by reacting to "the imperative for direct collaboration with the world beyond academia" (Wibben et al., 2019:87), by proposing an arts-based methodology which promotes participatory approaches, and contests 'the hierarchies' in the academic production of knowledge (Seppälä et al, 2021; Premaratna and Rajkobal, 2021). As my thesis is the outcome of doctoral studies at Tampere University, my research is grounded in the Finnish context.

Arts-based research methods open an expansive world of options, not only in terms of the art form itself, but also the different phases in which art, or creative tools, are engaged in the research process. For example, artistic tools can be used in generating content or collecting data, in exploring the context of the specific field, in analysing, interpreting or even (re)presenting our research results (Leavy, 2015; Seppälä et al.,

2021). Arts-based research intrinsically lends itself to interdisciplinary approaches. It includes research that is situated where the arts intersect with other disciplines, typically, all those experiences in which arts and/or creative tools have been engaged with and subsequently applied to produce academic knowledge in an alternative framework/setting. The primary tool used in my research in Lampedusa, has been applied theatre, more specifically two theatre workshops, during which participants were directly and personally engaged as a community in the process of creating a script based on the personal stories of the community itself. The emotional and physical engagements of participants in their everyday experience, especially our collective relationships in doing theatre together were where art and feminist peace research intersect (Premaratna and Rajkobal, 2021).

The theatre experience in Lampedusa gave me and the participants opportunities to explore 'contradictions in Lampedusa'. In the process of exploring the contradictions of the 'military paradise' through the everyday lives of the participants, a text – the collective play *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border* – was produced, which weaves itself through the fabric of this thesis as an analysis of the experience itself and the local milieu in which it was situated. The theatre experience plays two necessarily intertwined and strongly connected roles: (i) a research activity and (ii) a creative artistic process. They are connected at one level on the basis that I was both the facilitator[46] and the researcher of the artistic process. This was not, however, without risks and contingencies. Patricia Leavy, for example, warns arts-based researchers about the challenges of conducting arts-based practices, especially with regard to the quality of results (in terms of both aesthetic outcomes and societal impacts) and to the integrity of the academic evaluation. Whilst the many and varied concerns are noted in relation to these issues, the most salient assertion of how to proceed comes for Leavy. She suggests enjoying the process, advising researchers to "worry less about being "good" and focus on being engaged" (Leavy, 2015:31). Being "fully present in the process is the best any of us can do" (Leavy, 2015:31). There is much insight here. The artistic process demands practitioners be unencumbered with doubt and anxiety, and as has been noted previously, if the data recording is robust and sensitive, the integrity of the analysis will naturally follow.

The twofold nature of the theatre experience was most likely not perceived in the same way by the participants. Although they were naturally aware of the research project as whole, their participation was focused upon the artistic process, and the contribution of their own narratives about Lampedusa and their relationship with life at the border

[46] I acknowledge that the term 'facilitator' is used in Frontex language as synonym of a people smuggler, one who facilitate and profits from migrants' journeys. I use this term in its more common meaning: somebody who supports a group of people in the process of understanding their common aims and objectives them to plan, implement, and achieve those aims.

of Europe. Although there were moments of collective analysis that clarified and refined the messages in the play, their role as active participants was in the creation of the script (the research material), not in the process of analysing it. They were primarily engaged with a personal and political journey; committed to sharing their narratives about Lampedusa. Nonetheless, as Cynthia Cockburn notes, "when activists engage with a researcher, when they are asked to recount, reflect on and analyse their practice, it can helpfully clarify their thinking and renew their sense of direction" (Cockburn, 2012:6). Moreover, when those practices of recounting, reflecting, and analysing happened in a collective setting through the physical and emotional engagement of making theatre, the clarification is usually deeper and more effective (Premaratna, 2018). In many ways this had positive aspects, as the participants were focused on the creative process, and not burdened by thoughts of what would happen next. Consistent with Leavy's advice, my role as a researcher was consciously set aside while the play was being written to ensure that I was "thinking like an artist" (Leavy, 2015:29), and writing for the stage and not for the research. However, when the theatre experience was over, I was able to read the material – the play, and the work diary for example – with a different eye, taking a moderate distance from the experience itself.

The following session focuses more explicitly on the advantages and weaknesses in conducting arts-based research from a feminist peace perspective (Leavy, 2017; Mikkonen et al., 2020; Premaratna and Rajkobal, 2021; Seppälä et al., 2021; Wibben et al., 2019; Björkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic, 2021).

4.1.1 Strengths and weaknesses of feminist arts-based peace research

Patricia Leavy (Leavy, 2014; 2015; 2017)[47] and Tiina Seppälä and colleagues (Seppälä et al., 2021) cite vary advantages of engaging within the paradigm of arts-based research. Many of these contain elements of repetition making the use of them all overly cumbersome. Instead, I distil five aspects of their shared concerns into those that better reflect the key overlap between arts-based approaches in feminist peace research: the 'innovative', the 'everyday', the 'holistic', the 'prefigurative' and the 'participatory'.

Underlying feminist peace research is a demand for greater innovation in the ways of conducting research (Björkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic, 2021), which "can enable access to, or creation of, alternative knowledges" (Seppälä et al., 2021:11). Similarly, Leavy contends by creating links and associations which are otherwise left out of range,

[47] Taken to be: new insights and learning; describe, explore, discover, problem-solve; forge micro-macro connections; holistic; evocative and provocative; critical consciousness, raising awareness, and empathy; unsettle stereotypes, challenge dominant ideologies, and include marginalized voices and perspectives; participatory; multiple meanings; public scholarship and usefulness.

arts-based research "… offers (a) way to tap into what would otherwise be inaccessible" (Leavy, 2017:9). This applied in my research. The community-based theatre experience enabled the exploration, in our collective setting, of the invisibilities and paradoxes of daily life in a militarised context. By doing theatre we – taken as participants and researcher – were allowed "to think, learn, engage and express differently" (Seppälä et al., 2021:11). Consequently, I could "ask and answer new research questions, explore old research questions in new ways" (Leavy, 2015:21), by engaging myself and the participants in a collective practice of co-production through the medium of theatre. In this respect, the process of co-creation was arguably more important than the outcome, the finished text and subsequent play (Seppälä et al., 2021; Smith, 2021). In fact, as arts-based research "cultivates new insights and illuminates aspects of the social world and human experience", the research process itself has a significant value (Leavy, 2017:9).

The focus on process is what connected the experience to the notion that "arts-based practices are particularly useful for research projects that aim to *describe*, *explore*, or *discover*" (Leavy, 2015:21). Moreover, as Leavy argues, "these research practices are generally attentive to capture process mirrors the unfolding nature of social life, and thus there is a congruence between subject matter and method" (Leavy, 2015:21). Following a similar line, this research began with an exploration of the impact of militarisation and the migration industry on the daily lives of inhabitants in Lampedusa. As arts-based research "is also often employed in *problem-centered* or *issue-centered projects*" (Leavy, 2017:9, italics in the original), the problem which 'dictates the methodology' was the issue of making visible the invisible contradictions at the militarised border of Europe. Finally, the innovative aspect of feminist peace arts-based research methods emerges in the unexpected results that such approaches often entail. Neither researchers nor participants can fully and entirely control the process, and so it logically follows that this increases the probability of unpredictable outcomes (Banks et al., 2019; Seppälä et al., 2021). Given that this is considered an intrinsic and meaningful aspect of this kind of research methodology, it harbours within it some limitations and problems that need to be overcome. Principal amongst these is the evaluation of the process and its ethical implications (Banks et al., 2011; Wilson et al., 2017; Premaratna and Rajkobal, 2021).

The second crucial aspect of feminist peace research is the focus on the significance of 'the everyday' (Premaratna, 2018; Väyrynen, 2019). This resonates in Leavy's words, when she affirms that arts-based research allows for micro-macro connections, linking "our individual lives and the larger contexts in which we live" (Leavy, 2017:9). The embodied experience of making theatre in the emotional, sensorial, and relational aspects of the place-based and local cultural context (Seppälä et al., 2021) of Lampedusa, evokes other dimensions. By making theatre in such a heavily militarised context, all aspects of the artistic and research process, became inevitably entangled with the global

connections between our lives, flows of migration, and the wars which they inextricably tied to. *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border* provides concrete examples of such complex interconnections between micro and macro levels. For example, in the scene 'Hotels', the hotel keeper talks about the changes in his lifestyle because of the increased presence of military personnel in the island. As the military control of the Mediterranean Sea was reinforced during the 90s, the local businesses in the island of Lampedusa changed. Many left traditional concerns, such as fisheries, in order to establish hotels or restaurants to serve the needs of the military and the growing tourist trade. Another example of a micro-macro connection is offered in the scene 'The citizen and the sea', as it explains how the subtle, as well as the more flagrant, ways in which individual destinies are shaped by global wars and authoritarian regimes. In the scene, a (presumed to be) young woman sends a private message throughout the waves of the sea, hoping to find a better future for herself. Her wish to escape represents many other women and men in similar situations. By attempting to find a way through the sea she connects the macro level of humankind to the microcosmos of that person who finds her message.

The third overlapping aspect is the emphasis on holistic interdisciplinarity. As disciplines cross, and their borders become inevitably "blurred and expanded" (Leavy, 2017:9), they inevitably mingle. This level of cohabitation is a key characteristic of the methodology employed here. The conceptual pillars presented in the previous chapter all have a degree of discipline centric promiscuity to them. Indeed, as Leavy suggests, "Arts-based research practices may be a part of a *holistic* or *integrated* approach to research" (Leavy, 2017:9). Feminist peace research too, aims for a more holistic understanding of peace and conflict, and is rather more inclined to embrace complexities (the messy stuff of researching at the margins) than being exclusionary (Wibben, 2021; McLeod and O'Reilly, 2019). Thus, by combining theatre practices with feminist peace research, it is suggested here that implementing an integrated approach in conducting research is eminently possible. Undoubtedly, emotions play a significant role in engaging with the holistic aspect of arts-based methods and feminist peace research, as they both constitute gates for exploring the present and envisioning future scenarios (Premaratna and Rajkobal, 2021; LeBaron, 2014).

As Catia Confortini points out, feminist peace research's "methodologies open the spaces of our collective (but not coherent) imagination and compel us to act/theorize in prefigurative ways" (Confortini, 2017, 84-90). The prefigurative aspect has the potential to be both evocative and provocative, and "… as representational form[s], the arts can be highly effective for communicating the emotional aspects of social life" (Leavy, 2017:9-10). Reflecting on our community-based theatre experience in Lampedusa, the workshops certainly explored the evocative power of theatre; letting our thoughts, feelings and discussions emerge throughout our improvisations and process of playwriting. Furthermore, we could push the boundaries of reality by creating

paradoxical scenarios which were provocative and biting. This was the case in scenes such as 'The camping area', 'Schools' and 'Asparagus', which illustrate how research cannot be prefigurative without the support of critical awareness (Seppälä et al., 2021:11).

> ABR can expose people to new ideas, stories, or images and can do so in service of cultivating social consciousness, (…) to reveal power relations (often invisible to those in privileged groups), raise critical race or gender consciousness, build coalitions across groups, and challenge dominant ideologies (Leavy, 2017:10).

Similar to this, feminist peace and arts-based research methodologies (alone or in combination) have a strong potential to create counterimagery. Through the use of images that explicitly buck stereotypes (Leavy, 2017:10) they have a marked proclivity to "challenge individualism and instrumentalism of conventional research practices by emphasising collective doing and co-creation of knowledge" (Seppälä et al., 2021:11). As "arts-based researchers fully bring themselves into their projects, including the value system guiding the undertaking" (Leavy, 2015:29), they engage in unsettling stereotypes, and in discovering and inspiring subjugated perspectives, and giving life to the feminist request of including marginalized views and 'out of sight' positions (Väyrynen, 2019; Wibben et al., 2019).

One of the principal motivations for working in Lampedusa, and alongside Askavusa, was the curiosity of exploring the stereotypical image of the welcoming islanders, and how that unfolded in the context of the contradictions that people evidently faced every day at the border of Europe. Lampedusan people have been, and still are, exemplars of solidarity. Nonetheless they are also subject to a deep sense of marginality and disempowerment, as a consequence of their political and geographical isolation from mainland Europe. Moreover, their concerns about the health effects from considerable electromagnetic pollution increased their feelings of frustration and discomfort due to the poor quality of public infrastructure and basic essential services as.

The fifth and last aspect that connects arts-based practices and feminist peace research methods is undoubtedly the fact that are both epistemologically committed to participatory forms of engagement. In arts-based research practices, academics and non-academic participants might be collaborating together (Leavy, 2017; Seppälä, 2021), preferably within an informal setting (LeBaron, 2014). The informal collaboration is strongly linked and intertwined with all the other above-mentioned aspects. For example, co-production makes it possible to fully engage with counterimagery, to unsettle the stereotypes and the dominant perspectives, and create multiple meanings. This is exemplified by Tiina Seppälä's article on participatory photography, whose experience contributed to the "efforts to decolonise participatory research, (enabling)…

a more horizontal approach to co-production of knowledge" (Seppälä, 2021:81). In this way meaning-making is enhanced without advancing authoritative claims. For example, a piece of art can be interpreted in different ways without any of those interpretations being ruled invalid or illegitimate.

> (…) the kind of dialogue that may be stimulated by a piece of art is based on evoking meanings, rather than denoting them. This issue isn't just about how participants experience the art-making process or how audiences consume arts-based research, but also how researchers design their studies (Leavy, 2017:10).

In writing *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border*, different meanings were woven into the text to reflect the paradoxes and ambivalences that became manifest through the artistic process. Participation means more than just taking part, it is also about sharing know-how, cooperating from, and within, different perspectives, and especially rejecting the positivist and hierarchical methods of producing knowledge in academia, which finds expression in the feminist peace research tradition. For all practical purposes the participants in the workshops were regarded as the experts; only they, for example, had the necessary, direct and continuous experience of life in Lampedusa. My expertise was limited to the exploration tool, which was theatre. This is reflected artfully by Ruth Raynor in the context of applied theatre in human geography: "[…] theatre practice gives certain kind of access to collaborators' lived experiences" and make possible to initiate a dialogue with their own knowledge and experiences of the theatre facilitator/researcher (Raynor, 2018:6). The embodied, emotional, and intellectual dialogue between these experiences makes possible the collaboration and created the opportunity to create multiple meanings.

Community-based participatory research practices, however, might present some challenges, especially from ethical perspective (Wilson et al., 2017; Banks et al., 2013; Banks et al., 2019). Examples of which are, confidentiality, informed consent, representation, anonymity and ownership of data (Banks et al., 2013). Participatory approaches are time consuming and demand that the different needs and expectations of participants and researchers are recognised (Banks et al., 2013). To overcome some of these challenges, feminist peace research "proposes a dialectical engagement between reflexivity and intersectionality to contextualize the research(ed)" (Wibben et al., 2019:92). Obviously, this cannot guarantee a complete ethical integrity, as issues of gender, race and power relations can permeate any arts-based practice as much as anything else whether they are treated consciously or not. The point is that the arts, and in our case theatre, offer a greater opportunity to tackle those issues with respect and tact, because the medium allows for their transcendence through the artistic practice itself. Indeed, arts-based researchers need to assume an attentive and vigilant attitude about ethical issues as the power relation between the researcher and participants does

not disappear and can change during the research process. Moreover, the afterlife of the research process may impact on the relationship among people involved in the research in ways that might not be easy to predict. In our case it was important to discuss and decide how our play could be used in the future.

4.2 Applied theatre and feminist peace research

Theatre has always been connected with politics and political actions; it is an inescapable fact for scholars of Greek tragedy, which is at the roots of the European drama.[48] Theatre has always been a crucial tool for reflecting individual and societal aspects of life in community and unconventional settings with the intentional aim of promoting social change for centuries (van Erven, 2001). However, only in recent decades we have witnessed an increase in academic interest on the alternative use and utility of theatre practices. Mainly inspired by the pivotal work of the Brazilian theatre director Augusto Boal,[49] the 1990s saw universities and research centres around the world - mostly in England, United States and Australia – beginning to investigate the capability of unconventional theatre to help communities reflect on who they are, and support action allowing them to transform according to their aspirations.

More recently, popular alternative uses of drama have increasingly grown and developed variant strands: in the field of therapy, as tool of political participation, in business management, to empower communication skills, in school as a means of education, in prisons, in the communities to prevent and manage social problems. These different performative practices which take place "in non-traditional settings and/or with marginalized communities" (Thompson and Jackson, 2006:92) are seldom included in mainstream theatre performance. Instead, they are usually defined with the "useful umbrella term" (Taylor, 2006:93) of applied theatre.[50] Despite the pluralities and

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[48] I acknowledge the limits of my Eurocentric education, as my studies did not approach any other theatrical traditions, e.g., from Asian or African continents. For a good overview of precolonial theatre traditions in Africa see Joachim Fiebach (1997); see also the work of Amy Chan (2020) who discusses the absence of narrative in Chinese theatre until the 20th Century and the importance of meta-ethical and political stories told through dance and shadow and light.

[49] His book *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1979/2008) was probably the most influential contribution regarding this academic debate about new ways of making theatre. There, Boal challenged the Aristotelian tradition of theatre, and criticised western theatre as an oppressive and despotic art form that reinforced privilege and inequality in society. Instead, he proposed a new form of theatre, which could reveal the structures of oppressions and help people liberate themselves from them.

[50] I deliberately decided to use the term "applied theatre" and not "social theatre", without any specific ideological reasons; I consider that the names to be used almost interchangeably.

differences among the bodies, groups, activities and experiences that are embraced by this definition, those involved in applied theatre projects share a common intentionality:

> They share a belief in the power of the theatre form to address something beyond the form itself. So one group use theatre in order to promote positive social processes within a particular community, whilst others employ it in order to promote an understanding of human resource issues among corporate employees (...). The intentions of course vary. They could be to inform, to cleanse, to unify, to instruct, to raise awareness (Ackroyd, 2000: 1).

The multiplicity of experiences within applied theatre is clearly revealed when the essential factors that characterize theatrical action are considered: context, core issues faced, specific aims and strategies, participants and stakeholders' features, role of practitioners/trainers, structure and implementation. These factors, and combinations thereof, identify a variety of practices. For example, theatre in education, popular theatre, theatre of the oppressed, theatre for health education, theatre for development, prison theatre, community-based theatre, museum theatre, playback theatre, drama therapy and so on. The term applied theatre has the strength of encompassing a broad range of theatrical applications, but for some it comes at the cost of being so all-encompassing that it loses any distinctiveness.[51] However, as Ackroyd (2000) has argued, if a theatrical endeavour has two key elements, it has to be considered as being on the spectrum of 'applied'. She suggests that:

> (…) two features [are] central to our understanding of applied theatre; an intention to generate change (of awareness, attitude, behaviour, etc), and the participation of the audience. I have suggested that neither singlehandedly distinguishes theatre and applied theatre and that the distinction between them is a matter of degree (Ackroyd, 2000: 3).

I contend that these various and unconventional uses of theatre in different contexts comply with feminist peace research, especially with regard to their activist potential, and as a means to encourage reflection and promote dialogue (Hepplewhite, 2020). Looking through the eyes of applied theatre practitioners, the academic debate which includes theoretical approaches (e.g. Nicholson, 2005; Taylor, 2003) and practical contributions (e.g. Prendergast and Saxton, 2009; Hartley and Bond, 2012; Hepplewhite, 2020) strongly resonates with the underlying logic and procedural concerns of feminist peace research. It is, however, worth noting that applied theatre is not intrinsically feminist, but it is, in my view, an approach that is conspicuously malleable to feminist approaches (Griffiths, 1984). It has much in common with what feminist scholar Christine Sylvester

[51] Judith Ackroyd and John O´Toole have tried to reshape and limit the range that applied theatre covers. See e.g. Ackroyd (2000; 2007), Balfour (2009) and O'Toole (2007).

conceptualises as a commitment to empathetic cooperation "… as a feminist method for managing, working with, respecting, and surpassing rigid standpoints, positions, and issues without snuffing out difference" (2004: 244). Empathy is a key aspect of theatre practices, and it is interdependent with active listening and dialogue (Lewandowska and Węziak-Białowolska, 2020; Thompson, 2009; Holland, 2009). This, however, is not easy. Nilanjana Premaratna, for example, in the context of theatre for peacebuilding within structural violence, reflects on how the process towards empathy is fraught with difficulty and requires time, commitment and what she conceptualises as "a deeper understanding of the relations between the oppressive structures and oppressed" (Premaratna, 2018:15).

Given that practitioners are commonly engaged in facilitating theatre experiences in marginalised and sensitive contexts, as such elderly care homes, homeless shelters, schools, or prisons, critical reflection is undoubtedly a key concept in applied theatre practices. Experiences like these can create what Helen Nicholson calls a political "diaspora space", where "the boundaries that define and confine knowledge, meaning-making and understanding are subject to continual critical scrutiny, and the ways in which power is constructed are closely examined" (Nicholson, 2005: 159). Furthermore, as "citizenship is not simply a collection of legal rights and obligations, which are not easily changed, but it is also a more fluid and pliable set of social practices", Nicholson connects applied drama to citizenship, recognising its significant role as a reflective and dialogical practice for a conscious and responsible citizenship (Nicholson, 2005:22). Moreover, the reflective potential of applied theatre emerges when it enables communities to explore who they are, what they aspire to be (Taylor, 2003), and raise issues about identities, perceptions and wishes.

Applied theatre can be used as a healing tool, to explore choices, enhance awareness, and as a means to implement community change and transformation (Hartley and Bond, 2012; Taylor, 2003; Thompson, 2003). Theatre practitioners and participants are thus involved in experiences of 'bewilderment', as processes often reveal opportunities for social change, and for emancipation from a status of oppression (Thompson, 2003); but they represent risks for deep pain, "utter destruction or complete dislocation" (Thompson, 2003:23). In the hands of theatre practitioners, applied theatre becomes a means to facilitate decision making processes at community level and to give voice to the views of the silent and the marginal (Taylor, 2003). In their contribution, Jennifer Hartley and Edward Bond show how using applied theatre, people who were unable or afraid to express themselves, become able to discover their own voice (Hartley and Bond, 2012). The emancipatory aspect of applied theatre echoes the feminist peace tradition with its call for greater intersectional reflexivity, participatory and inclusive research methods and practices engaged "with the world outside academia" (Wibben et

al., 2019:96). However, as pointed out by Michael Balfour, theatre practices (and projects) for social change or promoting transformation within communities need to be aware that they are often inserted as part their donors' agenda, and thus face the potential risk of manipulation and exploitation (Balfour, 2009).

Experiences of applied theatre are not a reflective of a homogenous set of practices, but rather the characteristics of regional specificity. Contexts inevitably have an impact on the way experiences are tailored, addressed, and lived. Every applied theatre experience has its own particularities and meaningfulness, which is not comparable or measurable with others. "Applied theatre (…) should be understood as a contemporary theatre practice that has many different histories and varied rationales depending on where it is happening" (Thompson, 2003:19). In this sense, the term 'applied' reminds scholars to be connected and engaged with the realm of the society, in order to tailor and address their research to the real problems of people, so that "the applied disciplines (and theatre as well) are creating practice in response to a critique that they are too isolated from the communities in which they exist" (Thompson, 2003:19).

4.2.1 Community-based theatre as a feminist practice for conflict transformation

As noted earlier, our experience in Lampedusa resided in the tradition of community-based theatre which required a heterogenous approach to doing theatre. At the same time, however, community-based theatre experiences are distinguished by the centrality of the involved community and the uniqueness of its shared stories and its geographical and cultural specificity. As Eugene van Erven explains:

> Community theatre is a worldwide phenomenon that manifests itself in many different guises, yielding a broad range of performance styles. It is united, I think, by its emphasis on local and/or personal stories (rather than pre-written scripts) that are first processed through improvisation and then collectively shaped into theatre under the guidance either of outside professional artists—who may or may not be active in other kinds of professional theatre—or of local amateur artists residing among groups of people that, for lack of a better term, could perhaps best be called 'peripheral'. Community theatre yields grass roots performances in which the participating community residents themselves perform and during the creative process of which they have substantial input. Not only the participants are considered 'peripheral', community theatre as an art form is as well (van Erven, 2001:2).

This succinctly describes our theatre experience: participants were not professional actors or theatre people, and their personal narratives were the core of the creative process. The stories we developed together through improvisations and exercise were totally devoted to the local situation of Lampedusa. My role as facilitator of the creative

process was to welcome personal stories and find the most suitable organic frame for them. The participants' availability and their willingness to share those stories were necessary starting points for our collective work, which was to construct an alternative narrative about Lampedusa.

For Eugene van Erven, difficulties and challenges also emerge in the categorisation or labelling of something that simultaneously feels unique and "normal", because sharing stories leads to the creation of new ones together. In this respect, there is no a universal rule book that stipulates how one 'does' theatre collectively; there are different styles, schools, and methods, in the same way that there are different people, reactions, cultures, habits, beliefs, needs and ways of perceiving reality and being engaged in the creative process. Despite this, the intentions behind community-based theatre actions must always have some political relevance for the involved community, and so consequently their aesthetic is one which strongly attaches to that connection.

The political aspect for our theatre experience and the research project was, and is, crucial. For instance, our workshops and the play told a different story about Lampedusa, a narrative that was markedly different to that which the mainstream media has constructed over the last two decades. It was distanced from the spectacularization of the humanitarian border and reflected the perspective of the everyday lives of local people. Our theatre experience enabled us to give voice to emergent contradictions and hitherto 'peripheral' features of living at the securitised border of Europe. In fact, community-based theatre allows for the "once largely silent (or silenced) groups of people to add their voices to increasingly diverse and intricately inter-related local, regional, national and international cultures" (van Erven, 2001:3).

The possibility for participants to improve self-confidence "and cross-cultural understanding through collective art processes" (van Erven, 2001:244) is a further element that emerges in community-based theatre experiences. This opportunity assumes a significant role when participants are constantly suffering stressful situations, like many Askavusa members and supporters in the highly mediatised context of Lampedusa. Being involved in any kind of protest movement or activism usually entails sizeable doses of frustration, rage, disappointment and anger about the status quo; anger being the universal fuel to drive actions for social change, transform society or even make the world a better place (Wibben et al., 2019). All nonviolent struggles start from a preliminary condition of contradiction in which anger is embedded; the nonviolent challenge is, however, to use and transform such contradictions into something else, something that everybody can benefit from (Patfoort, 2002; Rosenberg, 2005; Confortini, 2017).

Through our community-based theatre, I would argue that we practiced a method of conflict transformation at the border of Europe. We collectively reflected about life at

the border of Europe, experimented with our bodies and minds the fluidity of citizenship in its various social practices (Nicholson, 2005). The practice of theatre became the means to explore and embrace new possibilities and multiple views (Taylor, 2002; Lederach, 2005; Wibben et al., 2019). It also became the vehicle through which new images about Lampedusa could be discovered, transforming the known ones into something else, and giving us the chance to be surprised in our findings (Hartley and Bond, 2009; Enloe, 2004). However, the geographical and cultural uniqueness, ensured the discoveries we made during our journey opened windows to both amazement and confusion. In many instances, we often faced the coexistence of contradictions and strong differences (Thompson, 2003); it is no coincidence that 'contradictions' was the key theme we began working with. In taking a holistic approach to facilitating the artistic and research process, I had to relate to different disciplines without being an expert in all of them. This adjustment to interdisciplinary challenges is also required by mediators and facilitators involved in conflict resolution through a mediation process (Bercovitch, 1991; Bowling and Hoffman, 2000; Winslade and Monk, 2008).

Because of its specific vocation to explore ideas, values and feelings, community-based theatre has the power to create moments of (re)imagining citizenship and the societies it is embedded in (Nicholson, 2005; Boon and Plastow, 2004), as well the potential for supporting and producing conflict transformation (Shank and Schirch, 2008). Thus, when potential political contributions are not openly visible, there is a need to reveal it. As one of the Askavusa members said,

> Art must be always political, absolutely; otherwise it is just a matter of 'beautiful' or 'ugly'. If there is not a political message. They are all artists! There must be a political message, we cannot separate them. [If someone says] 'Eh, but I am an artist, I cannot be engaged with politics' it's just not true. In every form (of art) we need to talk about politics, we all 'do' politics, or at least we should do it. So it's not something separate that concerns only few people. If we do not start to think that we are the ones (as citizens) to ask for things, to demand, to insist, to search for them, we cannot wait for others to give them to us (Interview with Askavusa member, 6 October 2015, translated from Italian).

In this sense we went beyond the simplistic distinction of art as either beauty and ugliness, rather we explored the artistic and political possibilities for the community of Lampedusa through the members and supporters of Askavusa. Participants could then give voice to their ideas about their identities and aspirations in the context of Lampedusa (Taylor, 2003). In so doing, participants engaged their profound and subversive ideas regarding established powers, as many other community-based theatre practices explore. Concomitantly, throughout the play, we did not claim that we could find 'the truth', rather, we were open to discovering different windows to look though in order to speak about life at the border of Europe.

Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border was not staged, so we did not engage with the whole community of Lampedusa, not confronting any external audience with what we had created. However, even without performing the play, our theatre experience provided the opportunity to explore the contradictions of Lampedusa from the everyday experiences of Askavusa, their supporters, and many others who live a stone's throw from the humanitarian/military border. The claim here is that the relevance and the meaning of our work was validated by the process, in the ways that the co-production of knowledge was negotiated, devised, organised and confirmed. It was not dependent upon the heroic notion of a displayed product.

There have been moments when I, and no doubt some of the participants, had wished for the play to be staged, and that sharing our work would have had more than a passing importance for those who live in Lampedusa.[52] However, I recognised that what mattered for the purpose of this research, and to those who took part in the workshops, was the value of co-creating something. Much like *Six Memos for the Next Millennium,* a series of public lectures written by Italo Calvino (1988), but never given because of the author's premature death, the words were not devalued because they were never aired and equally the value of our play is undiminished. Calvino's words remain a priceless gift for contemporary literature, and while clearly not suggesting that our play is at all comparable, the logic underpinning why it has value is the same – one hopes that one day our play will be discovered, re-read, and even performed by those who have the heart, soul and vision to grasp its multiple meanings and value.

4.3 Dwelling as a metaphor of conflict transformation

The fragment of the play which opens this chapter features a character who rails against the state system and wishes for an anarchistic, punk inspired, alternative and environmentally friendly solution to survive. Gianna, who wrote this short monologue, was most likely inspired by the story of Pasquale, an Askavusa member who died prematurely a few months before our first workshop in 2017. Pasquale was an iconic figure of the collective, deeply committed to anti-capitalism and alternative causes intimately connected to the same goal. He epitomised the anti-conventional nature of the movement,[53] and characteristically built his own house from the garbage that had been left behind: scraps he found in the dump, the streets and on the beaches. His capacity to re-use and transform objects which society deemed of no use, to produce

[52] An application for funding was made for this purpose.

[53] About Pasquale and his life-experience as alternative architect, see the documentary: https://magazine.lampedusa.today/video/lampedusa-day-by-day/pasquale-larchitetto-interiore/.

something as fundamental as a dwelling serves as a metaphor for conflict transformation and peacebuilding. In Pasquale's hands, something that was unwanted and discarded by other people, became the essence of his project, bringing with it a lost sense of purpose and a distinct aesthetic. The story of this man reflects the variety of ways one might approach life and its problems by stepping outside the constraints of the conventional and the straightjacket of possibility. In such a way, the methodological mindset of certain people, like for instance artists and peace workers, is explored, as a portrayal of those who live at the edge of society with peripheral vision, yet at the same time, become absorbed and engaged in it.

The metaphor of the dwelling reflects the gates we opened to explore the common place we created during our community-based theatre experience, which was the site of intersection between arts-based and feminist peace research. This connection, and feminist co-production of knowledge, manifested itself in myriads ways, not least in how the community-based theatre was shaped throughout the workshops.

4.3.1 Co-production of knowledge

One afternoon, while drawing whales and dinosaurs with my son on a large piece of paper, something struck me about the relationship between the chosen technique and the style and the content of your drawing. If watercolour is used, you will get a manifestly different result in terms of style than by using say, oils, charcoal, or acrylic. Furthermore, the content of your drawing or painting would also be different according to the technique you apply – long strokes of the brush, short strokes, dabbling, smudging and so on. This made me consider the interface between my way of doing theatre and conducting research and question my choices in the same way. If I write a play through a community-based theatre experience, it will have a certain kind of tone, arguably one that would be different if I had chosen to conduct a more traditional[54] writing workshop. Technique has an impact on the style, and the style has an impact on the matter and form. This is what Patricia Leavy means when she refers to 'shape' in the context of arts-based research, which "speaks to the form of our work but also to how the form *shapes* the content and how audiences receive that content" (Leavy, 2015:2). A similar reflection is found in the way knowledge is produced: being engaged in a collective process of knowledge production impacts on, and *shapes*, the final outcomes differently to when the process is in the hands of an individual. This relates to both the content and the structure of the result.

[54] I acknowledge that community-based theatre has become traditional as well.

Co-production of knowledge reveals to participants and the researcher the existence of a more complex set of views than they might have imagined. Even between seemingly similar perspectives there are likely to be finer grained, yet important, differences that would otherwise be missed or overlooked. As diverse individuals were engaged in the process, paradoxes and contradictions were unavoidable, multiple and welcomed. Despite the controversy from orthodox academic quarters regarding practices of co-producing knowledge, form of conducting research has more recently found fertile ground in variant fields *inter alia*: critical and social geography; development studies; sociology; anthropology (Durose et al., 2012).

In discussing how co-producing research (and thus knowledge) works, Sophie Harman in her book *Seeing Politics*, argues that it provides tangible benefits and new insights in international relations. One of her main arguments is that during the process of making a film is possible to make visible what is usually kept hidden and invisible in the traditional discourse within international relations field. Throughout her book, she explains how the process of making a movie, corresponds with feminist methods, which can reveal how "international power relations shape and are shaped by personal relationships, the domestic realm, the banal, and the hidden or unseen spaces" (Harman, 2019:9). Similarly, the practice of co-producing knowledge encourages critical self-reflection for the researcher about her "blurred position" between the research participants or subjects and herself.

> [If] the decolonial critique is concerned with the process and outcomes of visibility, and who can speak and who is heard, […then the…] methods of seeing need to recognize such power relationships and the social and historical context in which research takes place (Harman, 2019:10-11).

Being engaged in the co-production of knowledge, then, is consistent with the practice of implementing feminist methods in research.

Harman's findings were informed by the process of film making, nevertheless there are several meaningful ways in which her work chimes with my research. In our community-based theatre experience and the collective production of theatrical script, elements which were hidden, unspoken and unknown emerged and became visible. The medium provided opportunities to explore new meanings and create strands of knowledge which were hitherto unseen – this was undoubtedly one of the most important outcomes of undertaking research within a participatory framework. However, such practice entails several elements that the researcher must consider, namely, established relationships, reciprocal benefits, and the shared understanding about the whole process (Harman, 2019).

First, as already noted, "co-production requires an established relationship with the people one is working with" (Harman, 2019:66), made possible and supported by "previous and sustained engagement with the people, communities and networks in which the co-production takes place" (Harman, 2019:102). For me, being the research assistant of Karina Horsti was the essential key to unlock access to Lampedusa and to gain the necessary trust with Askavusa members. During my first trip in 2015, I had the chance to approach several people, and become familiar with the local community in Lampedusa.

Secondly, co-production requires reciprocal benefits for all the parties involved in the process (Harman, 2019). While it was obvious to me that conducting the community-based theatre experience simultaneously included producing material for my research and analysis, the advantages for the participants might not have been so immediately clear. This was arguably more acute, because they were not paid and could withdraw from the project if they wanted to do so but were nevertheless driven by being engaged in doing something that was dissimilar from their daily lives. Doing theatre might also be a cathartic practice for many people. Sharing emotions, thoughts and visions can have a truly positive affect on the wellbeing of participants in an effective way. As Eugene van Erven states, community theatre "privileges the artistic pleasure and sociocultural empowerment of its community participants" (van Erven, 2001:3). Also, the idea to write collectively something that at the end would stay in their hands as co-authors was probably another benefit. For those who were not residents (i.e. Guido and Lucas), involvement in the theatre experience was a chance to connect with Lampedusa in a different way, and fortify their will to stay and be engaged in our collective project.

Thirdly, a shared understanding about the core principles of the work was needed. The next chapter explores this in greater detail, suffice to say, 'negotiating' and 'devising' steps singularly addressed this. During the 'negotiating step' we discussed the topics we wanted to develop. Later we devised them more formally when we collectively understood how to practically shape them. Working within the framework of arts-based research allowed for creation of what Leavy calls "knowledge based on resonance and understanding" (Leavy, 2015:3). Sharing and understanding together was the basis of our journey, indeed, without sharing, co-production would have not been possible.

For Sophie Harman, "… the role of temporality, agency, and money in the co-production process and how these three factors underpin feminist method of this kind and potentially limit what we see" (Harman, 2019:105). These factors represent the difficulties and dilemmas that the entire team may encounter during the process. During our co-production process, the participants were able to explore their own agency, give voice to their hopes, dreams, and what may happen if they redeploy their agency to get what they want (Harman, 2019). Like Harman's videography, our theatre workshops neither shied away from confronting power relationships between the co-producers of

knowledge, nor the tensions, including personal tensions, that usually remain hidden in reporting academic work. Using a participatory approach to arts-based research necessarily manifests moments of tension and difficulty. For me, these frustrations were with the participants not arriving on time, or not paying attention to things I considered important. The process was not always neat and logical; unexpected things turned up in our co-production, sometimes resulting in situations that were far from clear. However, it was those encounters which gave me the chance to reflect critically on the collective practice of doing theatre, represented the uniqueness of our experience, reinforcing the claim that conflict transformation is about learning from experience, and transforming challenges into opportunities for something new and unexpected which can nurture our lives (Wibben et al., 2019).

4.4 Summary of the chapter

In three broad ways this chapter has explored the methodological framework which underpins this research. It has shown how arts-based practices fulfil the request posed by feminist peace researchers to provide platforms for innovative, everyday, holistic, prefigurative and participatory research.

Drawing on, amongst others, empirical examples from Critical Geography and International Relations, the 'practice as research' model was shown to have important synergies with the approach taken here, especially with regard to research strategies that are feminist both in orientation and in practice. Whilst this chapter established the conceptual synergy between applied theatre and feminist peace research, it also has been attentive to the ways community-based theatre provides a basis for conflict transformation, and further develops the claim that our collective theatre workshop provides a critical example of it.

It is argued that community-based theatre, developed according to the principles above, provided the necessary inclusive environmental and participatory conditions, that allowed for the co-production of knowledge that was intimately connected to the everyday, corporeal and emotional experiences at the militarised border of Europe. The chapter also reaffirms, and is consistent with, prior research which found that participatory models of creativity are not seamless and predictable. In contrast, they are messy, unpredictable, and fraught with tensions, personal and otherwise – in practice, contradictions that were observable and predictable prior to the workshops, were revealed to be harbour unpredictable and hitherto unknown additional contradictions. Like peeling a Spanish onion, each layer of contradiction is never separate, instead it is part of one deeper layer embedded within itself.

This chapter also sustains a critique of traditional structures of academic knowledge by producing and including marginalised positions in the collective process of making theatre. This leads neatly to the next chapter which explores how our collective theatre project sustained the co-production of knowledge. It assesses what lessons can be drawn about participatory research within the context of a community theatre project in a militarised environment.

5 THE CITIZEN AND THE SEA – PROCESS OF CO-PRODUCTION IN LAMPEDUSA

Anna is walking on the beach. She stops to look at the sea, this sea she knows so well, this sea she loves so much and which is often ungrateful. Anna watches the sea and speaks to it, as if it had eyes to see her and ears to hear her words. As she speaks, she wrist-flicks stones on the water's surface, as if the action would make her words travel further, as if she could inflict pain and punishment on the sea.

(Extract from 'The citizen and the sea', *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border*, 2017)

The structure and form of our community-based theatre experience was pivotal to the co-production of knowledge. Underpinned by the methodological considerations outlined in the previous chapter, and a conceptual framework drawn from the pillars of military geography, slow violence, and in particular moral imagination, we practiced dramatic conflict transformation at the border of Europe. This chapter gives a more concrete account – the nuts and bolts if you will - of how the four steps strategy, the organizational grounding of the principles already outlined, was operationalized. With the careful analysis of my work diary, field notes, interview data and other contributions, each step – negotiating, devising, organising, and confirming – will be outlined below, showing how they contributed to the writing of our collective play, the final accomplishment of our moral imagination.

My role as facilitator of the artistic process and as custodian of the research was essential to the success of the four steps strategy. As facilitator, I took care of the creative process through the theatre workshop, creating the space for the participants to articulate their visions and allowing their ideas to emerge. As custodian of the research, I ensured that it was kept safe, respecting the participants' will, their privacy and their own intentions towards the project. I proposed activities, yet encouraged a change of direction whenever an explicit need was expressed. The following sections show how the themes we finally engaged with emerged not from a predefined set of ideas, but nurtured from a carefully calibrated, yet open, responsive and collective endeavour.

Thus, military geographies and slow violence act as conceptual pillars that become visible elements in the moral imagination of representing the militarisation and the spectacularization of the border. From the perspective of marginalised voices,

disregarded in mainstream discussions allied to this, the chapter also puts flesh on the bones of how emotion played a role in the co-production of knowledge. This was central to revealing the conflictual aspects of everyday life at the border of Europe.

5.1 The four steps strategy

The development and implementation of the workshops with Askavusa members and supporters was systematised in what I have called a four steps strategy: negotiating; devising; organizing; and confirming. Through the exploration of these, our community-based theatre practice in the context of Lampedusa, was ultimately connected to feminist peace research. In formulating this structure, I relied on my previous experiences as a professional theatre practitioner, although it is worth noting that what is proposed here can be applied to different theatre projects seeking peace and conflict transformation, with the acknowledgement that every situation is unique and requires deep understanding of context.

It will be helpful to sketch the basic contours of each step, so that a grasp of how their knit together can be appreciated before going to discuss each in greater detail. First, during the negotiating step we defined the general content of our workshop, established the relationships between all the participants, and agreed upon ways of being in the group. Secondly, the devising step. This was the core phase of the theatre experience; concerned with 'doing' and 'being engaged' in the practical task of making theatre, developing the stories, and writing the first draft of the scenes which later formed the collective play. Thirdly, the organizing step, where I worked mainly alone, putting the scenes in a preliminary frame, that was later submitted to the participants for discussion. Finally, in the confirming step, we subjected the entire work to collective scrutiny, making some corrections and changes in the scenes where necessary before the entire work was translated into English. It should be noted that although each step is discussed individually, the nature of co-production meant that the process did not follow a strictly linear development, but often involved stepping backwards and whenever there was a need to discuss or clarify something.

	Four Steps	contents/aims	time frame
1.	Negotiating (the topics)	Agreeing about the topics; establishing the relationship	from Oct 2015 to Nov 2016
2.	Devising (the topics)	Gathering personal stories, exercises, improvisations; exploring the emotional and relational bond	Nov 2016 and Oct 2017
3.	Organising (the material)	Writing the scenes and combining them into a preliminary frame;	from Nov 2016 to Oct 2017
4.	Confirming (the agreed changes and the final version)	Checking together the entire structure (and translating the text from Italian to English)	from Oct 2017 to May 2018

Table 1. Four steps strategy: contents and time frame

5.1.1 Negotiating

This was the first phase of the workshop and the one where we agreed on which topics we wanted to grapple with during our experience together. This is an important stage and demanded careful stewardship. Detailed exploration of all matters relating to the preliminary agreement were essential if we were to have a clear and shared understanding of what we were doing, and where we were going as a collective exercise. The process was not quick and required a considerable number of meetings. In addition, it was sometimes necessary to revisit this step in order to confirm our agreement or make some changes *in itinere*. In our case, the negotiating step lasted more than one year from October 2015 when I first went to Lampedusa, to the next fall, when I returned to facilitate our first theatre workshop. For all that time, the negotiation progressed through email and phone calls, and finally had its culmination with a collective (in person) discussion in November 2016.

From my delocalised and distant geographical position in Tampere, I encouraged the discussion about the themes for our theatre experience with an email,[55] within which I proposed three subjects I considered to be macro themes. They were preliminary, open suggestions, based on an analysis of the available literature about Lampedusa, the

[55] My first topical email on 31 August 2016 was addressed to the collective email address of Askavusa, and personally to Gianna, who was my main contact person. By sending an email to the whole group, I hoped that they would have discussed collectively about it before my arrival.

interviews I was working on[56] and further accessible material on the web such as Askavusa website.

'Place', in particular, the lost access to the land, and the consequent disruption of the relationship between bodies and the land, was the first theme. It was attentive to questions such as: what kind of political and social images emerge when the passage gets prohibited? What emotional consequences does this have? In thinking about this, I was inspired by a post, published on Askavusa's blog which expressed strong disappointment and a poetic sarcasm, for the way in which the radar installations and military bases had changed the levels of accessibility around the island. The words of the post accurately represented the style of the collective, where deep sentiments of empathy for local needs, and rage towards the central authorities, were often mixed.[57] From this suggestion, it was plausible that we could build a map, both topographical and conceptual, to reflect how the physical and emotional experience of the island had changed.

'Temporalities' was the second theme and reflected the way time, and especially perceptions of time, were intrinsically connected to the permanent status of emergency on the island. This created a 'waiting feeling' amongst islanders, and at times, an overwhelming sense that something tragic might happen. This theme emerged from some of the interviews with Askavusa members (cf. section on organising) and local residents in Lampedusa. Local temporalities in Lampedusa were also connected to the economic distortions created by the co-dependency between tourism and the military on the island.

What became the most prevalent theme running through the project, was to capture the contradictions that were all pervasive on the island: between the natural beauty and the electromagnetic pollution; the seemingly unlimited military expense and the paucity of essential public services; the citizens' activism/participation relative to the economic succubus of the military presence.

It took two emails before I could finally engage with Askavusa members and arrange a discussion, which only took place once I had arrived on the island in November 2016. Writing them, I carefully pondered my words, balancing my enthusiasm with care that ensured my words explained that the proposal was about participation and community engagement rather than anything 'already fixed' by me in advance. From my previous experiences, I was, however, confident that my ideas, even vaguely expressed, would be

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[56] Particularly the ones I could have access to through Karina Horsti's research project. When I started working with her, my first task was to transcribe and translate interviews she conducted in Lampedusa in 2014. That material gave me a preliminary view about the situation in the island not only from Askavusa's perspective. Then, going to Lampedusa in 2015 was a great opportunity for me to create a solid background for my doctoral research.

[57] https://askavusa.wordpress.com/2015/05/06/un-posto-da-dove-ci-si-tuffa/ - in Chapter 6 I will mention and discuss this post.

sufficient for them to envision the possibilities and elicit a positive response. To borrow Ruth Behar's concept (1996), I cast myself as a 'vulnerable facilitator' (as well as a vulnerable observer), trying to enter into the life of Askavusa on my tiptoes, but still with a visible steady pace of knowing.

When I finally met the workshop participants in Lampedusa in November 2016, we engaged in a vivid and fruitful discussion, which led us to a final decision about the main theme. That evening, I wrote in an almost feverish vein:

> I would love to ask more questions, but also just listen what these persons have to tell me. Their words are flowing, one after the other, overlapping and opening continuously new topics. I would love to stop them and ask to be more precise, to linger over a detail that takes my attention. But I resist, letting their will of speaking and telling going on with their stories and flowing freely; somehow, I am captured and fascinated by it. I take notes, fragmented words, like secrets that should be kept hidden and protected by curious eyes. After this flow of conversation, I have to remind myself that we need some plan, that I have to respect the rules and be the guardian of the time, so after we agreed on the main theme, I ask them to discuss the timetable, and we agree also on it.[58]

We decided to develop our workshop on the theme of 'contradictions in Lampedusa', which became the initial, but temporary, title of our play. We felt this was a broad enough umbrella to include other themes that participants found equally relevant and meaningful.

It might be argued that such a moment ought to be considered the end point of the negotiating step. But such a claim would be a forced construction, designed to fit neatly with a linear approach, which was disconnected from the reality of the creative process we were embedded in. The matter of negotiation, if not an ever-present possibility, was nonetheless revisited whenever we asked ourselves if we were happy about the direction we were taking, or if we wanted to talk about a salient issue that had only just arisen. In this sense, the unmapped trajectory of our process was consistent with the practice of feminist peace research, which according to Catia Confortini, "… is always a work in progress, and it is defined, contested, and redefined by our everyday practices, agendas, and the content of our research" (in Wibben et al, 2019:90). This was the case for our workshops which were committed to an arts-based participatory approach, where facilitation and creation were on-going, the beginning and the end rarely delineated, and where revisiting topics or issues which had been already discussed a common occurrence.

New topics certainly emerged from the steps following the initial negotiation, and they were the unpredictable consequences of a creative process that cannot be

[58] From my field trip notes, 2016.

constrained in any rigid scheme or structure. In their uniqueness and singularities, community theatre projects require what Eugene van Erven defined as:

> (…) flexibility, the ability to adapt pre-planned structures and schedules to unforeseen developments, cross-cultural sensitivity, and the skill to generate original performances through improvisation [… and such characteristics represent the…] valuable assets for would-be community theatre artists all over the world (van Erven, 2001:244).

Behind the apparently simple task of reaching agreement about topics to be developed during the workshops, this step was also crucial for establishing a positive relationship between the participants (including myself). In comparison to the context of conflict transformation, it was necessary from the outset to create a relationship of trust and mutual understanding, a process which continued, albeit in the background, for the entire process. However, starting such a journey together requires being ready "to step into the unknown without any guarantee of success or even safety" (Lederach, 2005:39). This leap was both exciting and scary; it provoked curiosity in all who were involved, and we overcame the emotional challenges as we were all eager to jump into an unknown and unpredictable artistic process. Within this, an intriguing relationship was established. My suggestions, emails, and dialogical attitude offered and promoted the reciprocal trust necessary to create a respectful environment for participants, whilst the participants voluntarily accepted my offer, and the risk of potential failure, not out of misguided hierarchy, but because somehow they knew that it was the only way towards "the rise of an imagination that carries people toward a new, though mysterious, and often unexpected shore" (Lederach, 2005:39). Thus, our journey to the moral imagination started as we embarked together in exploring "the geographies of violence that are known" (Lederach, 2005:39) at the heterotopic humanitarian border of Lampedusa.

5.1.2 Devising

'Devised theatre' is a common way of referring to a multiplicity of theatrical methods based on collaborative creation, and which have developed across the globe during the 20th Century. They can be physical works or scripts created through improvisation by a performing ensemble (see Oddey, 1994; Heddon and Milling, 2006; Syssoyeva and Proudfit, 2016). Inspired by this concept of collective work, the second phase of our co-production process was the devising step, where everybody was deeply engaged in creative activity and the levels of participation reached a peak.

Through various exercises, tools and games, or physical and verbal improvisations, we explored the chosen topics in greater depth. We also engaged in collective discussions of our 'situated knowledge', which led us to reveal new and unexpected topics or more

contradictions that would be further developed in accordance with participatory methodologies of feminist peace research (Harding and Norberg, 2005; Björkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic, 2021:42; Wibben et al., 2019; Seppälä et al., 2021). For me, devising a topic must include several actions, which are not limited to acting. To fully explore an issue, it is crucial to grasp the different understandings of it, and possibly experiment with different representations and interpretations with various techniques and approaches. For this reason, the participants were asked to write, use their bodies to express themselves, play games, draw, and simply discuss the issue at hand. The devising step took several weeks and included a wide variety of activities across two years. Accounting for every detail would demand space that is unavailable here, rather I will focus on the more appropriate activities and exercises, where the intensity of discussion reflected more accurately what 'devising in/about Lampedusa' meant for us.

Throughout the process we alternated moments where participants 'shared the floor' with periods where they presented in a sort of 'settled staging'. When they worked 'on the floor',[59] the atmosphere was one of equality, where everyone shared the workshop equally, and where they could work individually, in pairs, or as a group. In those moments, I was an outsider, watching the whole group and facilitating their activity as individuals and working together. In the 'settled stage area', someone was usually presenting something – most often improvising – while the others watched. Before, during and after those moments, my interventions were limited but encompassed comments, instructions or suggestions on how something might be done.

Reflecting on Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela's (1998) studies about the nature of mind, Daniel Bowling and David Hoffman recognised that in the context of mediation,

> every system (and thus every individual) has a different history and process of organising itself. Our world view is a result of the completely different influences and experiences we have had in our lives and therefore a different perception of 'reality' (Bowling and Hoffman, 2000:18).

Just like mediators, who need to acknowledge a multiplicity of views and variant perceptions of reality, as facilitator of the devising step, I had to recognise that not all bodies and minds function in the same way, and that there was no singular correct way that suited everybody (see also Raynor, 2018). Consequently, in the act of devising, which demands understanding, discussing, embodying, reading and re-writing about specific issues, feasible ways of thinking and envisioning reality, need to find their place and have the opportunity be expressed and listened to. To activate this complex process of

[59] The expression 'working on the floor' refers to all the preparatory activities for the staging, as improvising, playing games, doing exercises.

collective artistic exploration several tools from diverse sources were used. In the first instance, my way(s) of seeing and doing theatre is a mixture of dramaturgical exercises, improvisations, physical training, games and collective discussions, a suitcase of various tools that I have collected and inherited during my years of professional theatre education and practice. As Alison Oddey puts it when describing one particular game in her pivotal work on devising theatre,

> 'Thinking on your feet' allows the individual to respond to new ideas or thoughts spontaneously, to sense and react to others so that the interaction or combined operation often produces unknown or unseen fresh material (Oddey, 1996:155).

Group discussions, which are still an important part of the devising process, can become a trap which locks participants into a cycle of endless talk with no final agreement. Working 'on the floor' makes it possible for the group to embody discussions and explore with some more concrete dramaturgical directions within physical interactions. In this, my role as facilitator was essential: I had to continuously ask myself which exercise would be most suitable for the group, for particular individuals, and applicable to the different moments we faced. Consequently, being self-reflective about my own world view and how it could impact upon the collective process, was a necessary and ongoing position (Bowling and Hoffman, 2000). This required me to be an active listener and a genuine observer, able to welcome participants' attitudes and to change directions whenever a need emerged. The co-production of knowledge, as it develops between participants, generates dynamics which affect the process, and in this respect the role of the facilitator is to be focused on how change occurs, and attentive to who the main drivers of artistic co-creation are.

The participants of the first workshop in 2016 had different backgrounds, ages, and genders. They also had different individual approaches and skills. For example, while some were more comfortable writing to express their thoughts and ideas, others were happier with physical improvisations and the more emotional work through the body to communicate their feelings. As far as was possible, I sought to actively involve everyone, balancing the activities, and diversifying as much as I could. But it would be *économique avec la vérité* to suggest that everyone's style was accommodated all of the time. Most days, for instance, the participants began by doing a physical warming up session, with the aim to 'think with our bodies' and mark the difference between the 'normal life' daily routine and the routine of the theatre workshop. Sometimes, this simple exercise can be a red flag to a participant that the experience is not for them. By way of illustration, after a few seconds of stretching our bodies in one of the first days of our workshop, Sara just left the room, mumbling something against the exercise and never returned to the workshop again. This is something that may happen while working with groups on a voluntary basis, where participants can withdraw from the process at any moment

(Harman, 2019). Within the workshops' settings, everyone was free to participate, and that participation was based on what people could share. Everyone gave the time that they were able to give. As pointed out by Tiina Seppälä et al. (2021), being engaged in a creative process (especially embodied) just might not be comfortable for everyone, and some can feel distinctly uneasy in ways they might not have predicted.

Despite quitting the workshop, however, Sara was still keen to share her stories and give comments on the text, but only during the spontaneous discussions we had. She was more confident and felt considerably more comfortable telling her stories rather than 'devising' them; to involve her, and her stories, I had to find my way to her through a different path than devising 'on the floor'. Thus, time and space were found to actively listen to her stories in an environment that was more suitable for her. What began as a potential loss was transformed into a tangible gain. Sara's contributions were crucial for our writing process; some of her stories were developed into scenes and included in the final version of the play. Active listening, like that with Sara, also became a key methodological skill both inside and outside the 'theatre workshop', and my feminist practice allowed a finer grained understanding of the power structures that I was introducing in the context of Askavusa (Björkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic, 2021).

With regard to materials and resources, *Porto M*, the premises used for our workshops, provided much of what we worked with. For example, the migrants' lost items and some of the images exhibited on the walls. As already explored in Chapter 2, Askavusa's premises are home to numerous items members found on the shores, and in the dump over the course of many years and are part of the daily life of the association's environment. Since I first encountered these items, I found their potential to use in the workshops utterly compelling; they are loud echoes of the identities and personal stories that can only be imagined, the belongings of persons who have failed or succeeded in crossing the Mediterranean Sea. They also represent 'scraps', the unwanted objects that somebody has left or thrown away. They remain as the permanent inhabitants of *Porto M*, and they were an important element of the environment where we worked for several weeks. Any visitor who arrives at *Porto M* cannot avoid noticing them, and they will most likely end up being in someone's album as picture souvenir, journalistic reportage, or hopefully the subject of some meaningful academic/artistic research.

Figure 5. Tea pots, shelves in *Porto M,* picture taken by the author

Over the course of time, these items have been sorted into categories and allocated appropriately on several shelves adjacent to the solid walls of *Porto M*. For instance, the tea pots are all on the same shelf, the bottles on another shelf, and so on. The items stare at the visitors, from the shelves, with the weight of all the memories and stories they are carrying. To some extent, they are like the sacred items displayed on altars: clearly visible, loudly telling their stories, visceral, and with no filter or means of amplification. They exist, occupy their own space, and speak in a language of their own. In the words of Fabio, one of the Askavusa activists, resonates a similar concept:

> (…) starting by a spiritual dimension…these items have an energy; they have such a vibration that strongly communicate to everybody, if you are able to listen. The only thing you need is the ability to be silent. Being silent in front of the items, you can communicate with them (interview with Fabio by Karina Horsti, October 2014, translated from Italian).

During the first workshop, the participants looked around to get a physical connection with the place we were in, and the objects on the shelves. Somehow, the decision to utilise the items in the workshop seemed to be a betrayal of the vibration that Fabio mentioned; by using them in the theatrical dimension, we had perpetrated a cultural and symbolic appropriation. Amongst other things, many of these items represented home for those migrants, and were involuntarily lost on their journey to Europe, due to the necessity of reducing the weight of their luggage, or worse. So, taking a different approach, we used them to explore and talk about life in Lampedusa, exactly the border

that those items were trying to reach and cross. We embraced the dilemmas suggested by the items and developed our theatre workshop on the base of that dilemma: the items became a crucial element in the life of our workshop as if they were magical elements, playing an evocative, narrative and dramaturgical role. Unexpectedly, we positioned ourselves in the tradition of story tellers.[60]

> I would say that the moment an object appears in a narrative, it is charged with a special force and becomes like the pole of a magnetic field, a knot in the network of invisible relationships. The symbolism of an object may be more or less explicit, but it is always there. We might even say that in a narrative any object is always magic (Calvino, 1988: 33).[61]

In our workshops, we used the lesson of Calvino as if it were a photographic negative: we let the objects evoke narratives and spread their power to make visible the (invisible) relationships and potential narratives behind them. 'The invisible relationships' that the items in *Porto M* evoked were constantly with us during the devising step. In addition, our devising actions with the 'lost and re-found' items of migrants, created a new way to tell and envisage moral imagination in the presence of military geographies. For example, those items represented the violence of wars, or the flee of people from authoritarian regimes, yet at the same time a hope that the future may permit the establishment of a new life. Taken together, the items were diverse, yet they shared a similar historical trajectory and a related destiny – they told individual stories which blurred into a collective and homogeneous otherness of people on their way to Europe. In their guise of everyday items such as cups, teapots, and items of clothing, they all brought an essence 'exceptional mundaneness', but at the same time they represented the extraordinary and difficult journey across dangerous places such as deserts, seas, and countries whose authoritarian regimes wished them harm.

An exemplary devising activity, implemented at the beginning of our workshop in 2016, will illustrate how the items were used during the devising step. The activity provided an opportunity for the participants to explore and critically connect with their knowledge and expertise of Lampedusa. In describing the exercise, I illustrate how the participants' articulation of knowledge into our artistic production was facilitated in a setting where they were the experts of contents, and I was the expert of the artistic facilitation tool. To prepare for this, we compiled a list of characters and wrote them

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[60] In the fable tradition, some items have sensorial capacities and magical powers; they are also metaphors or accessories of the body.

[61] "dal momento in cui un oggetto compare in una narrazione, si carica di una forza speciale, diventa come il polo d'un campo magnetico, un nodo d'una rete di rapporti invisibili. Il simbolismo d'un oggetto può essere più o meno esplicito, ma esiste sempre. Potremmo dire che in una narrazione un oggetto è sempre un oggetto magico" (Calvino, 1985:35).

on pieces of paper: an activist; an unconcerned citizen; a hesitant restaurateur; a hotel keeper who works with the military personnel; a politician with into thousands of different interests; an anti-militarist hotel keeper. I put the pieces of paper in a jar and put it aside for a while. Then, I asked the participants to choose an item or an image among those available in *Porto M* that could represent, evoke, or mean something about our theme "militarisation and contradictions". In Table 2, the objects and images that each participant chose are listed. Among them, a bottle with a message inside was probably the one which created the most touching improvisations (see Figure 7). The message said: "He who finds this letter I will accept to be my husband by God and his prophet". It was most likely written by a young, desperate, and/or poorly educated woman looking for a husband in the Islamic ritual.[62]

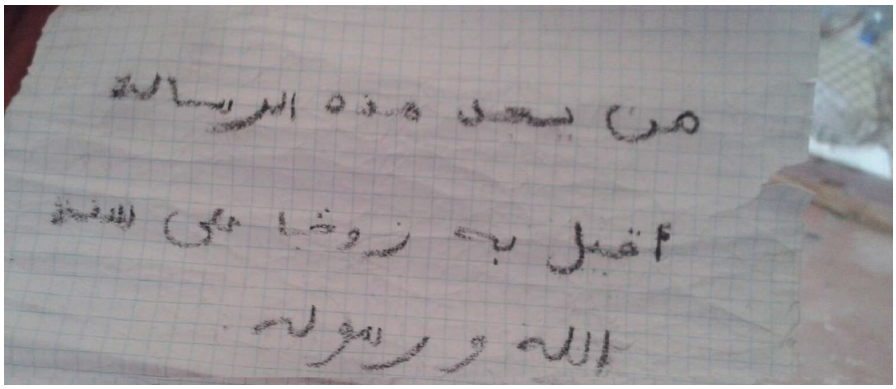

Figure 6. Detail from a message in a bottle – *Porto M,* picture taken by the author

Then I asked the participants to write down – in a free association of ideas - words or sentences related to these images/objects. Further, I asked them to freely identify the emotions or states of mind related to those words. After this, everyone fished from the jar a little paper and thus a character from our previously written list. I asked the participants to develop a short monologue or short story based on the combination of all these elements. Table 2 shows the combinations objects/emotions/characters that every participant used in their writing exercise and during a long devising session.[63]

[62] I am grateful to Saara Partanen for her interpretation of this message. The original message also contained a sequence of numbers, but for obvious reasons I removed it from the image.

[63] The texts developed in this phase, with the specific instructions and tasks can be found in the Appendix. They all contain embryonal elements of our collective dramaturgy.

Participants	Object/Image	Emotions/State of mind	Character
Eleonora	Bottle with a message	Loss and state of neglect	An unconcerned citizen
Gianna	Amulet in a plastic bag	Loneliness	A politician
Lucas	Nursing bottle	Uncertainty	An activist
Guido	World map	Indignation	A hotel keeper who works with the military personnel

Table 2. Devising from items

The random appearance of the characters from the jar was something that added to the unpredictability. However, after having chosen the item or the image, and thought about an emotion or state of mind, all the participants developed a coherent idea. Adding a new and unpredictable element, the character, was my attempt to introduce potential ambiguity, and encourage the search for new horizons and perspectives in the creative process. In this instance, ambiguity acted as it should, a key part of the artistic process, encouraging critical engagement to ensure that "creativity moves beyond what exists toward something new and unexpected while rising from and speaking to the everyday" (Lederach, 2005:38).

Following this, I asked the participants to assume the point of view of the characters and create a short text based on the connections between the elements. The exercise resulted in the participants proposing stories with complex and interesting layers; each one replete with contradictions, complexities, and conflict transformation. At this early stage, their ideas were embryonic. They were either in germ or not fully developed in a clear relation with a dramaturgic structure,[64] but in each of these short texts, there were elements which we included in our collective play. The following table shows what Eleonora wrote during this exercise.

[64] See the full table in the Appendix.

Participant	Free Words (1)	Monologue/Story (2)
Eleonora	Military, combined marriage, Muslim, blindly marriage, militarisation, research, family, certainties, the sea, the unknown, uncertainty, abandonment, loss, essence, prudence, recklessness, free will, impetuousness, prudence, waves, sea, ritual, empty message.	An unconcerned citizen, who feels abandoned by the State with regard to his primary rights, is on the beach looking at the sea; he finds a plastic bottle with a message inside from a Muslim girl looking for a husband. The citizen's indifference gives way to amazement and curiosity about such bizarre call.

Table 3. Devising from a bottle: Eleonora's story

Within just a few lines, the text Eleonora wrote contained many relevant elements, such as the frustration felt toward the public authority, the connection with the nature embodied by the sea, the plastic pollution in the environment and specifically in the sea, and the role of religion in people's lives. Silently, the text evokes loneliness as a feature of the human condition and how people have different ways of dealing with it; one can seek answers watching the sea, while somebody else can try to seek salvation by sending a message through the sea. The message in a bottle is a *topos* of romantic and adventurous literatures, evoking images of shipwrecks, hopes of reaching a final destination, and perhaps love. It is a message usually identified with castaways on a scrap of paper, rolled-up and put in an empty bottle, to advertise their distress to the outside world, where they fully expect someone to care.

The writing process of this scene revealed both a gendered and intersectional perspective. Through the theatre practice, we connected with the person (presumably a woman) who sent the message from the other side of the sea. In doing so, we sought to activate empathy and decolonised solidarity (Seppälä, 2021). Nevertheless, being a women is not a homogenous category; only by truly applying an intersectional lens, the structural violences occurring in different societies and cultures can be understood. Still, Eleonora and the other women participating in the workshops, felt a closeness to the anonymous woman who sent the message, envisioning her request for a husband as a desperate attempt of leaving some unpleasant situation. Paradoxically, the request fell back into a patriarchal system of rules (from father to husband), and this aspect was somehow read back into our text. With two versions of the same scene, we were able to

express these paradoxes and the pain of being inside a patriarchal frame in which women are only allowed to exist as daughters of, wives of, and eventually, mothers of. In the first version, Claudio, after having read the message, tries to find the words towards solidarity, which all together may sound clumsy, confused and not truly helpful. In the second version, Anna, differently, does not say anything, but breathes the message-in-the-bottle as if it were a creature coming from the sea, and listened to it with all her emotional involvement. This second dramaturgical version gave us the chance to leave open and unanswered the question: how do we react to the gendered injustices and the acts of violence that we are not directly witnessing at the fragile border of Lampedusa?

The scene 'The citizen and the sea' of which one extract opens this chapter, was written from a combination of the text devised by Eleonora and a few improvisations made afterwards around it. The genealogy of this scene represents the way we worked during the workshop: we found interesting elements, we developed a few of them immediately after the first session or later in the following year, and we left out others. At first, I noticed that my work diary spoke of how there were probably too many simultaneous elements in the exercise, and the 'overflow' might have created confusion and sent us in unhelpful directions. I was afraid that dealing with all these elements at the same time, and in casual combination, would create confusion in the creative process. However, on the same page, I had written:

> I like to think that in this way we do not focus on one unique element, but we can open new horizons and views inside the creative process. Anyway, we will polish and define more precisely later what to leave, what to develop, what to save, etc…

And this was precisely what happened. From the messy complexity of too many elements, we created simple texts, and developed and interlaced them in a wider common frame. My work diary did not explicitly reflect on these developments, as I mostly let the artistic process flow on its own directions. Nevertheless, I did follow my intuition, without recording the artistic process in every fine detail, even though my thoughts were not clear enough in my mind to record it. This was reminiscent of the serendipity in certain discoveries. Serendipity plays an intriguing role in both artistic processes and in conflict transformation. For Lederach, it reflects "the wisdom of recognizing and then moving with the energetic flow of the unexpected" (Lederach, 2005:115), but more so, serendipity embodies the notion that community-based theatre facilitators cannot completely control the process. Instead, they must let it flow and embrace the unpredictable discoveries or things that come within the process (van Erven, 2001). As Massimo Rossi puts it, "… intelligence and optimism create

serendipity, and, within an intertwined relation of cause and effect, they interlace infinite paces of dance" (Rossi, 2012).[65]

Although I wrote no specific comments about any of the improvisations during that day, I took rough notes about the material that came out of the improvisations, with the implicit intention to save them for future use. However, the day after, probably inspired by Eleonora's improvisation, and the motivation to develop it, I asked all the participants to work with an imaginary bottle and explore possible messages inside of it.

> I asked the guys (Mario, Gianna and Eleonora) to visualize and create their own spheres, to experience and visualize them as if they were their own worlds[66]. Then, I asked them to visualize the centre of this 'world-circle' an object, a bottle. "Initially observe it, and build its image in detail: what colour, what size, what material is the bottle made of?" Then I led them to a slow approach towards the bottle, with a mixture of curiosity, amazement, fear, wonder. Everyone therefore visualized the colour, surface, material, weight they wanted and found a message inside. I gave everyone the freedom to decide what message they received. I told them "That's a message for you. You react as you wish; you can write something or do nothing". And in the end, they returned the bottle to the circle with or without the answer.

During this activity, it was crucial to encourage them to neither judge themselves nor the 'final result'. On the basis that they were all non-professional actors, they might have encountered feelings of silliness, or wondered about what we were doing and what the purpose was of specific activities. In fact, as pointed out by Elise Boulding in her pivotal feminist contribution about image literacy on peace, "for many people, it is very difficult to begin imagining in a fantasy mode that is at the same time guided by a certain level of intentionality within the imager" (Boulding, 1989:77). Thus, my role in that specific moment was to help them as individuals, and collectively, to liberate their imaginations so as to produce something meaningful. The practice of visualization helped some of the participants to express not only their emotions with regard to the status quo of the island, but also the hopes and wishes for future scenarios. If we want to envisage future utopias, our capacity to imagine them need to be trained (Boulding, 1989; Wibben et al., 2019).

This exercise was the preparatory work for the individual improvisations needed to write two versions of the scene 'The citizen and the sea'. For these improvisations, the arrangement of the space was changed, and a stage area was created against the counter at the entrance, with a few chairs in front for those who were watching the improvisation. The same instructions, inspired by the insights I got from the participants after the exercise with the imaginary bottle, were given for all improvisations, namely "first the character is alone and feels the weight of this loneliness". I encouraged the

[65] from an email that Massimo Rossi sent to the author, 23 February 2012.

[66] I do mean a sphere around them, as they are the centre of it.

actors to take all the time they needed to concentrate. Then, "this sense of solitude becomes something like rage or frustration, and taking the energy from this feeling, the character starts to speak to the sea, as the sea was a person. The monologue gets interrupted by the arrival of a bottle, the character has a reaction, and the scene ends". Having given the instruction, I tended not say anything during the improvisations, as I preferred to allow things to develop without interruption. I might have suggested something if I felt that the situation was not growing dramaturgically, or when too much time was being taken. In the latter case, I would whisper to the 'actors' to find a conclusion.

The exception was Mario, the youngest of the group, who wanted to go first. With difficulties in concentrating, my first thought was that Mario needed some help. But instead of helping, my voice disturbed him, and he could not stay in the situation of the character and listen to me at the same time. He just looked at me and asked, 'as Mario': "how shall I do it?". We took some time out and I explained that I wasn't telling him how to act, but instead I tried to guide him so he could find his own way and develop something authentic and meaningful for him, and consequently for all of us. That improvisation was the beginning of discovering new ways of approaching my role, both for him and for me.

Eleonora went second and developed a touching scene. Having already expressed to me how difficult it was for her to express rage, we discussed the different shades that rage can have, and how it can be also combined with other feelings and attitudes, as sadness, irony, sarcasm, fear, arrogance, and so on. With her deep smiling blue eyes, she looked at me and said: "I wish I could express all my rage, because I do feel rage!". During the improvisation, she developed an intense scene, and her monologue ended with her whispering to the sea "Enough, it is enough now…". After the improvisation, she was so deeply charged that she could not stand in the middle of the stage, and she had to hide herself behind a drywall and cry. Immediately I followed her, to check that everything was ok and to offer my hug. While I hugged her she told me, "… this is painful, or maybe I do not know if it is, perhaps it is a good feeling, I don't know". Whilst I believe that emotions are welcome, and that even feeling and displaying strong emotions can be a liberating and revealing act, I was at the same time concerned about the vulnerabilities that participants can suddenly be confronted with during their theatre experience. In front of emotional explosions, I can be with them, listen to them actively and empathetically, and act with ethical 'responsivity' towards the group and the individuals (Hepplewhite, 2020). In this sense, and as an applied theatre practitioner, I was showing the capacity to respond to the needs of the group, and to be simultaneously "…*responsible* to the group members and for their experience of the work" (Hepplewhite, 2020:4, italics in the original). I was thus committed in being vulnerable and bewildered

with Eleonora, while at the same time I was taking care that the entire group had a safe opportunity to express and sharing their emotions without being judged (Hepplewhite, 2020; Thompson, 2003; Hartley and Bond, 2012; Premaratna, 2018). While practicing and looking to suspend judgement of our emotions, we allowed ourselves to experiment and develop what Lederach calls the reaching of a high degree of ambiguity, the necessary capacity to explore both face and heart value in settings characterized by conflict (Lederach, 2005). That uncertainty was fully explored during the improvisations about the 'bottle'.

After Eleonora, Gianna went to the stage and developed her improvisation, which was balanced, centred and full of controlled emotion. She expressed the rage, the disappointment, the frustration of being isolated, armless, surrounded by water and death. This was one of those rare occasions when something unforeseen and magical happened. There was a collective emotional response to the empathy and compassion for the unknown woman, from an unknown place across the sea, who sent a message in a bottle, to an unknown destination, hoping to reach unknown persons in an unknown place. In a sea of unknowingness, we all felt as if we had imagined more than just fragments of her. I asked Gianna to write down what she had just done. That was how 'The citizen and the sea' was devised.

During the devising step it became clear to me that our discussions and improvisations were leading to a collective dramaturgy, and clear to all of us that that we were engaged in writing a play. Beginning with generic themes such as contradictions in Lampedusa, we ended up devising specific stories, in which emotions and visions about Lampedusa played important roles. Those stories were personal and simultaneously emblematic of the special conditions that Lampedusan islanders experience in their everyday-heterotopic-life at the border of Europe. The value of the devising step lies in the fact that the issues we explored and devised had their origins in the real bodies and experiences of people living, observing and feeling from our unique location, the 'privileged observatory' of Lampedusa itself. Equally, the items we used, supported us during the workshop, were inspiring elements in the devising step, and meaningful objects for our whole artistic process. They became magical tools that allowed us to access the new realities we were creating through our workshop, and at the same time critical anchors, that kept us attached to the reality from which our stories came. Somehow, it was an exercise which kept awake both our imagination and our realism and helped me to encourage the group to explore further those issues, and facilitate the collective writing process.

5.1.3 Organising

Like an ethnographer, who after the fieldwork faces the lonely task "to bring the ethnographic moment back, to resurrect it" (Behar, 1996:9), the organising step, was my most challenging moment as a facilitator. In contrast to the devising step, where I was centred on others, and physically, emotionally and intellectually engaged with the workshop participants (Hepplewhite, 2020; Prendergast and Saxton, 2013), the organising step left me mostly alone and geographically distant from the site of our workshop. I had to adjust to my 'de-centred' position and keep the co-produced material from the collective experience we had in Lampedusa foremost in my mind. Using the words of Hepplewhite, despite being alone, I embraced my 'responsivity' as an applied theatre practitioner, and let "empathy, reflection and dialogue" guide my choices in the co-production, assembling and editing of the produced material, while retaining a sense of what we wrote together (Hepplewhite, 2020:4).

The organising step began when the first workshop ended in 2016, overlapping with the devising step, and continuing when we met again in 2017 and worked on all the scenes, until I finally assembled all the texts into a coherent play and translated it. During this period, my work interlaced with other tasks and events, including the fact that I became mother and my life rhythm drastically changed. Borrowing the expression of 'feminist standpoint' from Sara Ruddick (1989) and Nancy Hartsock (1983), I suddenly found myself "immersed in the materials of the physical world" while taking care of my child, and at the same time working on my research (Ruddick, 1989:130). Yet, along with these enormous and beautiful life changes, maternal thinking became a consistent contribution to the research development. During these months I managed to organise the produced material into a dramaturgical frame, reflecting how my responsibility as theatre practitioner was not only about facilitating the workshop, but also in the writing, editing, and organising of texts.

Some scenes were produced during the workshop by the participants, with some addictions or adjustments made by me in order to clarify or reinforce the material collectively produced. This was the case with the 'Prologue', 'Houses', and 'School' scenes, where a few words or expressions were changed, some parts were assembled, writing where the text was not developed entirely, or not explicit enough in their first versions. Other scenes were written by me on the basis of improvisations that had taken place, or from relying on the discussions we had engaged in, which was the case for the 'Asparagus' and 'the camping area' scenes respectively. So there was a clear and tangible connection between the material produced during the workshops, and that which was used as the inspirational starting points for the scenes. Once I assembled the pieces together, I checked the structure with the participants back in Lampedusa, where we

discussed how the new structure resonated with their general ideas, whether it reflected the collective work we had undertaken so far. As was by now expected, the organising step necessarily overlapped and merged into the confirming step.

Although the scenes were thematically connected, the play had no plot in the traditional sense. Each scene was neither dependent on another, nor chronologically related, so it was incumbent upon me to establish a mental and emotional internal rhythm when ordering the scenes. The criteria for doing this was primarily to establish balance in the flow of the scenes. Thus, wordy scenes were alternated with (potentially) more physical scenes, and the ones with only one character interchanged with those more populous. However, the sequence of the scenes was not crucial to the final meaning of the play, and the scenes, save for the 'Prologue' and 'Epilogue', could have been read and staged differently in order to emphasise one theme or another.

In organising the scenes in a balanced way, I took inspiration from 'Fear and Misery of the Third Reich', a play written by Bertolt Brecht during the 1930s, and one of his most popular works. By depicting scenes of people confronted with the realities of the nascent regime in their everyday lives, Brecht, for the first time, explicitly expressed his position against Nazism. Brecht's scenes depict fragments of lives which are in a singular sense disconnected, but collectively they convey a coherent vision of their own sense and completeness. For our collective play, we wanted to look at life at the border of Europe and tell how militarisation and the migration industry enter in the personal space of the Lampedusan community. The fragmentated structure underlines the isolation and uniqueness of every single story, yet like Brecht, we capture something where the whole is more than the sum of its parts.

A further element that guided me in organising the final structure of the play was the fatalistic perception of the time. This peculiar temporality emerged from a number of interviews with Askavusa members: the rhythm of tragedy and human disaster which regularly occur in Lampedusa, coincided with the problems the locals had to face in their everyday lives. For example, in the wake of one disaster, the inhabitants already had a silent and unspoken expectation that sooner or later something equally bad will happen. It was as if the essence of 'tragic' had woven itself so tightly into the fabric of the island, disaster was an expectation not a surprise or a shock. In our first interview in October 2015, Gianna had already told me about the difficulties Lampedusans constantly perceive, and the feeling of an impending humanitarian emergency.

> In a while we will add to the complaints about the fact that summer has ended, and the problems with the school will start. Children are now going to school in shifts, the waste collection at household is unpaid, and the transport services do not work. Now we continue to suffer with the same problems we had for years. And you can already sense in the air that a new emergency is coming. We already noticed few days ago that the military presence has increased lately… (interview with Gianna, October 2015, translated from Italian).

Similar concerns were expressed by Maurizio in his interview when he told me:

> … about one year after a big problematic event in Lampedusa something happens again, statistically. So, when a year has passed after something big, I start getting worried, because statistically the frequency between a shipwreck and something else really bad is one year, one year and half (interview with Maurizio, November 2015, translated from Italian).

In their words then, the sense of frequent emergency is perceived a as something cyclic and fatalistic, but at the same time has its roots in activities pursued by the authorities. The natural rhythm of the seasons – after summer, fall will come and the schools' activities will start, for instance – is accompanied with the expectation that visible and concrete problems will emerge – i.e., the public services will not work, schools are badly organized, transport will get worse. The recurrent problems with the school buildings, the transportation and the waste collection services were told as though they were the result of intentional neglect by not solving those issues but instead putting their efforts into supporting the military presence in the island.

At first, to reproduce this feeling of fatalistic circularity, I collocated various elements of text to produce the 'Prologue' and the 'Epilogue'. They perfectly framed the scenes in a cyclical structure and illustrated the resignation and the sense of destiny which embodied the view that nothing can truly change. In the underlined repetition and circularity of events, a kind of cycle of life was depicted.

The 'Prologue' was derived from a text written in Spanish by Lucas who took inspiration form a nursing bottle he took from one of the shelves at *Porto M*. When Lucas read his text to us for the first time, I could already sense that it was different from the other ones. It had a poetic language and style that opened to another space and time, reflecting the 'unknown elsewhere' embodied by those who try to reach Lampedusa, and who were 'coming as tourists in a safari' pretending to know what to say about it.[67] I decided to translate Lucas' text into Italian and work on it. I changed its structure, by stressing the image of an eternally sick little baby who does not want to grow independently, but instead wants to be fed in perpetuity with a nursing bottle. Despite all these changes, his initial ideas were respected and both Lucas and the rest of the group accepted my modifications.

Later, we thought it would be a good way to open our stories, to introduce the audience to the elsewhere that Lucas had evocated. Thus, the Prologue came into being, and played the role of a glue which held the component parts together; a poetic action which takes the audience (or reader) by the hand and leads them into the various avenues of the play. Just like the Greek tragedies where stories were introduced by a prologue

[67] In Chapter 6 I further explore the concept of 'elsewhere' in relation to Lampedusa.

and choruses refrained by satyrs, I imagined a chorus opening our play, creating a rhythm between the words, so they could be sung, chanted, or even danced.

To test my intuition, I proposed a physical exercise called 'the fish'.[68] This involved engaging with Lucas' text, words and lines that Eleonora had developed during the first exercise with the items,[69] and explored various possibilities with them. The words we chose were militarisation, incognito, uncertainty, sea, emptiness. And the lines were: "how can the Island grow to adulthood? Lampedusa is like a small child who has to be breastfed. She is like a sick baby!" Through this activity, I wanted to explore the potential of having a chorus made up of those words and statements, and how the poetic images they conjured could be embodied by them. We were thus exploring "the effects of doing on thinking (and vice-versa) (…) in spaces made for critique, intuition and analysis" (Raynor, 2018:14). The final effect was that the group formed a collective body while simultaneously saying different words and lines. It also reflected the theme that military control emanates from its physical presence on the land (Woodward, 2004). One way of making the less tangible or immediate effects of its presence more visible was by using our voices and bodies to reflect the uncertain and frightening feelings that the military presence imposed on people's lives. This was a particularly good example of how co-production made visible what was hidden and unspoken.

To place these developments in the appropriate procedural context, I did share *in itinere* with the group how I progressed with the organising step. I wanted my ideas and thoughts to be validated by heuristically playing them out 'on the floor' and working out whether the dramaturgical intuition of having a chorus at the beginning of the play was going to be strong enough. This was how my four steps strategy was designed to work, in this instance via the devising and organising steps: first, we created texts through improvisations, then, after some time, they were read and modified, if needed, in a silent moment and space, before putting the words back 'on the floor' to see if the idea worked in the bodies of the actors. In this way, there was enough scope left for changes, and I could jump back and forth between the devising and organising Steps and vice-versa. Put simply, I would be able to go back to the text and think in a practical way, how to modify, write or rewrite elements in a different space, where I could digest my thoughts which had been allowed to mature for long enough to meaningfully re-emerge.

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[68] 'The fish' is a physical exercise where participants are moving in a synchronized and coordinated way as fishes (and birds as well) do while moving as a group. Everybody is standing with few centimeters of distance between each other, in a chessboard position; thus, everybody can see at least one person in front of them and is also able to move at the same time and way. The exercise is usually used for training mutual listening and to activate peripheral and focused gaze. While the collectivity moves also the leadership moves, as only one person at the time is visible for everyone in the group.

[69] See Table 'Devising with the items' in Appendix.

Behind the activity of organizing the produced material into a common frame of images and meanings, is what Lederach calls the peripheral vision. According to Lederach,

> peripheral vision is the art of serendipity in social change, the capacity to situate oneself in a changing environment with a sense of direction and purpose and at the same time develop an ability to see and move with the unexpected (Lederach, 2005:118).

This kind of ability allows mental flexibility to address the direction of one's gaze and mind in different ways. It is a vision which makes it possible to create a flexible platform, in which

> change processes have a flexible strength, never find dead ends that stop their movement, and relish complexity precisely because complexity never stops offering up new things that may create ways forward, around, or behind whatever jumps in the way (Lederach, 2005:118).

With serendipitous vision, my creative eye was able to go "forward, backward, and sideways", looking at the devised texts and "adapting (them) to the changing environment while maintaining a purpose in mind but without a singularly defined process or pathway" (Lederach, 2005:118).

Given that the responsibility for the process of collective creativity during the organising step was mainly in my hands, it was necessary that there was unquestionable mutual trust between the workshop participants and myself. This allowed me the space and flexibility to engage with, revise, and assemble all the material into a coherent frame in the absence of unnecessary uncertainties.

In the final version of the play, we excluded a small amount of the material that we had previously devised. For example, there was a short story written by Guido that did not find its place in the play. The story of Lillo, a young citizen and son of a fisherman, who during the tourist boom of the 1990s became a restaurateur. However, this story touched upon the relationship between Lampedusa and Libya, in particular, a mystery about two missiles which were allegedly (or not) launched toward Lampedusa in 1980s (Nesti, 2016; Taranto, 2016). We felt that such a detail would have drawn us in the direction of documentary theatre and historical dilemmas. Instead, we decided to keep the play within the real and surreal paradoxes of Lampedusa.

5.1.4 Confirming

As expected, elements of the confirming step were strongly interconnected with the organising step, and necessarily imbricated with the other steps. This dialogical relationship was evident in reading, 'working on the floor', re-writing, discussing, and in the final agreement not only over the finished versions of single scenes, but also in confirming the final structure of the whole play. The result of our co-production was an intense, emotional, genuine, and fragile text through which we gave voice to stories and perspectives that would have otherwise remained hidden and unknown. In many ways, confirmation demands similar levels of concentration and focus to the editing stage of a literary novel. The burst of unconscious creativity that allows ideas and artistic improvisation to flourish, gives way to the studied development and transformation of the raw material into a polished and coherent production. Naturally, the environment required for the former, differs markedly to that needed by the latter. My diary notes about this stage reflect the difference and how it affected me during the process.

> The noises from the street, the phones ringing, people coming late. The familiarity in our encountering and talking, our being so casual. The sound of the lighter and of the burning cigarette. The voice in the background from another room. The loud voices from the downstairs fruit shop. How difficult is to think when there is such constant noise around us. How difficult is to have a clear mind and gaze, without grey clouds making thoughts heavier (my side comments after listening to the audio recording of our focus group on 2017).

In October 2017, we read all the written scenes from the previous year together, discussed the changes to be made which included writing the new text about schools' situation[70] in order to complete the play. Gianna and Eleonora could not recall some of the scenes, and they asked whether I changed something from the last time we met, which I had not. After a whole year apart, many things had been forgotten, and the group was understandably less focused than when we had parted a year before. Reading all the written scenes together proved an effective way to reconnect ourselves with the emotions of the previous year when we started our experience together.

The changes we agreed during that meeting about 'version 2016', were mainly about realism and common sense. For example, in the scene 'Houses', we noticed that the area where Gianni wanted to build would not have been possible, so we discussed alternatives and refined his request to the municipality officer and made some consistency changes to the overall scene. We similarly clarified that the girl in the 'Asparagus' scene would not say "You have to write it down in your Google Calendar", but simpler "in your diary". Another relevant change we discussed was about the text of the 'Epilogue'.

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[70] See Chapter 3.4, 'The power of different voices'.

It was already noted above, that using the same text for the 'Prologue' and 'Epilogue' was not long for the script. It was during this intense focus group in 2017 that we shared ideas and suggestions about potential changes for concluding the play. The final version of the 'Epilogue' provides the key which unlocks the cryptic evocation in the 'Prologue'.

> Chiara: *(reading from the Prologue)* 'an island which is always sick…but how can the island become…?' This is how Lampedusa is now, right? But we are also trying to remember how Lampedusa was in the past. Thus, we should make clear that Lampedusa has not always been like that. And we should rather go back and find the wellbeing of the past. Go back to the roots, indeed. (…) not going forward but going back to the past. I remember that was this sentence 'they give her the minimum to get a move on' yes, this sentence… instead Lampedusa should go back, as it was earlier… (Focus group, October 2017, translated from Italian).

Chiara's observation of tensions between visions of Lampedusa's past, present and future, speaks to the representational challenge posed by slow violence. This makes it incumbent on us "… to account for how the temporal dispersion of slow violence affects the way we perceive and respond to a variety of social affliction" (Nixon, 2011:3). The gradual degradation of the territory happens not only at the environmental level, but also in other dimensions. In the practice of confirming our play together, we accepted this challenge and engaged ourselves in depicting "… stories, images, and symbols adequate to the pervasive but elusive violence of delayed effects" (Nixon, 2011:3).

Chiara's contribution engaged us in a discussion about giving birth in Lampedusa, which on the island assumes an even greater political resonance than everywhere else. In the male militarised context of Lampedusa, the "political significance of birth that, without an exception, begins with/in a female body" gave us the chance to explore an important dimension of unseen everyday issues at the border of Europe (Vaittinen, 2017:54). In her pivotal book *Maternal Thinking*, feminist philosopher Sara Ruddick underlines how birth and birthing women are taboos that harbour pain, and concurrent ambivalent fascination and repulsion in several cultures (Ruddick, 1989). In Lampedusa, the act of giving birth assumes a double exclusion; from the gaze of the other islanders, as the future mother needs to leave the island to accomplish her task, and from the self-affirmation of the female body. While being the most natural thing in life, birth is also the most painful and potentially dangerous. As birth became increasingly a medicalised practice, the active participation of the birthing woman is neither requested nor encouraged (England and Horowitz, 1998). Thus, in Lampedusa the gendered dimension of the mother's body assumes a twofold meaning: she needs to be 'expelled' from the island and simultaneously made passive through her hospitalisation. Our

discussion on the theme of giving/not giving birth nurtured the final version of the 'Epilogue'.

Ilaria: - It might be that in order to go forward, it would be necessary to go back?

Chiara: - …to a more natural dimension, of the island, of the inhabitants…

Gianna: - And also associating with the fact that you cannot give birth on the island. Lampedusa is like a child who is not born.

Ilaria: - Oh yes, unbelievable… few days ago, I met this girl who was pregnant, and she told me that her due date was in two weeks so she needed to go to Palermo. I did not think about this.

Eleonora: - …in retrospect…

Ilaria: - …you need to go ten, twenty days before!

Eleonora: - …if not even more, otherwise they do not allow you to leave.

Gianna: - My sister-in-law left a month before her due date.

Eleonora: - Three weeks before, unless you go by boat. They want the doctor's certificate.

Ilaria: - Tell me this again, I need to write it down.

Eleonora: - That physically there are no births.

Chiara: - Lampedusa is like a child.

Gianna: - It is also a privation, the fact that people live in the island, but they were not born in the island; it is the first privation.

Eleonora: - Earlier was possible.

Gianna: - It is as if they create a dependency from outside.

Eleonora: - It is all a dependency.

Gianna: - I don't know…for now let's add the important point about being born here or not…

Ilaria: (*trying to find the sentence*) 'Lampedusa is like a child…is like a child who was born elsewhere'. Lampedusa… in the metaphor of the child becomes a bit twisted, because if the island is the child, who are the ones living on the island, the children of the child…?

Gianna: - It is also like the inhabitants were obliged to live here in this sort of dependency.

Chiara: - This sentence is beautiful 'Lampedusa is like a child who was born elsewhere'. If you think about all the decisions made about Lampedusa, concerning the military presence, the hospital, they are all made somewhere else, since it became already a dimension so… so small, but then there are so many things around this island, there are

such issues, bigger than the island itself, that are made somewhere else, yes, we can put this sentence.

(Focus group, October 2017, translated from Italian)

This dialogue is a good example of the way we discussed and thought aloud together about the interrelationships between daily life and the military presence. The feeling of the island becoming ever more vulnerable to a dynamic defined by 'dependency' on the military installations, was a recurrent topic in our discussions, and one that reconnects me to the fragilities and vulnerabilities of military geographies. As Woodward puts it, "we should be cautious about assuming that this (valuable financial) contribution is indispensable or entirely positive in terms of the social consequences which follow from defence dependency" (Woodward, 2004:49).

The collective practice of thinking out loud was at the core of both our co-production, and my individual task of formulating a final shared and common vision. Quite often single sentences were discussed and pondered over within the group with the same deep attention and commitment, and afterwards I had to re-frame the discussions within the writing process of the play. Only few weeks later, back in Tampere, I wrote in my work diary:

A Lampedusa non si nasce più, è un'isola che nasce altrove.	In Lampedusa, no births anymore; it is an island born elsewhere.
Lampedusa è un figlio debole che da solo non può andare avanti.	Lampedusa is a weak baby who cannot make it alone.
È come un figlio che nasce altrove,	It is like a baby born elsewhere,
e in quell'altrove si prendono anche tutte le decisioni.	and in that elsewhere all the decisions are taken.
Ma Lampedusa è anche ~~un biberon,~~ un piatto caldo, ~~il biberon di t~~ da cui in molti mangiano.	But Lampedusa is also ~~a nursing bottle~~, a warm meal, ~~the nursing bottle,~~ from which many are fed.
Tampere, 27.11.2017	Tampere, 27.11.2017

A further element that emerged during the focus group in 2017, was the relationship between realism and paradox, which was mainly a concern for me, as I was an outsider

in Lampedusa. On one hand, I wanted what we wrote to be believable, on the other hand, I felt that we should give space to the paradox, since realistically the situation in Lampedusa is full of contradictions and paradoxes. In the practice of co-production, writing a story that the community could reflect on became an important issue for me and the whole group (Harman, 2019).

During the organising and confirming steps, I worked mainly through what Alison Oddey called the "… the solitary occupation of writing", through which I was able to capture the wholeness of our theatre experience, (Oddey, 1996: xii). It is worth noting that collectivity and collaboration operate along a spectrum where nuanced differences in organisation and process are always present. Even the most collaborative settings would be hard pressed to ensure every single moment of the whole process of co-production was similarly shared. In some specific moments, such as the final editing of a text, individual work is needed to make progress, but not in a way that denudes the quality of collaboration overall. The presence of the collective was guaranteed, and made possible, by the previous commitment of participants' stories, and the mutual trust between the facilitator (or producer) and the group with regard to the co-production process (Harman, 2019).

During the winter of 2018, I translated the play into English, and checked it with a native English speaker and professional theatre person, Evan Schoombie. We worked word by word through the script to find closest matches to Italian expressions in English so as not to lose any of the meaning and intensity from the original. As Evan had lived and worked in Italy for several years, he has an excellent understanding of Italian language and culture; so, it was easy for him to grasp the mood of scenes, and the intentions behind the characters' words. Translating the play together was a pleasant and inspiring experience. In particular, it was the first line by line analytical reading from a different perspective after having been personally involved in the co-production of it. As I acknowledge, the uniqueness of language means that every translation is considered a partial betrayal. However, despite minor differences between the two versions, I feel confident in saying that the main concepts suffered no meaningful loss or distortion, and the voices we gave life to were not diluted in any noticeable way.

A number of positive things came out of the translation into English. I came to understand that the titles we were using for the play (*Contraddizioni a Lampedusa)* 'Contradictions in Lampedusa' – appeared weak and vague. While 'contradictions' was the key theme we started from, that title would not fully represent the complexity and the beauty of our collective work. So, we needed a different one. By discussing and brainstorming with Evan, we elaborated two new titles, for the two versions, in Italian and English. Inspired by the scene, 'The citizen and the sea', which, in his opinion, was the most emotional and poetic scene in the play, Evan suggested *Flotsam and Jetsam at the*

Border, as the English title. When the group heard the English version of the play and the new titles, everyone agreed on them.[71]

5.2 Life at the border

An islander knows the feeling of being isolated; shouting to the waves of the sea with rage, disappointment, and regret would sound familiar to anyone living on an island. Anna might be any islander living at the border. In the detailed, yet still open stage directions in the opening scene of 'The citizen and the sea' (and this chapter), we were invited to read, or foresee, different stories: (i) an individual suffering (for reasons we can or cannot imagine); (ii) a person who has a personal relationship with nature, embodied by the sea; (iii) the need to mirror ourselves in the solitude, in front of the nature; (iv) the therapeutic and cathartic sense of being in nature; (v) the necessity of communication, of being listened to and understood. Moreover, the natural element of the sea evokes unrefined magical energy, one which informs and moves living beings as humans, like the feeling of falling in love.[72] Before Anna starts to speak, several things have already been imagined. They may, or may not, happen; we will only discover where these imaginings go by absorbing the entire scene to find out.

When we improvised 'The citizen and the sea' for the first time with Mario, Eleonora and Gianna, we experienced a touching moment. I could sense the pain of being isolated, the deep frustration of not being listened to, a certain sense of inadequacy to life on the island, reflecting that perhaps to exist without meaning is not enough. For me, finding our way through this scene was a turning point in my understanding of how the work would have proceeded. It was a small, but meaningful, victory which I allowed to resonate in my heart with that satisfying rhythm which accompanies a successful direction. As I have explained above, this scene was emblematic of our co-production, both for the process that created it, and for the textual result. As an example of co-production of knowledge, the account has shown how the methodological direction taken in this thesis, made it possible to collectively develop stories from the emotional and intellectual relations between bodies, the environment, and manifest items in the

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[71] As a point of clarification, the English version was necessary not only as research material, but also for any potential staging of the play outside Italy. In fact, there was the intention to put on stage the play with an international group of actors.

[72] I do refer to the contribution of Jung and his interpretation of anthropological studies carried out at the beginning of 20th Century in Malaysia regarding the concept of *mana* (Jung, 1964).

challenging context of Lampedusa. Moreover, methodologically, the serendipity of using items and improvisations to develop scenes, allowed for different versions of this scene to take shape. In this respect, we could simultaneously explore dimensions of collectivism and individuality, while allowing various ideas, objects and interpretations permeate through our combination of different exercises.

The contents we developed while devising and writing this particular scene was iconic for the entire play. In my analysis of this moment, I was struck by the impetus I felt to engage with the conceptual pillars of military geographies and slow violence which were intuitively connected, and topically related, to the themes of the scene. In this sense, the scene grapples with the natural environment represented by the sea and its relationship with the militarised community of Lampedusa; the otherness coming from the sea in the form of a bottle, the emotionality, the loneliness, lost and rediscovered humanity, and the possibility to tell different versions of the same story. In the emotional and corporeal complexity behind this scene, we represent the potential of community-based theatre at the border of Europe, as the need to create alternative narratives about Lampedusa. Indeed, moral imagination is illuminated by the coexistence of divergent stories, where military geographies and slow violence can be told and heard from different perspectives.

Looking again to the scene 'The citizen and the sea', for example, the noisy presence of contradictory emotions is deafening. Although the sea is often depicted as a symbol of freedom and vastness, the scene conjures an all-pervasive portentousness and sense of oppression from the sea itself. The sea shows its 'dark' side as a conception of that which is bounded, bordered, and limited. The contradiction of energies which violently clash against each other, resonates in Claudio's words when he says to the sea:

> You are like them. You hear without listening, and then you abandon me. Yet you are so beautiful, you are so beautiful, my dear sea, enchanting me with your smile. And I am such a fool speaking to you, hearing without listening (from 'The citizen and the sea', *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border*).

The Janus-faced nature of the sea as both beauty and cruelty, was also present in the flotsam and jetsam that Anna yells at, or when she shouts against the sea:

> Freedom?! You are a prison, you are a limitation, you are a border… you are a condemnation: whenever I go you are there, always… you are everywhere, you have imprisoned us in these twenty square kilometres of land (from 'The citizen and the sea', *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border*).

5.3 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has been attentive to the second core question of this dissertation and showed how a community-based theatre experience could make a concrete contribution to the co-production of knowledge about, and located on, the border of Europe. Throughout the account of the four steps, I have illustrated how the community-based theatre experience, organised around a collective, inclusive, and participatory method, could understand, make sense of, and render visible those everyday emotional features of the border which are usually hidden, and reveal the voices which are commonly silenced. Thus, the contradictions created by the humanitarian militarised border found their voice through our collective theatre experience. Every step recorded the methodological development of the experience ('the how') but was also linked to its topical contents ('the what').

The discussion of the four steps strategy showed how the conceptual pillars of this research – military geographies and slow violence – could emerge from the collective process, as fragments of explanation when participants shared their views, fears, emotions, and dreams about Lampedusa. Thus, the main themes of this research were not assumptions brought into the workshops, rather they arose as embryonical material, and later blossomed in the collective play. This becomes more significant to a further feature established here. Co-production was not a linear process where completed tasks could be represented as ticks in a box, but rather a circular and interdependent one where each step was imbricated with the others by a complex mutuality. The parallels with conflict transformation are all too clear. It requires flexibility, (moral) imagination, active listening, integrated presence, and curiosity. In this circular and interdependent creative process, the role of the applied theatre practitioner emerged as the facilitator and custodian of the whole process. What strongly resonates through this chapter is that the accomplishment of those tasks demanded properly established, transparent and mutual trust between the participants in conducting the work, and in the applied theatre practitioner who was, inevitably, required to make decisions on behalf of the group, when they are emotionally and geographically detached from the collective experience.

6 ASPARAGUS – CO-PRODUCING IN/VISIBILITIES

A young woman is picking asparagus near the military fence in West Cape. She is in a good mood. It is a fine day and there is much asparagus. After a while, she feels observed. She looks around and notices a soldier watching her from behind the fence. At first, she pretends not to see him, looking somewhere else. But then, he speaks to her, sternly. Eventually she looks straight at him, disdainfully.

Girl: - Good morning, by the way. *(She goes back to the asparagus)* Why should I? *(She laughs sarcastically)* Oh, really? I didn't know that the asparagus also belongs to you… ah, that's not what you meant… *(back to the asparagus)*. No, I won't show you my ID, because I can't, I don't have it with me now. Yes, I don't have my ID with me. Is it a problem? So now we can't even go for a walk without our passports in our pockets? Isn't it enough that you riddle the island with your radar installations, and now you tell me that I should also carry a bar-coded ID around with me, eh? Why's that? Are we not people anymore... have we all become merchandise to be scanned? I don't think I am doing anything wrong here. We have been doing this forever, and we will keep doing it: picking asparagus on our land. Don't you see? Your fence is over there, and my asparagus is here…

(Extract from 'Asparagus', *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border*, 2017)

Asparagus plants have grown wild and profuse for centuries along several country roads in Lampedusa. Their spears peek through the grassy foliage until they are harvested by the many islanders who eat them or sell them in the streets of the town. In the confrontation between the girl and the soldier in the above extract, the asparagus plant becomes a symbol which harbours multi-layered and variant meanings. Its wildness is a reminder of the freedom and the capacity of nature to flourish without, or in spite of, the imposition of human constrictions. Concurrently, the presence of this plant in the island is reflective of how the history of human action impacts upon nature. The long presence of asparagus in the Mediterranean area began in Mesopotamia over a thousand years ago, from where the plant spread all around the globe, most likely with the help of human mobility. Interestingly, its phallic shape has also been symbolic of virility, to the extent that in old Renaissance medicine it was believed to be an aphrodisiac plant (Albala, 2002). Thus, in the relationship between the girl and the (male) soldier, the asparagus plays an allegorical role, alluding to the heavy presence of the militarised and gendered environment of Lampedusa, in the high of male military personnel. In the process of co-production, this gendered aspect was underlined by the crucial role of female participants in shaping and tailoring the theatre experience.

Human interaction with the environment of Lampedusa has also been perpetuated by the enduring process to preserve the natural patrimony of the island. In 1995, an Administrative Order pronounced by the Sicily Region, established a Natural Reserve of 369,68 hectares in Lampedusa, between the localities of Vallone dell'Acqua and Cala Greca. Later, in 2000, due to its remarkable naturalistic-environmental value, including a population of rare plant and animal species, the entire territory of Lampedusa and Linosa were recognized as Special Protected Zone (ZPS) and a Site of Communitarian Importance (SCI)[73]. The importance of protecting the islands naturalistic heritage, was finalized by a third official recognition, when in 2002, a Ministerial Decree established the Marine Protected Area of the Pelagie Islands, which covered a surface of 4367,73 hectares. Article 4 of the Decree forbids

> the indirect or direct alteration with any means of the geophysical environment and of the biochemical characteristics of the water, as well the production of solid and liquid waste dump, and in general, the emission of any substance which might modify, even temporary, the characteristics of the marine environment [and…] the introduction of guns, explosive devices and any other destructive or capture means, as well toxic or polluting substances.[74]

Despite these regulations and restrictions, Lampedusa increasingly became a detention island with highly militarised infrastructures and potential health threat for its population, animals included.

This chapter shows how our community-based theatre experience created the space to explore and make sense of the unseen impact of militarisation on people living there. More specifically, the key theme of this chapter is 'in/visibilities' in relation to the militarisation process and the border enforcement on the island. Throughout the chapter, qualitative research materials, in the form of the 'Asparagus' scene and the process of co-production behind it, provide a contextual backdrop to the discussion of the collective process of making theatre. In addition, the conceptual pillars of military geographies and slow violence emerge in dialogue with other relevant literature and concepts, in ways which enabled critical thinking about militarism, while simultaneously expressing fears, emotions, and dreams about Lampedusa's present and future. The chapter shows how this act of sharing opens the path to moral imagination as an alternative way of seeing the otherwise humanitarian militarised border of Europe, by placing the voices of the participants at the heart of the narration.

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[73] Regione Sicilia, Assessorato Regionale Territorio e Ambiente (2000) "Disposizioni e Comunicati. Elenco dei siti di importanza comunitaria (S.I.C.) e delle zone di protezione speciali (Z.P.S.), individuati ai sensi delle direttive n. 92/43/CEE e 79/409/CEE" in *GURS 57*, 15 dicembre 2000.

[74] Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Tutela del territorio, Decreto Ministeriale (2002) "Istituzione della Area Marina Protetta denominata 'Isole Pelagie'", 21 ottobre 2002, translated from Italian.

With a particular attention to the 'Asparagus' scene, the first section shows how in/visibilities are developed in the play. More specifically, the dramaturgical aspects of in/visibilities are linked with the concept of military geographies, and the paradoxical consequences of such in/visibilities are explained. Among the features of military geographies, the struggle over land in Lampedusa is explored, with particular attention on the military occupation of territories and their public data access. The in/visibility at the border is explored in the second section. In this respect, the significance of the militarised landscape of radar installations, and their relationship to the concept of threat, is shown through the perceptions of terroristic attack which serve as the rationale for the substantial increase of securitization on the border. Paradoxically, the logical consequence of such securitization poses an intrinsic threat to all aspects of the environmental ecosystem. Within this, the in/visibility at the border is also fundamental to understanding the bodies of those migrants who are hosted in the reception centre, and more so of those who lost their lives and are namelessly buried in Lampedusa. Finally, I show how the co-production behind this scene, made possible the realisation of moral imagination by exploring how we reimagined the contradictions and paradoxes at the EU border through the embracing practice of community theatre.

6.1 About in/visibility at the border of Europe

In *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border* no military personnel are seen on the stage: their presence is created through the voices and actions of characters who mainly represent inhabitants of Lampedusa. Neither are any migrants depicted, but their presence is subtly imbricated in the play during several moments. They - military and migrants - dramaturgically embody what Alison Mountz's (2010, 2015), calls 'in/visibility' at the border of Europe, a concept which refers to the fact that simultaneous displacement and relocation of border enforcement create hypervisible and hidden geographies of securitization, through the control of human mobility. In *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border,* and our entire theatre experience, this in/visible presence reflects not only the mobility of those crossing the border, but also the military, who are concurrently unseen and hypervisible. For example, in the scene 'Hotels', the hotel keeper openly states that his business had prospered because of the military presence on the island. Military personnel are not depicted as characters in the scene, but the hotel keeper's words make it clear that the militarisation of the island has resulted in a substantial change for the hospitality industry (Baracco, 2015; Orsini, 2015). An additional example of the in/visibility of military people comes from the scene 'Houses', which reflects the struggles of a citizen

in choosing a suitable location for his son's house project, because the area he had chosen was designated as the site for constructing a new military barracks.

In teasing out the emphasis on the in/visibility of military forces, scenes like 'The camping area' and 'Asparagus' reveal a considerably higher degree of this particular paradox. In both of these scenes the central characters direct their words towards a representative of the military, and equally in both the representation of military power has a perceptibly strong effect on the characters.[75] The brief text which opens 'Asparagus' appears as a monologue, but it could also be considered as the audible one sided dialogue, as the audience can hear the words of the girl and second guess the replies of the soldier, who is not a visible character or audible presence. Instead, through the words and the reactions of the girl, there is no obvious trick or mystery as to whom she speaks, nor is much imagination required. Thanks to well implemented stage direction, it is clearly imparted at the beginning of the scene that her mood is good, but during the dialogue her tone changes and her voice becomes disdainful, sarcastic and provocative towards the military. The tiredness and anger with being obliged to follow unjust rules, resonates between and within her lines; it makes the effects of all-pervasive invisibility emotive audible and visible. The character of the girl shows how military geographies come to dominate and subsequently have a profound impact on the shaping of local spaces and cultures (Woodward, 2004). While "the visible effects of a physical military presence accompany effects less tangible or immediate" (Woodward, 2004:153), the emotional frustration in the words of the girl embodies those effects, transforming the invisible presence and occupation of military forces in something tangible and visible. Also, this dramaturgical in/visibility implies, to some extent, what Alison Mountz has said about the 'hidden' and the 'hypervisible' within the context of securitization of migration, when the "process of rendering known does not necessarily entail unequivocal visibility but strategic visibility and invisibility (Mountz, 2015:186).

Strategic visibility and invisibility also emerge when the young woman is forbidden from picking wild vegetables from her land, something she and her community have done for decades. Again, with this simple dramaturgical stratagem, the unseen presence on the stage is that which has the power to determine what happens. The struggle over land appears throughout this scene in all its dramatic potential, representing something that happens within the realm of the island. Despite its ambiguous visibility, the military affects people's lives in a tangible and visible way. Its control of the land is one the most defining features in the territory of Lampedusa: islanders cannot access certain areas, they are restricted from doing things that were enjoyed for as long as they can remember, in short, they have lost the historical connection with, and the autonomy within, their surrounding environment. Developing a relative understanding with such matters is

[75] For further discussion about the scene 'The camping area', see Chapter 2.

challenging, not only because the nature of slow violence makes infractions on freedom hard to chart with anything like temporal equanimity, but also on the basis that such changes occur outside of public visibility. Rachel Woodward makes this point with a degree of acuity when she says, "the military occupancy of land is a critical issue almost because of its relative invisibility" (Woodward, 2004:12).

After the passionate monologue (or half dialogue) of the young woman, another woman arrives, attracted by the loud voice of the girl, and the confrontation between two opposite positions regarding the military presence in the island begins. The girl passionately argues that instead of giving financial and political support to the implementation of military infrastructure embodied by radar installations, resources should be used to improve health care and public services. In contrast, the woman is sincerely optimistic, reflecting her faith in the role of military in Lampedusa, even being ready to give up her property for the military cause, if requested. Again, as the two women fervently argue about the presence of military forces on the island, the shadow of military control has a tangible effect on the stage. Their sharply divergent views exemplify the complex polarisation between Lampedusans over the social consequences of the military presence on the island, and their "confrontation between humanitarian cosmopolitanism and new forms of xenophobic populism" (Baracco, 2015:447).

6.1.1 Dramaturgical paradoxes and ambivalences of in/visibility at the border

The in/visible presence that accompanies this chapter, and to some extent our theatre experience as whole, acknowledges and accepts that with the coexistence of opposites and paradoxes, reality inevitably generates multiple meanings. In/visibility immediately and implicitly affirms the first paradox, that something can be visible and invisible at the same time. From a theatrical perspective, this can be experienced and shown in different ways. For instance, a character can be unseen by the audience, whilst another talks to her/him from the visible stage, as in 'Asparagus' and 'The camping area'. Alternatively, a character could be completely absent, neither physically present nor as an imagined elsewhere, but nevertheless critical to the role of other characters, and for the dramaturgical development. The paradox here lies in the fact that it is 'the something' that is missing from the play makes the play itself. This is the case, for example, in the Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (Beckett, 1954), in which Godot, the crucial essence of the play, never appears on stage and the little we know about him comes only from the words of the others. If Estragon and Vladimir were to meet Godot at the end of the play his relevance would be completely different and his character would lose his power as a character/entity, which is strictly related to his invisibility. Similarly, in *Flotsam and Jetsam*

at the Border, even they are not physically on, or off, stage, the military characters are still relevant for the development of the story, and they have significant effects on it. The dramaturgy shows the paradoxes of military in/visibility and its power, even though they are absent from the spotlight of the stage.

If on the one hand this in/visibility highlights the function of the military personnel, it may on the other, have the obverse effect of making those characters appear vaguer and more distant for the audience/reader. If so, the audience cannot empathise with them. This in/visibility has the effect of blurring the ability to 'read off' either empathy or mutual understanding. We consciously chose to allow such paradoxical and contradictory elements to emerge, with the expectation that contested meanings would arise in the audience as they do in the real world. Notwithstanding, this rather meta ethical claim, our workshops were arguably characterised by a tacit prohibition on being openly empathetic with the military characters, because of the relative authority possessed by the military and the matter militarisation on the island. As one of the participants might have put it, "These guys already have so much voice, power and visibility, why should we give them even more visibility through our play?" In many ways, depicting their invisibility gave them presence in a dramaturgical sense, but nonetheless conveys to the audience the sense of awkwardness and mundanity that Lampedusan inhabitants live with daily. In other words, they are there, but they do not completely fit within the local context - they become, ironically, the other. This is reinforced in the practical encounters with the military, whose personnel are scheduled on two weeks shifts, a rhythm which ensures that although a permanent fixture, they never become familiarised or even acquainted with Lampedusan society (Mountz, 2015; 2010).

The lack of empathy derives from the positionality, and the point of view of the Askavusa collective, toward the military. Concomitantly, their engagement with writing about Lampedusa is unlikely to be divorced from their political and social perspective, and equally unlikely that it will not have a profound impact on the artistic process and any work produced. In short, it is impossible to escape the long established opinion that Askavusa, as a collective, has toward the militarisation process on the island. As I was closely engaged with them it was also impossible for me not to have a view. I would argue that it is unavoidable for co-produced knowledge, in the context of feminist arts-based peace research, not to entail the personal and political engagement of the researcher with the participants; arguably, it is essential (Harman, 2019; Leavy, 2017). Because of its social engagement, its transformative intentions, and its potential in challenging hierarchies of knowledge, feminist arts-based peace research is not - and cannot be - value-free or objective (Seppälä et al., 2021; Premaratna and Rajkobal, 2021; Wibben et al., 2019). Reflecting on her experience with Liberian women veterans, Leena Vastapuu makes a feminist case for a responsible research practice with "hands in dirt",

which engages "with the world outside academia" (Vastapuu, 2018). Only by embracing this subjectivity and political action (Harman, 2019; Harding and Norberg, 2005; Leavy, 2015), it is possible to "open the spaces of our collective (but not coherent) imagination" (Confortini, 2017:84) and "imagine and create together (in our theories and practices) the world we want to see" (Wibben et al., 2019:90). However, as my task was to facilitate the co-production in letting the voices of participants emerge, it does not mean that I always agreed with their positions. This research is about them, not about me.

Two other critical issues related with the ambivalence of in/visibility which emerged from our play, were the 'unknown' and the 'elsewhere'. When something is invisible it is often unknown, and what is unknown may provoke fear and strong reactions because it can be neither seen nor controlled. The act of seeing is strongly connected with the act of knowing, as when we can see something (also with the eye of the mind, not necessarily with the physical eyes), we can get to know and understand it.[76] However, something invisible can be also perceived as attractive. Similarly, the invisible may evoke an elsewhere in both place and time. In this sense, it conjures a feeling that it is not in the here and now, and this has the potential to represent a dreamed for or longed after place and/or time. It can equally cause fear and suspicion. In the 'Asparagus' scene, the girl, through her words and actions, evoked an elsewhere that is best understood as a sort of 'golden age' of Lampedusa. Echoing this, picking wild asparagus from the country roads as people had done for centuries, becomes both a statement and an act of resistance: "We have been doing this forever, and we will keep doing it: picking asparagus on our land". At the end of the scene she arouses memories when in the moment "after the Second World War, the people of Lampedusa were united, and if there was a need to fight, nobody would have shied away from their duty…". This line is a reminder of the protest in November 1964 that Lampedusan inhabitants organized. During that time, citizens refused to vote in the local elections, on the basis that the conditions on the island were dramatically bad: there was no sewage system, no school or hospital buildings; the ferryboat which connected Lampedusa with the main island only sailed twice weekly, and there was not even a proper pier to alight from the ferry. In the wake of the protest, the central government finally decided to implement infrastructure investment in Lampedusa, including the airport and a water sanitation plant to deliver tap water (Taranto, 2016).

[76] The relationship between seeing and thinking was explored in much ancient Greek philosophy. In Plato's Theaetetus, for example, lengthy discussions are recorded with Socrates who understood how thinking and seeing were two distinct forms of sensory perception, and yet intrinsically related (for further discussion about this see e.g., Reale, 1988).

The ambiguity of the 'unknown' in relation to military in/visibility, also emerged in the demand for clear information and scientific reassurance over the potential health consequences linked to the radar devices installed by the military on the island. In confrontation with the concern expressed by the girl about the radar installations, the woman, almost flirtatiously way, strongly supports the military and all the infrastructure which relates to them. This time, the unknown is expressed as something attractive: "What's the harm in that? You are so against these radar installations; I don't understand why… *(with admiring look at the soldier)*. I wouldn't be surprised if these installations actually improve one's health…" The clash between these two characters is insoluble in the context of their understanding. It is the absence of clear information which serves to exacerbate already polarised positions and entrench deeply held convictions in the local population. This was precisely what our collective practice of writing theatre modelled as a means to transcend long standing conflict. The invisible conflict of everyday life in Lampedusa was accepted, but nevertheless transformed through something visible and tangible: the voices and bodies of our characters. The important point here, was that naming and expressing this level of disagreement, was a crucial step for sustaining and embracing the paradoxical coexistence of contradictions necessary to exercise moral imagination (Lederach, 2005).

There are several Arabic songs about Lampedusa, where the island is valorised as a desirable land to reach. In narratives such as this, Lampedusa becomes an 'elsewhere' a place migrants are looking for when they cross the Mediterranean Sea to European shores. Migrants leave their homelands for an unknown elsewhere, and their homes left behind become a new place, a place of longing and memory. For many, Lampedusa is a turning point in their journey to Europe, but for far too many others, it is where their journey ends with death/disappearance in the sea. Tina Catania, points out that the protracted violence migrants suffer during their journeys, does "not begin or end with the boats they use to cross the Mediterranean" (Catania, 2015:471). Instead, those boat trips are often the last rung on a long ladder of risky situations, as human traffic, kidnappings, crossing of Sahara Desert, all kinds of violence, torture, arrest, overcrowded conditions and deprivation of food and water (Catania, 2015). Somehow, Lampedusa becomes the place where all those things can be told at the same time, making them visible, but also forgotten, once in plain sight but now kept hidden. Lampedusa becomes an epitomic gate of human in/visibility (Mountz, 2011).

Migration itself is an in/visible phenomenon, one which carries on amid a series of complex contradictions. For example, migrants are carriers of an elsewhere, which makes the both the bringer and the receiver of different perspectives, cultures and languages. Yet they simultaneously come to embody the 'other', the one who scares, the one about whom little or almost nothing is known, and where too often there is no interest in knowing more for fear that it might challenge the constellation of the receiving

societies. Moreover, in the context of Lampedusa, migrants are a 'ghostly presence'. They are present but unseen, since they are kept in the reception centre, which is situated in the inner land of the island, where only the few professional people working for the humanitarian sector have any contact with them (Friese, 2010; Proglio and Odasso, 2018). Undoubtedly, the invisibility of migrants on the island is a critical issue, which has been addressed differently over time, depending upon the prevailing political agendas of the Italian parties in power (Mazzara, 2015, 2016; Tazzioli, 2015; Cuttitta, 2012).

'Elsewhere' also resonates in the words of the girl when she says: "It seems that we can't pick asparagus anymore. On this island, anybody can come and do whatever they want: to build, to buy, to install radars, to build, to buy… but we can't pick asparagus anymore!". In this instance the meaning is different, the words express the frustration that everything that happens in Lampedusa is decided elsewhere, with no consideration of Lampedusan voices. It is of little consequence if this 'elsewhere' is Palermo, Rome, or the European Parliament, the outcome is the same. This isolation is directly related to invisible power, and the marginalisation of Lampedusans from decisions regarding the control of their island. Our play reflects how this frustration has intensified since an elected platform for policy makers to show their actions and decisions was established in Lampedusa (Cuttitta, 2012; Mazzara, 2016; Tazzioli and Walters, 2016). This paradox is well described in the original Italian title of our play, which was *La bellezza ipotecata: un'isola che nasce altrove*. The literal translation would have been: 'The mortgaged beauty: an island which was born elsewhere'. The conjunction of beauty with mortgage was the essential representation of the dualistic existence that embodies Lampedusa in the media: simultaneously, it is a paradisiac touristic destination and a horrific detention island. The reference to being mortgaged element depicts how Lampedusa has been urbanised without any common vision or sense of beauty, by the granting of planning permission without due consideration of the natural environment, or the interests of the population whom development affects. The second part of the original title – 'an island which was born elsewhere' – is a recurrent theme for the play and this thesis. The 'elsewhere' of Lampedusa even extends to the inability to be born on the island anymore, as all the inhabitants must be born on the main island of Sicily, or in Italy. Despite being common to speak of Lampedusa as an island of death, not one of birth, a disconcerting paradox arises in the potentiality of migrants' babies being the only ones to be born at Europe's door (Grotti, 2017).

With the above in mind, it is not problematic to assert that there is a singular lack of fit between the daily reality of problems faced by Lampedusans, and the carefully cultivated images of them as sunny happy people. The reality they struggle with includes basic needs, such as the paucity of public health services, the lack of drinkable tap water, unsafe school buildings, housing regulation procedures which do not favour the

islanders. For centuries, Lampedusans had built homes without the necessity to seek permission from, or register their constructions with, a bureaucratic authority. Until regulations were enforced and remitted for those buildings, people were living in invisible houses. This nod to history is reflected in the scene 'Houses', where the citizen had lost his right to live in a council flat, and so built a house from junk and the items that people had thrown away. At the other edge of the paradox, as explored in the scene 'Schools', school buildings in Lampedusa were not expected to comply with safety standards, and so consequently, students and their families have been waiting for years for a new school building.

The final example of in/visibility at the southernmost border of Europe finds a further paradoxical expression in the encounters between different identities and cultures. Lampedusa had always been a geographical constellation of cultural change. The historical records reveal that by the 13th Century, different cultures regularly encountered one another in the hidden and private cave of Madonna di Porto Salvo, a place of sanctuary where Muslim and Christian practices cohabitated (Palmieri, 2016; Taranto, 2016; Mosca Mondadori et al., 2014). However, many of the physical archaeological evidence of such interreligious practice have been lost, and nothing is visible anymore within the architecture of the sanctuary (Taranto, 2016:51).[77] So, the small island of Lampedusa, which for centuries had been an important site of regional and global mobility and exchange, arguably an historical epitome of encounters between different cultures, still embodies this characteristic, but not without significant differences. Such encounters now occur under the auspices of contemporary border regulations, in the context of humanitarian militarised border regime, which in no way reflects the cultural melting pot of the past and its essence of mutual respect. In its place, encounters take place under the control of bureaucracy. Instead of peer-to-peer relationships who share the same roof for religious practices, the current encounters in Lampedusa occur under rules imposed from elsewhere, rules imposed by hierarchical structures, where the only permitted relationship is between saviours and survivors, and between those living above and those under the Strait of Sicily (Dines et al, 2015).

6.1.2 Struggle over land

According to Rachel Woodward, at the most fundamental level military geographies are concerned with land and who controls it (Woodward, 2004). In order to understand the military control over land then, precise data about it is crucial. It goes without saying,

[77] According to the Governor of the island Bernardo Maria Sanvisente (1843) the room inside the cave was divided by a wall in a way that could be practiced in one side the Christian rite and in the other one the Muslim.

however, that in the case of institutions like the military, those data are often hard to reach, or simply unavailable due to official secrets restrictions.

> The data problem is an issue of public accountability. Statistics make thing visible (the word 'accountable' means precisely that, describing the rendering of information in a form that is auditable). Entities appear as issues for public debate through the provision of data and statistics about them; the absence of data will obscure an issue. Furthermore, once domain of life are rendered into statistical representations, they become amenable to forms of intervention, forms which themselves both depend upon and bring into being the representations yielded by statistics. Statistics on military land are important because they help constitute the ways in which intervention, in the form of mechanisms for control, are developed (Woodward, 2004:16-17).

In the Italian context, the transparency and availability of data regarding militarised lands have been an issue for a long time, partly as a legacy of the Second World War and largely because of the co-dependent military strategies adopted during the Cold War era, and beyond, as part of NATO. There was an official attempt to significantly change the situation in July 2014, when the IV Parliamentary Defence Commission published an important document regarding the current situation of military infrastructures and *servitù militari* in Italy. The document accompanied a fact-finding survey made by key stakeholders involved in the militarisation of the national territories: the regions most affected by the military presence, the citizens committees and the environmental associations who act to protect health and the local environment, and the highest representatives of the military. According to the document, 17% of national territory was occupied by so-called 'military (support) zones' (in Italian *servitù militari*), which are special areas under military regulation who can impose limitations on building permissions and are able to force demolition for military purposes[78]. Those special zones occupy a considerable tranche of land compared to other countries, who averagely dedicate around 1% of their national territories to military functions (Westing, 1988). The crucial conclusion of the parliamentary document was the public admission of the lack of transparency with regard to military properties. Moreover, there was an explicit acknowledgement of the need to safeguard human health as a fundamental right, followed by the same acknowledgment with regard to the environment and the landscape, both ratified in the Italian Constitution (artt.32 and 9). These rights, by being fundamental, represent a priority relative to the need for military training, which is still implied in the Italian Constitution (art 52).

[78] In accordance to the Italian jurisdiction, those special areas are regulated by the Law n. 898/1976.

When I tried to compare the percentages mentioned in the parliamentary document with the data available online,[79] I noticed several incongruences in terms of numbers, and a singular lack of information in terms of total surfaces for several military sites, and some lacked basic data on their specific locations. For instance, in the database of the Italian Ministry of the Treasury, several properties are listed without any details about the size of the area they cover, nor were they available elsewhere. They are mainly training lands and barracks, which means that their surface details are a variable that can change drastically, and in turn the validity of any accountability pertaining to such military territories. The database also details whether or not the properties are accounted for in the Municipality real estate registry. This was the case for the radar installations in Lampedusa where much of the lands they occupy is unregistered, meaning that there is no exact information about properties ostensibly owned by the Central State in Lampedusa. As Rachel Woodward maintains, "the defence estate remains invisible because its precise extent and details of its location are not revealed" (Woodward, 2004:17). Conversely, in some cases the melange of (dis)information, with its lack of anything precise about locations, reveals much about the extent of control of that military powers possess over sources of information. By not being easily accessible, data cannot be reliably interpreted. As Woodward puts it, "control by military establishments over land becomes far easier to sustain when little information about those establishments is placed in the public domain" (Woodward, 2004:14). Despite the intentions in the Parliamentary document of 2014 to work toward greater transparency and accessibility, information remains conspicuously unclear in the 2017 Ministry database.

The Sicily Region in general, and Lampedusa in particular, are not exceptions to this national picture. In fact, as the military presence in Sicily is dominated by US bases, the accessible data regarding that presence would, in any event, remain incomplete. All together the known militarised surface in Sicily amounts to 10,4 km^2 (US Defense 2,8 km^2, and Italian military infrastructures 7,6 km^2). This however, does not account for the MUOS[80] Base in Niscemi, which despite the substantial area it covers (around 2 km^2 of rural land and forest according to the NO-MUOS movement[81]), does not appear at all in the US Department of Defence Base Structure Report (2017). Again, the accountability of the military bases and (support) zones is wanting, and the available data are lacking some elements. In the case of Lampedusa, the registered land devoted to

[79] I consulted the website of the Ministry of Treasury, which collects all the properties of the State divided by Ministry and functions (2017) and an official report made by the US Department of Defense (2017).

[80] MUOS means Mobile User Objective System and it is one of the sites t of a global surveillance strategical network the United States are settling around the world.

[81] https://www.nomuos.info/cose-il-muos/.

military functions is about 4% of the entire island surface (about 0,8 km²), but it might be larger in practice.

6.2 In/visible in/security at the EU Border

The in/visible military presence in Lampedusa is intrinsically related to the securitization of European borders, and more precisely of the Mediterranean Sea. Securitization, in this thesis, refers to all those acts directed toward the arrival of people from non-EU countries, which are considered to be a threat.[82] Militarisation is one side of this process and concerns the transformation of territories and societies from a socio-political perspective, even during so-called 'peacetime' (Enloe, 2004:219-220). This transformation happens as response to the threat, in the attempt to reduce the risk of threat (Andersson, 2014), but also produces a counter-effect in terms of amplifying the fear of threat (Katz, 2007).

In his analysis, anthropologist Ruben Andersson refers to the securitization of the Euro-African border as a "'game of risk' played out by Europe's border agencies on high seas and in control rooms (…) in which experts and security forces labor under the sign of looming catastrophe". Andersson mentions how the process of securitization is known and studied in the two different disciplines of international relations and global finance, who share a commonality in the attempt to "disperse and reduce the risk" (Andersson, 2014: 68). How does this "game of risk" concern local lives in Lampedusa? If, according to Andersson, securitization "refers to taking an issue out of politics and framing it as a security threat, whether through enunciation or practice" (Andersson, 2014: 77), then our collective writing performed an act of de-securitization. In fact, we tackled human vulnerabilities within an open political frame; in our play, political aspects are not hidden, nor is the fragility of life in Lampedusa. Our practice has not been the dispersal and/or reduction of risk, rather it explored the vulnerabilities at the European border, putting ourselves into an exposed position and collectively revealed the hidden and unspoken. Thus, the collective writing process represented a potential multiplicator of risk. As Andersson says, "… risk cannot be contained by the border regime – and neither can the conflicts spawned by the ever-higher stakes in the business of bordering Europe" (Andersson, 2014: 68).

The securitization of migration affects local people and visitors who perceive and experience the induced state of exception and emergency in their daily lives on the island

[82] For further analysis and debates about securitization, see the Copenhagen School of Security Studies: Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, 1998; Williams, 2003; McDonald, 2008. For a feminist approach on Security Studies which engages feminism, security, and strategic studies, see Wibben, 2011.

in different ways, including the in/visible presence of the military. In the context of Lampedusa, the in/visibility of military personnel conjures what feminist geographer Cindi Katz, in relation to the camouflage of military people and video surveillance technologies, calls 'banal terrorism',

> Banal terrorism produces a sense of terror and fear in a drivelly and everyday way. The common (non)sense constructed and assumed around terrorism (and terrorists) in all sort of banal ways can be hailed at moments of crisis to authorize such things as a suspension of civil liberties or an open-ended and clearly never-ending 'War on Terrorism"' (Katz, 2007:350-351).

As "banal terrorism is sutured to – and secured in – the performance of security in the everyday environment", camouflage "is – paradoxically – an obvious performance to produce and reproduce the nexus of terror and security" (Katz, 2007:351). Instead of making people feel more secure, it multiplies the sense of terror and insecurity. The camouflage – initially created to make people blend with natural environments such as jungles or forests – makes those bodies more visible within the urban context, as Katz puts it, "…this routinization engages the popular imaginary and reproduces docility vis à vis the state and its security operations. And this is, of course, the intent of making visible that which is designed for invisibility" (Katz, 2007: 350-353).

During my first field trip to Lampedusa in 2015,[83] I experience such routinization in the social environment of the island. As the diary fragment below shows, the relationships and constructions of meaning that occurred during an ordinary lunch break, had the potential to evoke emotions and considerations about the exceptionality, emergency, visibility and invisibility on the island. In this episode, I was with my project leader Karina Horsti and a colleague Adal Naguse, an Eritrean refugee activist who had lost his brother in the October 3rd disaster.[84] It was lunchtime, and we were eating at a restaurant called *La Rotonda*, which had been recommended by several local people. It was our favourite lunch place, not only for the quality of the food, but also because of its calm and quiet atmosphere, located near the old harbour at the border of the town. It was October 2nd and we curiously and nervously shared our thoughts about the following day, the commemoration of the 366 migrants mainly from Eritrea who drowned a few hundred meters from the coast.

> While continuing our lunch at *La Rotonda*, a team of ten specialised anti-terrorism guards suddenly entered the restaurant. These teams are only called in specific and extremely dangerous situations, so I was quite surprised and worried. They are a special body of the

[83] This text has been already partially published in Tucci (2018).

[84] Adal´s commitment as political activist aims to raise attention on the ongoing situation in Eritrea, in terms of human rights and freedom.

> *Guardia di Finanza*, or paramilitary forces, trained in various martial arts, trained to operate in vulnerable situations and in case of emergency. I can feel the atmosphere changing drastically, and I start wondering if something serious is going to happen.
>
> However, like us, they have just come to eat in the quiet and anonymous restaurant. I asked the waiter if they are regular customers, and he explained to me that they occasionally show up, but they are not settled on the island.
>
> The arrival of these men had suddenly changed the atmosphere of the restaurant in our eyes. Karina, Adal, and I all felt a shiver of danger, and our fish lunch takes on a completely different taste.
>
> I think of those who live on the island, and who face the contradictions every day that I am only just discovering, and how emergency becomes a normal state of affairs that pervades everything and everyone.

In the strategic attempt to "disperse and reduce the risk" (Andersson, 2014:77) of a terrorist attack, I would argue that the paramilitary forces amplified the threat and magnified the sense of terror and insecurity in ways consistent with that described by Katz (Katz, 2007).

In that mundane moment, I suddenly felt vulnerable and driven by strong emotions, without even understanding exactly why. I was unexpectedly producing "anthropologically relevant knowledge" that I had no control over, due to being suddenly immersed in "tense moments, sometimes in heartfelt mutual interaction" with my colleagues (Hsu, 2010: 168). When sharing my perceptions with local people, I felt that my reactions resonated with their experiences and understanding of them. In fact, despite their long-term presence on the island, the military personnel were still not seen as integrated actors in the Lampedusan society by many islanders. As one might expect, there were different opinions concerning the militarisation within the community, and not all the residents were strongly opposed to the militarisation of the island like Askavusa's members and supporters. The controversy had been present for several decades; as early as 1988, a three-episode video documentary about Lampedusa showed customers in a bar having a lively discussion about whether or not the presence of armed forces on the island would negatively affect the future of tourism.[85] In the following sections, I explore how the in/visibility of the militarised border is shaped in the military infrastructures and embodied by the people on the move through the border itself.

[85] Radiotelevisione Italiana (RAI), *Laboratorio Infanzia, quando la vita si chiama isola*. Lampedusa, 1988.

6.2.1 In/visibility and control: the health threat of radars installations

In/visibility on the land, and in the surrounding waters, is a key aspect of military surveillance at the border of Europe and operates through several devices to defend the Fortress Europe. Andersson succinctly described it thus:

> A Euro-African border is under construction at the southern edge of Europe. Clandestine boat migration is a small phenomenon, yet vast amounts of money have been spent on radars, satellites, advanced computer systems, and patrols by sea, land and air to prevent migrants from leaving the African coastline in the first place. From state-of-the-art control rooms in Europe to rundown West African border posts, from Atlantic coasts to the Mediterranean Sea, a new border regime is at work, aimed at tracking one principal target – the illegal immigrant (Andersson, 2014:66-67).

This substantial deployment of surveillance devices has been motivated by different factors across successive decades, but commonly as the prevention of terrorism which mutated into the global war on terror in the wake of 9/11. In their analysis, Chiara Brambilla and Holger Pötzsch connect borders with the concept of audio-visuality, and specifically "interrogate the role played by audio-visual media in processes of b/ordering" since "to function properly, borders are intimately connected to various culturally and technologically mediated forms of visibility and invisibility" (Brambilla and Pötzsch, 2017:70).

In Lampedusa, the in/visible control is performed through military devices and infrastructures, especially through radar installations and military antennas for surveillance which are all pervasive features which occupy the island. As an integral part of the Fortress Europe, whose borders "look more like a fluid Internet firewall than walls" (Andersson, 2014: 67), Lampedusa's 20 km^2 surface, is host to eight fixed radar systems, two mobile radar devices and an undetermined number of antennas for both military and civil uses. As shown in Figure 7, the most crowded area is undoubtedly the West Coast, with seven radar installations.

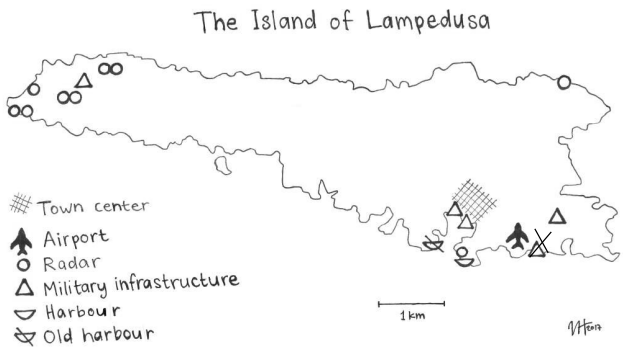

Figure 7. Radar sites and military bases in Lampedusa (original sketch by Veera Hanhiniemi)

For many of them it was not possible to access any detailed information, whilst for those that are, the available information was not encouraging in terms of health safety reliability. For instance, in *Contrada Albero Sole* is the model FADR (Fixed Air Defence Radar) System, which is a long range (over 470 km) surveillance radar with anti-ballistic capability. This system is part of the national network in collecting information to intercept potential air threats and is in communication with other structures around Italy.[86] It also works in full interoperability at NATO level. Then, in the same area in *Contrada Albero Sole*, there are more radar installations and several antennas, whose characteristics are unknown. What the health consequences are on living things who live close to such long-range capability, are questions commonly asked by Askavusa and many other islanders.

A model of radar installation which created concern among the population of Lampedusa was the EL-M 2226, which, by virtue of two judgments from the Regional Administrative Court of Sardinia, has been officially recognised in Italy as extremely dangerous for human health. Those models were removed in several municipalities of Sardinia and Sicily after public pressure, yet in Lampedusa three installations of this model continued to operate for several years. In 2014, Askavusa and other citizens began protesting about the one in *Grecale Cape*. The local inhabitants claimed that it was too

[86] See the official communication published by the Italian Aviation in occasion to the inauguration of the new FADR in Lampedusa: http://www.aeronautica.difesa.it/comunicazione/notizie/Pagine/nuovo-radar.aspx.

close to the city centre, and the dangerous exposure to electromagnetic waves posed a significant to people's health. Finally, in November 2018, the radar was removed, but only after a long struggle of petitions, public protests and legal actions.[87]

Figure 8. "Radar Forest" in West Cape, picture taken by the author

As the radar installations belonged to different military organizations, not all of them cooperated. Instead, they continued to operate for the same purposes, but obscured their use by overlapping their functions and aims with the task of patrolling the surrounding waters of Lampedusa. As the biological effects of the electromagnetic waves' emissions are multiplied, it would no doubt be instructive to evaluate the potential danger that those devises might cause. However, the available information about those installations, which is scarce and uncomplete, comes from the same institutions in charge of them, or from the firms which provide or build them. It would be desirable that an external and independent scientific authority carry out studies to determine if the electromagnetic waves produced by all those radar installations conform to national and international standards of human and nonhuman health.[88] Perhaps more significant is that the overlap of radar installations with other forms of surveillance, has arguably proven to be incapable of carrying out the task they are charged with. For example, many boats reaching the Lampedusan coasts are neither intercepted nor rescued on time, sometimes with tragic consequences.

> On the West Coast, in a Site of Community Importance (SCI) area, which means it is in a pre-reservation zone, and only a few hundred meters from the most beautiful beach in the world, there is a forest of radar. Just on the West Coast are six radar devices. Devices,

[87] In Figure 7 that radar installation is marked with a cross on it.

[88] As pointed out by Massimo Coraddu in the Askavusa's pamphlet *Lampedusa: istruzioni per l'uso*, November 2014.

> which apparently did not work properly on the October 3rd, because there are no traces of this boat sinking 800 meters from there. And then, we wonder what the purpose is of having these radar devices. If they are supposed to control, to be used for security, why not that night . . .? Why is there no trace of that boat? Why do you not know anything about what happened that night? (Interview with Gianna, October 2016, translated from Italian)

Gianna's words convey strong criticism and sarcasm about the actual need and efficacy of having so many radar installations. The need to have them for security reasons poses questions regarding the disaster of 3rd of October 2013, and other disasters which could have been avoided. As pointed out by Alison Mountz, the lost lives in the sea and those lives in detention are part of the devaluation and dehumanisation processes in the "hypervisible exercises" of marine interception and remote detention (Mountz, 2015:189). Moreover, Gianna's words point to the crucial issue regarding the location of radar installations in the West Coast of the island. It is in deep contrast with the multiple status of Lampedusa as Special Protected Zone (ZPS), Site of Communitarian Importance (SIC) and Marine Protected Area.

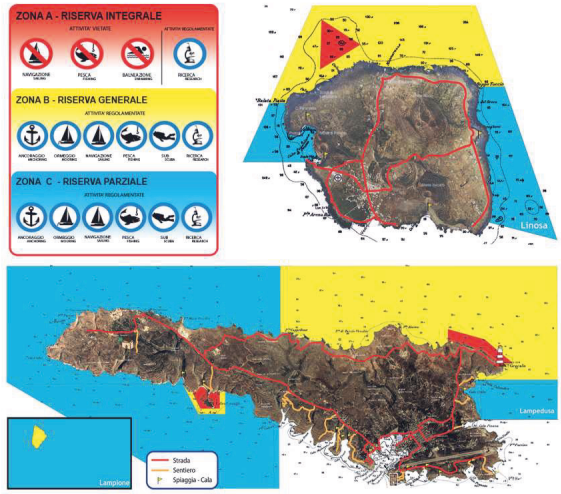

Figure 9. Map of the Marine Protected Area of Pelagie Islands

The records in the Ministry of the Treasury database that cover all military infrastructures in Lampedusa within the "cultural and/or environmental restriction" show nothing – the word "none" is clearly written. The lack of symmetry between the environmental regulations and the official information provided by those responsible for the use of such infrastructures (for those responsible read the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Economy and Finances, and the Ministry of Infrastructures and Transportation, the

Natural Reserve) tell much about the contradictions that persist in Lampedusa. It is obvious that regulation covering the preservation of the landscape are not observed, and that the electromagnetic waves are not (unlike the judiciary in the Sicily Region) considered a dangerous intrusion in the natural biosystem of Lampedusa. Looking more closely at the database, another significant element was the status of building permissions on the area. Each area of land which hosts radar installations was clearly recorded as "not in the Municipality real estate register", which means that no permission was requested for the siting of radar installations, nor were there any public consultations or preliminary scientific studies undertaken prior to their installation, according to the Municipality archive.

In this way, the invisibility of militarisation is amplified by the lack of information and triangulation of official sources in several ways. First, while their action is not visible, they may have – as several epidemiological studies have shown[89] - tangible effects on the health of human and nonhuman lives. It is strongly arguable then, that radar installations in Lampedusa can perpetuate a slow violence in the usurpation of land rights on the one hand, and the pollution the create on the other. The casualties of this violence are both human and environmental, and according to Nixon, they are those "… most likely not to be seen, not to be counted" (Nixon: 2011:13). Secondly, the scant that is available comes from actors who have strong interests in them, and not from any independent scientific committee or publicly accountable authority. The difficulty in obtaining and verifying information about military properties is a recurrent theme within military geographies, especially when the military are intimately embedded within territories (Woodward, 2004). Thirdly, radar installations have an obscured relationship to the environmental restrictions that cover the entire territory of Lampedusa. The lack of reliable information makes the analysis of military geographies and the assessment of the environmental impacts of military occupancy much harder (Woodward, 2004).

Can such a complex web of in/visibilities be simultaneously represented and revealed? Our answer was considered throughout our community-based theatre experience by looking at the previous paths already indicated by some Askavusa members. For instance, in the Askavusa blog, a post tells how radar installations and the military bases have changed the nature of accessibility within and around the island which has resulted in consequences for the local environment and the birds' migration routes. In the post, the point of view is personal and emotionally charged, but still the approach retains the sarcasm that accurately represents the style of the collective, where deep sentiments of derision and anger are often mixed with empathy. The following is an extract from it:

[89] Among many, see the studies conducted by Favre (2017), Singh and Kapoor (2014), Deruelle (2020), Moon (2020).

May 6, 2015

We used to go to the lighthouse at *Grecale* to see the sunrise.

The sun rose from the east, after pushing away the night, already pale and weak.

We were there, among the suspended rocks, when it was windy and it was nice to watch the foam getting golden.

Now near, the lighthouse is a powerful radar. It is ugly and dark like a rotten tooth in a smile.

We were told: "Look! It's dangerous! Do not get too close to that place."

And so, the sunrises are lost. And if we lose the sunrises, days are lost wandering blind.

So, we lose the windy foam that rises or falls with the sirocco sharp, downhill, when pulling mistral.

At West Cape, we used to go to see the hawks drawing impossible trajectories along the cliffs.

From up there, the sunsets are balanced over the curve of the world that from there embraces you with an immense liquid that takes your breath away. But now, there is full of radar.

It is hard to count them. To be sure how many there are, you have to go there and count them without being seen, because you cannot get close to military bases and look inside.

"Even if they are in the middle of a natural reserve?"

"Even if they are in the middle of a natural reserve. You have to keep distance and look somewhere else."

Then I thought about the birds. They do not know that there is a military base and that you cannot look inside. And they make nests there.

"What do you do with the birds? The nature reserve was made also for them."

"We will banish them too. You cannot violate the military secret."

(from askavusa.wordpress.com, translated from Italian)

By using their power to abuse the asymmetrical power relationships between policymakers and local people, in terms of budget disposal and access to services, the military radar installations have slowly changed the environmental equilibrium of the island. The biodiversity of the island itself, which is an important – even unique – stopover for turtles and birds, has been gradually eroded. Electromagnetic waves do not

discriminate; migrants, military personnel, locals, plants, animals are all equally at risk, albeit with variant consequences. The invisibility and the long-term effects of electromagnetic waves delineate how slow violence occurs in Lampedusa. Arguably, the critical objections to the militarisation of the island have gained less traction than one might have expected. It is, however, understandable that such concerns have resonated less in public debate, compared to say migration, because media saturation of 'immigrant threat' narratives dominate public and political discourses to the detriment of any other perspective.

Yet, there is still hope. By recognising and giving an identity to those in/visibilities and relationships through the words, emotions, and imaginations of characters, the practice of community-based theatre can make visible the otherwise unseen and hidden conflict, and thus hold a form of transformative power at the militarised humanitarian border. In this sense, we engaged with the marginalised positions of a female-driven group of members and supporters of a glocal association (Askavusa) and generated a feminist practice of conflict transformation. The result was a collective play that reflected the emotions, fears, dreams for a different Lampedusa, making room for a desired moral imagination. Again, through art-based practice in the setting of conflict transformation, it is possible to render and make visible what is unseen, hidden and unspoken (Premaratna, 2018; Väyrynen, 2019).

6.2.2 The in/visibility of the Others in Lampedusa

Within the hypervisible and hidden geographies of securitization created by the displacement and relocation of the border enforcement, the control of human mobility in Lampedusa plays a central role (Mountz, 2015). Thus, the in/visibility of military forces parallels the in/visibility of migrants in the detention centre, whilst the in/visibility of migrants who reach Lampedusa by boat has been depicted in different ways. All interpretations, however, share the common understanding of how Lampedusa embodies a paradox of visibility. For Alison Mountz, the contemporary governance of migration in offshore enforcement presents the peculiar contradictory practice, which acts "to make visible and invisible, to show some things while hiding others" (Mountz, 2015:184). Accordingly, migrants "alternatively occupy spaces of 'invisibility' and 'visibility', depending on who is looking and from which perspective" (Mazzara, 2015:452). For Federica Mazzara, "the spaces of invisibility are those where the migrants are (de)identified as mere bodies, masses, numbers" (Mazzara, 2015: 452). Conversely, the spaces of visibility are created when migrants are recognised as the "real actors of the Mediterranean passage" with their individualities, their faces, and stories, "becoming the political actors of their own counter-discourse" (Mazzara, 2015:452-3).

For Tina Catania (2015), the visit of Pope Francis in July 2013 marked an important occurrence, when migrants took part in the Catholic Mass. Their participation "becomes more than a simple religious ritual, but is a spiritual-political claim proclaiming the human dignity of those usually considered Other" (Catania, 2015:474). To some extent, belonging to the Catholic Church signals the liminality of migrants in the context of their inclusion or exclusion. "While immigrants are included as citizens of the Church during Mass, they are simultaneously excluded from citizenship within the Italian state. In a way, therefore, their inclusion here politicizes a seemingly apolitical aspect of a religious event" (Catania, 2015:474). This in/exclusion recalls Marieke Borren's "pathologies of in/visibilities" (Borren, 2010:158). Borren draws on Hannah Arendt's take on political agency to develop an Arendtian notion of in/visibility, that accounts for public visibility and natural visibility (Borren, 2010). In this regard, Borren states that people as illegal migrants, aliens, refugees and the stateless are subjected to a public invisibility that is reinforced by their natural visibility. This paradoxical status implies that migrants, for example, "do not gain a standing or voice in processes of public deliberation while their individual and personal traits at the same time become publicly visible markers of identity, political or juridical position" (Brambilla and Pötzsch, 2017:72).

> Pathologies of in/visibility, for instance, assume a crucial, often disquieting role in the dramatic staging of refugee crises and migrant deaths in the Mediterranean, but also in the discursive framing of terrorism, migration pressures and religious conflict. Due to the pathologies of in/visibility that predispose the border spectacle in the Mediterranean, migrants suffer from a public invisibility that is tied to natural visibility. In this sense, pathologies of in/visibility participate in creating an imaginary for the Mediterranean that is based on simplifying assumptions devoid of historicity and any geographical depth (Brambilla and Pötzsch, 2017:72).

In the daily life of the island, migrants who occupy the hot spot in *Contrada Imbriacola* are usually not visible. Depending on the time, or if there is, or is not, a hole in the fences, migrants are usually constrained inside the centre and have no right to go outside. However, sometimes rules get broken, because of the weather or the number of detainees is in excess of the maximum amount of people that the centre can hold, and a new hole in the fence is established, allowing those inside to leave the centre for a walk around the island. This is part of what Alison Mountz calls the:

> biopolitical and geographic reconfiguration of borders… [as] borders are increasingly contracted out and relocated to places where migrants and asylum seekers are in transit, confusing domestic and foreign space in ambiguous jurisdiction and blurring past and present (Mountz, 2015:186).

When I was in Lampedusa in November 2016, the reception centre hosted more than 800 detainees. The tourist season was over, and the holes in the fence were open again.

One morning, on my way to *Porto M*, I stopped for few minutes on the terrace at the end of *Via Roma,* to breath in the salty sea air and look to the horizon and the beauty of the landscape. It was a nice, crisp, sunny morning, and I felt grateful for being there, escaping from the darkness of the Finnish winter. Leaning against the wall of the terrace, I saw a group of young black men slowly walking through the quay. In my diary, I wrote my thoughts.

Silenziosi si muovono come ombre
in gruppi di cinque o sei
Sono in attesa. Aspettano di sapere
quando e dove andranno.
Negli occhi la voglia di guardare
Nel loro silenzio la voglia di gridare
Molti di loro hanno perso tutto
Restano a fissare il mare
Quell'immenso sconosciuto che ha divorato
già tante persone
fratelli e sorelle in un'avventura
che non ha nulla di affascinante
Sono giovani, pieni di sogni
che ancora non sono morti.
Sono vivi, così i loro sogni
per un futuro altrove.
Vorrebbero raggiungere i loro cari
chi in Svezia, chi in Germania.
Non vogliono restare qui.
Qui c'è puzza.
Puzza di inquinamento al cuore.

Lampedusa, 11 Novembre 2016

Silent they move like shadows
in groups of five or six
They are waiting. They are waiting to know
when and where they will go.
In their eyes the desire to look
In their silence the urge to scream
Many of them have lost everything
They remain to stare at the sea,
that immense stranger who already devoured
so many people,
brothers and sisters into an adventure
which has nothing fascinating about it
They are young, full of dreams
that still are not dead.
They are alive, so their dreams
for a future elsewhere.
They would like to reach their loved ones
who in Sweden, who in Germany.
They don't want to stay here.
Here it stinks.
It smells of heart pollution.

Lampedusa, 11 November 2016

Because of the over spectacularization of the migration issue, or simply because we felt that already too much has been said and we did not want to speak on their behalf, *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border* did not explicitly mention the term migrants. We did, however, acknowledged the severe and violent in/visibility attached to their bodies. While migrants at the reception centre 'made it' and were alive, many lost their lives and also their identities when crossing the Mediterranean. In the old cemetery of Lampedusa, there are many anonymous crosses that signify the unknown bodies.[90] During the 1990s, the guardian of the cemetery, with no official request, took care of the dead migrants and their bodies and buried them in the cemetery. He did so on his own initiative, as a symbol of respect.

Pain and death were an integral part of our play. The migrants' in/visible presence is an echo of the militarised life at the border of Europe; the militarisation of Lampedusa exists in strict relation with the migration policies, which are a consequent reaction to the migration phenomenon. For us the link between these two issues was the migrants' items found on the beaches and at the dump by Askavusa members. As I explored in the previous chapters, they were crucial elements in developing our collective dramaturgy, and their in/visible presence at *Porto M* was our key to access to and discover our community-based theatre process.

6.3 Co-producing upon in/visibilities and militarised land

All the concepts discussed in the previous sections were present in *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border,* as thematical contents and/or as dramaturgical elements. They are among those unexamined themes noted by Richelle Bernazzoli while discussing the study of militarism and militarisation: place, culture, and "small p" politics (Bernazzoli, 2008:197). Our theatre experience explored those themes and gave voice to them in the text of our collective play. In many ways, I consider the 'Asparagus' scene one of the most complete in this sense. In particular, the dialogue in 'Asparagus' dramaturgically develops the concept of critical military geography, showing how the presence of military forces in Lampedusa leaves a deleterious footprint that degrades the landscape, the environment, and provokes resistance from local people against military exercises and activities (Woodward, 2005; Bernazzoli and Flint, 2009). The in/visibilities of military personnel and infrastructure are represented in the dramaturgical in/visibility of the military characters with all the implications discussed above. During the scene, those issues

[90] For a deep analysis of commemorative practices in Lampedusa, Sicily and around Europe of the victims of migration, see Horsti (forthcoming).

emerge in the words of the two characters, who represent two of the many positions I encountered in Lampedusa.

In addition to the themes of in/visibility with regard to the military presence, health threats, and restricted access to the land, the scene also represented how diverse citizens' approaches towards the military authorities have been. The younger woman wants to keep a strong connection with the land, with tradition, and with being genuine in the here and now by respecting the environment and its rules. Her words reflect the language of Askavusa and she wants the same things the activists are fighting for. She dreams of a radar-free island, where nobody lives under the risk of getting sick because of electromagnetic waves. In contrast, the character of the older woman represents many Lampedusan inhabitants who do not regard the military presence as a threat, rather they think life might be even safer with them. The scene also strongly reflects the gendered dynamics of power surrounding the conflict. As the two women raise their voices in open confrontation about the military presence on the island, the in/visible elements that are implicitly male are muted, but quietly dominate the terms of the debate.

It is pertinent here, to consider how our co-production of knowledge explored these themes and how we developed the 'Asparagus' scene. During our first workshop, we began by devising the idea of how local spaces are defined within the militarily imposed limits to land access. Our starting questions were: how are the relations between bodies and land in the militarised context organised? How does the interdiction between bodies and land occur, and what are the consequences of it? The questions elicited a stream of shared images and ideas. Gianna told a personal story which became paroxysmal through the dramaturgical exercise, but still plausible for the participants. The paradox at play was how restricted access to hitherto common land might create an interdiction in doing something (picking asparagus) which was intrinsic to the collective culture of the islanders. The extract below recounts my reflections on that session in my diary.

> After a break, I asked Gianna and Eleonora to improvise together following few instructions: Gianna will be picking asparagus, and suddenly she will be interrupted by an imaginary military male officer, who will be in front of her. The conversation will get heated, but we will see and hear only Gianna, leaving us to guess the military's words and attitudes from Gianna's reactions. At a certain point, I will tell Eleonora to go to the stage as well, and she will interact with Gianna in defence of the man.
>
> The improvisation succeeded; Gianna and Eleonora were deeply connected with their characters and the scene. Their words were fluently and freely flowing, and we were all waiting to see what was going to happen next. Eleonora probed Gianna with questions about how and why the military presence is so dangerous for the community, and Gianna started a touching spontaneous monologue. She said how basic needs are not guaranteed in Lampedusa, as well noting the poor public infrastructure and services. In the emotional peak, the two women looked at each other and exploded in a relieving laugh. They laughed and hugged each other, and I felt that was great. It was great to see all those thoughts

> freely expressed and it was good to let the laugh comes out. There is nothing to laugh at, but we need to allow ourselves in this laugh, otherwise what is left?

Later, back at home, I wrote down the whole dialogue, trying to remember the details that emerged from the improvisation. It is always a challenge when an improvisation goes well, and I needed to write down those spontaneous lines that I have heard only once without the help of any recording device except for my memory. I asked myself many questions: how did she articulate that concept? Which words did they use? In the evening, I took my laptop and visited Gianna at work in her bar-restaurant, to share and check my writing with her and see together if the main essence of the improvisation was captured.

The moment when something I have just written is shared, is a magical moment. In that initial flicker of time, I usually feel embarrassed, as if my words are my naked self being exposed for the first time. Although I am proud of my ideas and images, my excitement is tempered with a degree of anxious curiosity about what the other person will say. It is a fragile and beautiful moment, where a deep understanding is as possible as the opposite, which can leave me broken and hurt. Nonetheless, I needed to give voice to our collective work, which was not only about me and my writing, but it was making sure there was a common understanding and agreement about what and how we were going to say. In recalling that moment, I can see how my emotional vulnerability and engagement in the artistic process fused with the feeling of responsibility I felt towards the workshop participants. My emotional and motivational engagement with them was something that is echoed in the strategies of feminist peace researchers. In this respect, they strive to be simultaneously connected with research participants within a "utopian-driven engagement with the everyday" (Wibben et al., 2019:96), while still being critically self-reflective about the meaning and the impact that research can have (Hepplewhite, 2020). Ruth Behar puts it succinctly when she describes how, "… efforts at self-revelation flop not because the personal voice has been used, but because it has been poorly used, leaving unscrutinized the connection, intellectual and emotional, between the observer and the observed" (Behar, 1996:13-14). The next passage from my diary, reflects on the intellectual and emotional connection between Gianna – who was the closest person to me in Lampedusa – and myself.

> I am at the bar-restaurant where Gianna works. The evening is not too busy, and I am able to work for a while and have moments of conversation with Gianna between the customers' arrivals. I order my pizza and drink some sparkling water. They have the best pizza of Lampedusa, and tonight, a gloomy Friday night, all the customers are ordering take away pizza to bring home.
>
> I am sitting at one of the tables in front of the counter and reading aloud to Gianna what I have written today. From behind the counter, she listens and nods with her soft and

gentle smile. I understand she is taken by the dialogue, that the main sense of the improvisation is still there, and we are on the same page. We keep this game between the customers coming and going, and we are both amazed and amused by the situation. I feel like I am telling her some adventurous story she does not know yet, and the words are flowing and developing one after the other in an engaging way. Until a new customer comes in and she looks at me with a clear message in her eyes "stop reading now, do not say anything, I do not want him to hear us!" Afterwards, I look at her and ask what happened, who was that guy. "He was the former mayor; he loves our pizza" she tells me with a subtle light in her smile. And we laughed together, once again.

By devising and writing this scene, we recalled the old conflict between Antigone and Creon: the natural right to pick asparagus versus the positive law to build fences and limit the common space. We almost all sympathize for Antigone, but many of us are also supporting Creon, who is, at the end, the one ruling and deciding for everyone's lives (and deaths). To this ancestral conflict there is not a clear solution, only a paradox in which people are living. Openly exploring this paradox within the safe setting of community-based theatre has been our way to reveal the unseen and unspoken at the European Border, and artistically envisage the metaphor of moral imagination in the practice of making theatre. Neither the young woman nor the older woman will find a final solution or reach a compromise, but they will be engaged in the act of trying to find a common ground by mutual listening.

When I went back to Lampedusa in 2017, we reread the scene again and made some minor changes. The structure of the scene remained the same, and we still liked it, but then, I raised the issue whether the position of the lady was plausible, or an unrealistic exaggeration.

Girl: - Don't you believe me? Don't you understand what I'm saying? Then tell me, what will happen if they decide to expand the military base? Let's say one day one of these guys come knocking on your door telling you, Well, thank you for everything, but we need more land, so the time has come to vacate your property…?

Lady: - Well, it means that I'll have to leave then.

Girl: - What?!

Lady: - Well, if that's what they decide, it will be because of legitimate reasons. They know what they're doing! They are always right.

(from 'Asparagus', *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border*, 2017)

Would it be so easy for the lady to give up her house in case of expropriation by the military forces? Would anyone actually say that? Or are we just keeping this strong contrast to magnify the contradictions in Lampedusa? Despite my doubts, Eleonora and Gianna strongly reacted saying, "no way, this is not unrealistic, this is definitely realistic! There are people like the lady, in Lampedusa!"

6.4 Summary of the chapter

From different angles, this chapter first explored the key theme of in/visibilities, which emerged as a text from the collective creative process, for a play about life at the border. As in/visibilities is a paradoxical theme, its implications are also paradoxical from dramaturgical, geographical, and emotional perspectives. Dramaturgically they occur in the in/visible presence of military characters in the play. The chapter critically shows how this resonates with the concepts of 'unknown' and 'elsewhere' in the context of Lampedusa. The chapter drew on the controversial perspective on the public accountability of military geographies suggested by Raquel Woodward (2004). In this respect, it was argued that the struggle over land in Lampedusa was complicated by the lack of available public documents regarding military properties, and opaque levels of accountability that taken together make any discussion inevitably incomplete and unclear. Secondly, the ways in which in/visibility at the border is intrinsically connected to the securitization, the patrolling, and the control over people lives and which limits the ability to move around freely, through the haphazard implementation of military radar installations. Finally, I drew out the key elements of how our community-based theatre experience created opportunities to reveal and develop dialogues about the unseen impacts of the militarisation of the border in Lampedusa. In particular for people who live there, and for the emotional, intellectual and corporeal experience of engaging with the collective practice of doing theatre and writing a play.

7 EPILOGUE – LAMPEDUSA (TO BE) RE-BORN

In Lampedusa, no births anymore;

it is an island born elsewhere.

Lampedusa has become a little baby, a weak baby,

who cannot make it alone.

Has Lampedusa always been this way?

Was there a time she could walk on her own?

To progress, there has to be a change of direction,

a return to mother's milk.

Lampedusa is the nursing bottle from which many are fed.

Lampedusa is the warm meal, from which the multitudes know to eat.

In Lampedusa, no births anymore;

it is an island born elsewhere.

Lampedusa is a baby born elsewhere,

and in that elsewhere all the decisions are taken.

('Epilogue', *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border*, 2017)

This research began a long time before I first encountered Lampedusa and the activists of Askavusa. One afternoon in 2003, I received a phone call from a primary school teacher of a small town in the Castelli Romani area of Rome, who wanted to involve me in a project with her pupils. Through this encounter I experienced a certain 'knowing' in my professional career, namely I understood that doing theatre was 'more' than simply staging a play for an audience. What began in that small Italian primary school, was an awareness of what collective creative work can achieve at the grassroots level, and coincided with my discovery of strong similarities between theatre practice and peace research.

Being engaged in research for my PhD was the culmination of over 14 years of professional and personal development. I had the opportunity to put into practice what

I had discovered with the Askavusa community, a heterogenous group of people who held radical positions regarding the militarisation of Lampedusa in Italy which had become central to 'fortress' Europe. The research was somewhat unique. The dramatic text that was created constitutes both the material of the research process and at the same time its outcome, concomitantly this makes the co-production of the narrative text as intellectually valid as the thesis itself. In this respect the co-production of collective knowledge through community-based theatre, in part embodied as this thesis, will make a worthy contribution to the extant literatures across disciplines which are attentive to the meaning of violence(s) in the context of a militarised society, *inter alia*: feminist peace research; critical human geography; arts-based research. Through the dramaturgical process, the narrative text that was produced, revealed those features at the border zones which are usually left hidden and unspoken in the mainstream public debate. This was facilitated by applying non-conventional research methods as arts-based research through the platform of community-based theatre. Positioning myself within the arch of feminist peace researchers, I experimented with methodologies that were able to reveal the finer grained evidence of "… violence in order to make it visible and uncover the potential for the flourishing of all living creatures" (Wibben et al., 2019:90).

It logically follows from the intellectual trajectory described above that the project was also committed, both personally and professionally, to a participatory journey. The research participants were located in a cooperative setting where they were both active subjects, and meaningful authors, of what was 'our' collective practice of imagination which explored the everyday contradictions, frictions and paradoxes of life on the Lampedusan border (Confortini, 2017; Moĉnik, 2018; Leavy, 2018). Consequently, my role as a researcher and the facilitator of the artistic process was marked by its fragility, vulnerability, and unpredictability, yet simultaneously committed to, and empowered by, the dedication and the support of the whole working group.

The main finding of this thesis is that feminist arts-based research can be demonstrably conducted in a highly militarised environment, using a mixed methodological approach that critically explores the contradictions in the everyday lives of locals and visitors. This was articulated throughout the thesis with extracts from, and the critical analysis of, our community-based theatre experience. Through the exploration of emotion and the everyday paradoxes of people living in Lampedusa, we made visible the hitherto unseen impacts of militarisation, realising an expression of the moral imagination invoked by Lederach (2004). In achieving this, my role as facilitator and custodian of the collective process played a crucial role. I would argue that the findings were in large measure enhanced by my gradual and significant acclimatisation to a contextually valid "responsivity" and the development of an "inter-personal attunement with participants" as a practitioner of feminist applied theatre (Hepplewhite, 2020:89).

The following shows in greater detail the key elements of this thesis and how they combined to support the findings. First, I explore the relevance of an arts-based methodology to peace research, and in particular, how my four steps strategy drew on the four disciplines of moral imagination (Lederach 2004). I argue that this approach has the potential make a substantive difference to professionals engaged in community-based theatre and conflict transformation processes. Secondly, I underline the above by illustrating the value of arts-based approaches and methods to the field of peace research, stressing the connection with the feminist peace tradition as a prefigurative practice that opens "the spaces of our collective (but not coherent) imagination" (Confortini, 2017:84). Evoking Boulding's work on Utopias (1989, 2000), I assert that community-based theatre in the context of conflict transformation can contribute to a more peaceful, nonviolent, and disarmed collective imagination for our future scenarios. Thirdly, I consider future directions for arts-based feminist peace research. I explore the argument that the role of arts-based and participatory approaches in peace education can make a difference at a higher level.

The findings of the thesis show that there are meaningful opportunities to learn from community-based experiences in other fields (e.g., social work studies), and from a peace perspective, the potential value of community-based theatre experiences for conflict resolution in unarmed societies. Finally, I reflect on the final phase of this research in comparison with the actual situation in Lampedusa at the time of finalising the thesis (Summer 2021). During the challenge of the global pandemic, Lampedusa has not ceased to be in the media and the contradictions that were explored in the play have increased. Similarly, the positions of Askavusa members are also changing and creating controversial discussions at the border of Europe.

7.1 Revealing the in/visibilities

The use of community-based theatre in this thesis was shown to be a valuable tool in the critical exploration the process of militarisation. At the same time, it offered an alternative to the mediatic spectacularization of events at the border of Europe. Chapter 5 showed the planning, development, and implementation of our community-based theatre experience, and how it resulted in a collective grass-roots exercise in the co-production of knowledge. The findings strongly suggest the opening of new paths and avenues for further exploration.

First, our collective theatre experience demonstrated how theatre has the power to identify, name and reveal the in/visible and blurred ambiguities embodied at the border of Europe. Community-based theatre makes visible and tangible the "out of sight"

features connected with military geographies and slow violence which are constitutive elements of the border of Europe. They include the lack of rights to health care provision, denied access to land, lack of public safety, dis/connectedness to local territories, and the militarisation of society. In the act of collectively writing a play we rendered these features visible and enacted a process of conflict transformation. From a local and marginalised perspective, co-production became a strategy for the re-appropriation and de-militarisation of the territories, as they were framed through the experience of community-based theatre. Although the asymmetrical power relations between a small association and military institutions – for instance - are impossible to completely overcome, theatre practice offered a meaningful platform for dialogue, reflection, and the imagination of alternative scenarios. Being able to name and represent the everyday-heterotopic-militarised life at the border was our contribution to increasing the volume of those voices who suffer the militarisation process from underrepresented and marginal positions. Thus, the collective writing process became an empowering exercise in reflecting the daily practices of nonviolent resistance that Askavusa members and supporters enact in terms of choices, political orientations and collective practices.

Secondly, we also highlighted the need to accept that there is a variety of practices in dealing with militarism. In this sense, collective theatre has great potential as it can represent, collocate and include multiple positions and views in the same common setting - every single truth can find a place, and contradictions can cohabit under the same roof. Community-based theatre has the reflexivity to poetically, metaphorically, and bodily recognise and embrace the ambiguities of the militarisation process. Doing theatre and writing a collective dramaturgy became our enacting of the kind of moral imagination evoked by Lederach.

7.1.1 The four steps strategy and moral imagination

The four steps strategy was critical to realise, embrace or render the four disciplines that John Lederach identifies for the flowering of moral imagination: relationship, paradoxical curiosity, creative act and willingness of risk. Despite following each other - in that one element is necessary to have been undertaken before moving on to another - the steps do not resemble chronological linearity. Rather, the steps bleed into each other in complex and important ways, with practitioners often having to temporarily revisit one step, in order for progress to be made. In this sense, the acquisition of knowledge is seen less as the process of following a pre-ordained map or trajectory with precise stages and questions known in advance, but rather a messy, non-linear exercise,

where unrevealed facets might only be revealed by the recalibration of questions and the exploration of hitherto unknown paths.

The negotiating step created a relationship of trust and mutual understanding, a process which silently continued for the duration of the entire creative process. As it has been made clear, however, the journey was not always easy or without obstacles. It required had work, patience, time and devotion, as well a readiness "to step into the unknown without any guarantee of success or even safety" (Lederach, 2005:39). In facilitating this, I approached the process with care and an open and trustful attitude, offering and using my professionalism to ensure the collective theatre experience was a success. In many ways, it was a risky venture to expose myself into the vulnerable positionality of failure, but we agreed the topics and the generalities of our theatre experience and established the reciprocal trust necessary to collaborate and a safe environment. In that sense, using Lederach words, by navigating through the negotiating step, we allowed ourselves "… the rise of an imagination that carries people toward a new, though mysterious, and often unexpected shore" (Lederach, 2005:39). As noted above, the negotiating step was revisited on a number of occasions, not as a matter of dysfunctionality, but because it was supposed to occur.

The devising step was the core moment of the creative process. This was the place for the open exploration of possibilities, where curiosity flourished, and the relationships of trust that were previously established were reinforced. Only in circumstances of moral equality, such as these, could something new and unexpected be collectively produced. With regard to the metaphor of moral imagination, Lederach argues that "… the centrality of relationship accrues special meaning, for it is both the context in which cycles of violence happen and the generative energy from which transcendence of those same cycles bursts forth" (Lederach, 2005:34). Similarly, in devising our main topics, we explored the features of violence and transformed them into improvisations, discussions, and finally texts. Moreover, devising the topics allowed us to practice the "capacity of individuals and communities to imagine themselves in a web of relationship even with their enemies" (Lederach, 2005:34). Throughout the act of devising, we practiced collective paradoxical curiosity, which allowed us to seek "… something beyond what is visible, something that holds apparently contradictory and even violently opposed social energies together" (Lederach, 2005:36). Embodied contradictory emotions became the primary actors in *Porto M* during our workshops, and our responsibility was to let them speak, loud, clear, and deep. For example, in the scene 'The citizen and the sea', the sea was personified while both Anna and Claudio talk to it, sharing their emotions, frustrations and anger. But it was also personalized by the unknown girl who sent a message in a bottle in hope that the waves will deliver her message. In the same short

scene, the sea became both a place for hope and that which was responsible for human loss and suffering.

The organising and confirming steps are best considered together as they were interlaced in a continuous dialogue between the participants and myself, often at a distance. During the organising step I activated my peripheral vision, which according to John Lederach is the opposite of a tunnel vision. He argued that "… peripheral vision pays attention primarily to the purpose of the process rather than to the rote delivery of the process designed to provide a desired outcome" (Lederach, 2005:120). Looking at things in this way meant that I could organise and assemble the scenes in a shared frame, keeping in view the complexities previously produced, allowing them to be expressed in the narrative of the collective play. In my solitary positionality back in Finland, far from the workshop set and the participants, I looked at the written texts with a different eye – committed but with a new distance that allowed me to reflect on some issues that were thought through collectively.

We acknowledged that *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border* could not fully reflect every aspect of the situation in Lampedusa in all its complexities. We did, however, agree that by giving voice to the realities Lampedusans faced through fragments, we could echo enough of the everyday emotions to create a meaningful picture. The contradictions we addressed were also present in the different positions Lampedusans held over the military economy present on the island. During the confirming step, these contradictions were with us, in our discussions and comments. This extract from the focus group in 2017 which discussed the final revisions and confirmation of the scene 'Hotels', succinctly illustrated the nature of the disagreements.

> Chiara: - There is this hotel keeper, if I understood correctly, who is almost complaining about because there are too many guards, and recalls about how was during 90s, when he was closed almost all winter, and he had the possibility to visit his sister, and the children stayed with the mother-in-law. 'I and my wife had the freedom to do something else'. Honestly, to me, a hotel keeper who talks like that sounds absurd. I don't know. If it was written for its absurdity, then it fits. But a hotel keeper who speaks like that is not realistic.
>
> (…)
>
> Eleonora: - It might be an example to make people think about it. Through the contrast… perhaps who watches… we could think also in this way, as a provocation. As a mother, for example, I have a certain approach, then when I see something completely in contrast in another mother, or for example on stage, I reflect on it, and ask myself: 'Could I also do things in that way?' It could be an alternative perspective to reflect on (Focus group, October 2017, translated from Italian).

This was one of the ways we agreed that situating paradoxes and contradictions in our play, was a way to affirm the complexity of the whole matter. Fragments of lives do not show the entire picture and its details, but they do reflect moments that can be connected

with the wider complexity of which they are part of. As Lederach puts it, "… simplicity precedes complexity… rather than focus directly on the complexity, it would be useful to locate a core set of patterns and dynamics that generate the complexity" (Lederach, 2015:33). At the risk of stating the obvious, our use of simplicity reflects what Lederach describes as a means to engender energy, a mechanism that allow others to magnify what they experience, it is clearly not akin to methodological reductionism. In this way, our play used fragments and contradictory elements that open a path to more detailed pictures created by the complex combination of the migration industry and the militarisation process.

The confirming step was the culmination of a successful collective and participatory experience which allowed the exploration of what Lederach relates to the nature of vocation:

> the nature of risk and vocation, which permits the rise of an imagination that carries people toward a new, though mysterious, and often unexpected shore… Vocation, as we shall see, requires us to explore the prompting of the inner voice and provides a center for this most difficult journey to break out from the historic grasp of violence (Lederach, 2005:39).

As poetically said by John Lederach, "to deeply understand vocation as voice, we must go beyond what is initially visible and audible, to that which has rhythm, movement, and feeling" (Lederach, 2005:65). By exploring the geographies of violence in Lampedusa, Eleonora, Gianna, Mario, Guido, Lucas, Chiara, and Sara made visible what is "out of sight" to most those who see the Italian border of Europe from the perspective of an outsider. Throughout our community-based theatre experience, we engaged in listening deeply to ourselves and each other's voices; we shaped our collective stories of military geographies and slow violence within a final dramaturgic structure which enables the reader/audience to see through a different lens, what life at the border of Europe looks like.

The role of the facilitator was essential to traversing successfully through and between the above-mentioned steps. She must actively listen to the participants, translate their voices into artistic expressions whilst simultaneously protecting the integrity of the collective and participatory process. My professional experience as a theatre practitioner gave me the confidence to take risks and trust my judgement. In addition, I could call upon the germination of my ideas in my master's thesis where I had alluded to the notion of a theatre peace facilitator which I described as a "… professional trainer in applied theatre and conflict transformation who has the ability to share different specializations within the same complex situation" (Tucci, 2013). The embryonic formulation of this professional figure was intuitive. I argued that the skills necessary for an applied theatre facilitator and a professional mediator, would not only be very similar, but their

combination would, moreover, form the basis of a successful proposal for a theatre project in the context of peace education, conflict transformation and peacebuilding.

What I was suggesting by the professional profile of theatre peace facilitator was to overcome the rigid distinction between an applied theatre practitioner and a peace researcher/worker/activist. Certainly, the cooperation of these different professionals might generate insightful practices, as Hannah Reich suggests, they "… emphasise reflective, relational and practical knowledge by employing artistic means in their contribution to conflict transformation" (Reich, 2012:14). However, the hierarchical structure of academia often places a structural straitjacket on the balance of power, and in the presence of an interdisciplinary team of collaborators coming from within and without academia, the former commonly prevail (Nikunen et al., 2019; Tucci and Kingumets, forthcoming). Rather, I would maintain that only by 'getting one's hands dirty' with participants, by being engaged in the artistic and research process with them and embracing different identities and roles simultaneously, can anything meaningful be achieved.

At this point of my journey, instead of insisting on new names or on a taxonomy of the features each professional figure should possess,[124] I suggest a more fruitful, compassionate, and honest collaboration between and within different disciplines, practices, and theories. Despite interdisciplinarity becoming something of a buzz word in recent decades (or even more), there remains little support and understanding for those aspects of the academy which straddles different schools/fields at the same time. In order to embrace inter/intra/multi-disciplinary collaboration, consistent with its intrinsic meaning, disciplines and subdisciplines need to be more open in welcoming experimentations, not least with the field of arts-based research, where it can be truly fruitful and meaningful. In many instances, independent artists cooperating with academics find the academic world 'too abstract' and disconnected with the real world's problems (see Vastapuu, 2018; Tucci and Kingumets, forthcoming). Related to this issue, we must remember how the precarity of temporary and short-term contracts, both in academia and in arts, make things more challenging, fragile and often under the pressure of 'showing that we are good enough'.[125]

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[124] In this direction it would be interesting to compare and combine the ongoing discussion about applied theatre practitioners (Hepplewhite, 2020; Taylor, 2003; Thompson, 2003; Prendergast and Saxton, 2009) with the one regarding the peace mediators' and facilitators' skills and work (Webel and Galtung, 2007; Bowling and Hoffman, 2000; Wehr and Lederach, 1991). The contamination of these two fields within a honest interdisciplinary approach will bring benefits to theatre practices as well to mediation and peace studies.

[125] see the discussion about theatre practitioners' contracts in Hepplewhite, 2020.

7.2 Moral imagination and feminist peace research

Throughout this thesis I have asserted that community-based theatre, as a practice of co-production of knowledge and conflict transformation, brings a new perspective to the field of peace research. In spite of arts-based research, specifically theatre, having recently received attention for its potential in transforming conflicts and 'building peace', artistic approaches for peacebuilding remain outside the mainstream (Premaratna, 2018; Reich, 2012). In the last decade, the Finnish academic context has been receptive to arts-based practices in peace and international relations research (Seppälä, 2021; Vastapuu, 2018; Jauhola, 2021; Hast, 2018; Särmä, 2014; Puumala, 2012). This thesis enriches and contributes to those discussions and makes more specific ongoing debates about the role of theatre makers in peace research. In my view, the field can only benefit from new and alternative approaches, as they "compel us to imagine and create together (in our theories and practices) the world we want to see" (Wibben et al., 2019:90). Moreover, it supports the feminist idea of conducting peace research by employing community-based theatre practices in contexts which are not directly affected by war (see Vaittinen, 2017; Väyrynen, 2019).

Perhaps echoing elements of Elise Boulding's claim that "… the very ability to imagine something different and better that what currently exists is critical or the possibility of social change" (Boulding, 2000:29), this thesis calls for further explorations regarding arts-based practices in the name of Utopias. I suggest three potential directions: (i) the need for more projects showing the role and value of community-based theatre experiences in peace research in disarmed societies; (ii) greater opportunities for peace research to learn from cognate disciplines; and (iii) that peace research should be connected to peace education. If findings remain unshared and without wider reflection with students of different levels and grades, they risk losing their significance and import.

7.2.1 Pathways for further explorations and limits

Considering my first direction, it is clear from this thesis that community-based theatre as a practice of co-producing knowledge can engender narratives about conflict transformation. In addition, it can create an interdisciplinary bridge and a framework, where theory and practice overlap in constructive dialogue. While discussions about theories in peace research is advanced, the developments connected to practices are more challenging (Jutila et al., 2008). This inertia has two main causes. First, understandings of interdisciplinarity remain patchy in peace research, and secondly,

because much peace research still inhabits the realist and neo-realist methodological space it inherited from international relations where the study of meso and micro level diplomacy and war studies tend to dominate. Despite interdisciplinarity becoming a fashionable term since peace research began, and the fact that many generations of students have been taught within this complexity-oriented model, academia still harbours institutional obstacles to recognising the value of intersections between disciplines. For ethnographers like Allaine Cerwonka, many feel "like a dilettante" in a world where "disciplines have their own methodological orthodoxies", and even when "many champion interdisciplinary research" (Cerwonka, 2007:8). With this thesis, I have constructively challenged the orthodoxies, by creating an interdisciplinary method where theatre practice and peace research were able to meet in ways that echoed the calls posed by feminist peace researchers to embrace holistic and interdisciplinarity approaches. Thus, the work that occupies this thesis, constitutes a call for more arts-based research within the field of feminist peace research and consequently more artistic co-production of knowledge in the practice of feminist methods in research.

As emphasized by Tiina Vaittinen, "… there is *within Peace and Conflict Research*, a long-forgotten *existing* tradition of everyday peace", which comes from an "arguably marginalised" genealogy (Vaittinen, 2017:160, italics in the original). To some extent, this thesis is collocated within this tradition and engages in the expanded discussion about "everyday peace to societies that are not seemingly 'deeply divided', but live 'in peace' (i.e., in the absence of war/conflict)" (Vaittinen, 2017:161). In this sense, peace research could look to the rich experiences in other fields. For instance, there are ongoing experiments in the field of social work, marked by increasing arts-based research collaborations that are engaging theatre practitioners and social work researchers in decolonising approaches (Deepak, 2011; Dominelli, 2010; Mikkonen, 2017; Ranta-Tyrkkö, 2010; Wehbi et al., 2016).

One way of illustrating the greater connection between research, theory and practice is through mainstreaming into teaching. While conducting my doctoral research I have not only disseminated my findings in scholarly fora, I have also taught an MA course called Theatre for Peace. The course explores the techniques available for applied theatre in the pursuance of conflict transformation, peace education, activism and mediation training. The teaching experience,[126] explored many of the key findings outlined here, such as the connection between mediation studies and theatre practice. Consistent with feminist scholars such as Annick Wibben and Elise Boulding, I brought the notion 'bringing peace' into teaching sessions, encouraging students to explore their own

[126] So far, I have been teaching in Tampere University, for the Master programme in Peace, Mediation and Conflict Research, in the University of Jyväskylä to a diverse group of students from education, sociology, social sciences, and in Helsinki University to International Relations students.

nonviolent strategies in dealing with conflicts in everyday contexts, instead of focusing on macro expressions of conflict such as wars, divided societies, and state violence (Wibben et al., 2019; Boulding, 2010). Indeed, as this thesis illustrates, using applied theatre in a teaching setting provides a great tool to practice conflict transformation.
Teaching opened further possibilities and opportunities for development. Besides the educational aspect of applied drama – using theatre exercises to learn about active listening or communication or about how to develop a mediation simulation – I explored with the students the transformative power of theatre as a means to express emotions and create common ground for dialogue. Put simply, the academy would benefit from an honest dose of promiscuous interdisciplinarity, a merging of different disciplines together in brave and eccentric forms of experimentation (Cohen, 2014; Hietamäki and Tucci, forthcoming).

7.3 Taking off from Lampedusa

There is an elegance in ending this conclusion with a consideration of both the prologue and the epilogue. Both the beginning and the end of the process rest upon on the same multi-layered metaphor that describes Lampedusa as a little sick baby who constantly whines for the nursing bottle to maintain itself. This metaphor tells of the external economic dependence that the island has been experiencing for at least three decades. It also suggests that the island has been exploited by what has commonly been termed the migration industry. Whilst this might nominally mean the businesses activities that surround it, the outsider exploitation is embodied by a wide range of researchers, NGOs members, artists, tourists, politicians, all those who combine to mine the resources of Lampedusa. This simple and yet complex metaphor embraces all the various aspects that this research has encountered: the beauty and fragility of a contradictory island.

Among the potential criticisms of the research, the most tangible for me has been the fact that the play was not staged. Although the text of the play leaves a permanent impression of our collective work to be analysed and discussed, plays are written to be publicly shown, communicated to an audience by actors on stage. This begs valid questions: what if a play is not staged? Is the written text enough to qualify as an expression of creative art, or is it destined to remain in a realm of self-referentiality inside an impenetrable and exclusive bubble? When the participants were asked if they wanted to stage the play in Lampedusa, they were clearly opposed. At first, I was quite surprised. For me it was axiomatic that these alternative narratives about Lampedusa should be publicly represented. When I asked why, some of them told me: "The persons who would come to see the performance would not see anything new, they already know

what is going on and what people think about this". On reflection, I could see how it made sense to them that staging a play about Lampedusa in Lampedusa would have been a meaningless act of meta-representation, something that Askavusa was conspicuously not in favour of, and had consciously decided to refrain from. During an interview with Fabio after the 3rd of October commemoration in 2017, he spoke about the public protests against the commemoration of the disaster:

> If we keep demonstrating on the 3rd of October during the commemoration of the disaster, then we will have to accept that we play our role in all this farce.[127] And taking our role in this play means reinforcing this play, and we do not want to do so (interview with Fabio, October 2017, translated from Italian).

For them, staging *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border* in Lampedusa would have a similar effect. However, when I proposed to the participants that they take the play outside the island and show our work somewhere else, in Finland, for example, they were enthusiastic. One said, "everything is decided somewhere else anyway, we would have a chance to freely talk about how Lampedusa is from our experience of daily lives and our views". Unfortunately, the search for partners and funding has been difficult, but efforts are ongoing.

It is tempting to take a distinctively binary perspective to the 'staging or not staging' dilemma, especially while working in the context of communities and activism. However, as a consequence of this research, there is a possible future where *Flotsam and Jetsam at the Border* can have the chance to be read, performed and discussed. The portents are promising with one scene of the play – 'The citizen and the sea' – being staged by my colleague and friend Ignazio Raso and his theatre group in Rome in December 2019. The monologue was transformed into a choral piece and inserted in a wider frame focused on migration and diversity.

This thesis has focused on my time in Lampedusa and on our community-based theatre experience between 2015 and 2017. I have refrained from discussing that the individual positions of some Askavusa members became more radical regarding the migration policies and the patrolling policies at the border of Europe. Nevertheless, for clarity, it was perplexing to me how somebody who once thought the opposite, could invoke the closure of borders and migration flows, and support the idea that the self-determination of populations means a nativist conception of freedom in their own countries. But in finalising this thesis, and in an increasingly polarised global conversation about migration and associated issues, I need to disassociate myself from those taking increasingly populist and nativist positions in seeking to oppose migration flows and advocating regressive measures in managing shifts in global populations. This

[127] In Italian, he actually used the term *teatrino*, which is a depreciative way of using the word theatre.

is not, ostensibly, a thesis about migration and migrants' rights, however, given the themes of our collectively written play were quintessentially related to matters of global migration, I feel compelled to claim the validity of freedom of movement. None of us decide where we are born, consequently, we should all be free to decide where we live, where to establish a home, and have the right to look for a better place to live. This is especially so when our birthplaces have been ravaged by war and social upheaval of which we had no say in. I am a migrant, a privileged white European woman educated and raised in a wealthy highly educated family, who moved to another European country and embarked on a new journey. Freedom of movement should not be just a matter of luck or privilege.

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Mosaico di Pace. www.mosaicodipace.it

NoMuos. www.nomuos.info/cose-il-muos/

Progetto Melting Pot Europa: per la promozione dei diritti di cittadinanza.
www.meltingpot.org/Lampedusa-Tra-accoglienza-e-rifiuto.html#.X4AbuOdRVaQ

Rete Comuni Solidali (Re.Co.Sol.). comunisolidali.org/

Movies, TV series and programs:

Burchielli, Roberto (2014) *La scelta di Catia – 80 miglia a sud di Lampedusa,* Rai Fiction and Corriere della Sera

Pontecorvo, Marco (2016) *Lampedusa,* Fabula Pictures and Rai Fiction

Di Gregorio, Alessandro (2018) *Frontiera*, KAVAC

Radiotelevisione Italiana (1988), *Laboratorio Infanzia, quando la vita si chiama isola*. RAI

Rosi, Granfranco (2016) *Fuocoammare,* Stemal Entertainment, 21 Unofilm, Cinecittà Luce and Rai Cinema

Crialese, Emanuele (2011) *Terraferma,* Cattleya and Rai Cinema

9 APPENDIX

Devising from items: short stories and monologues

Participants	Words in freedom (1)	Monologue/Story (2)
Eleonora	Military, combined marriage, Muslim, blindly marriage, militarisation, research, family, certainties, the sea, the unknown, uncertainty, abandonment, loss, essence, prudence, recklessness, free will, impetuousness, prudence, waves, sea, ritual, empty message.	An unconcerned citizen, who feels abandoned by the State with regard to his primary rights, is on the beach looking at the sea; he finds a plastic bottle with a message inside from a girl looking for a husband according to the Muslim rite. His indifference gives way to amazement and curiosity about such bizarre research.
Gianna	Leaving your land, roots, desert, occupation, plunder, amulet, exploitation, coming back, border.	I am the mayor of these islands. During these years, I have kept feeding the military occupation of this land. I have created an image of the welcoming Lampedusa, of which I am the solidarity queen... instead it is an open-air prison and the Hot Spot makes profit on the migrants' skin. Today it is finally a border, I feel alone.

Lucas[128]	Sucking, spiting, Lampedusa Security To be born on an island that looks like a place of passage. Tourists, migrants and the military people. Lampedusa as an island that must continuously "amamantar" (breastfeed) and for many years (ZWW, immigrants ... American base). The bottle has the milk that is not of the mother, the militarisation as an inappropriate solution for the current situation. The breast milk ends, but the other one can always be bought. UNCERTAINTY	The bottle is the easy help. Because it temporarily solves the problem. In Lampedusa no quitan el biberon (do not give up the nursing bottle). In Lampedusa they do not leave the nursing bottle. How can it develop on its own if there is always someone who holds and gives them (to the island) the bottle? How can the island become an adult? It's like a sick child who wants to grow up but never wants to take the nursing bottle away.
Guido	The economic interests linked to border control do not coincide with the sense of security of the inhabitants of the border areas. Migration flows are fueled to motivate the militarisation of the island. The meaning of life, of the community of Lampedusa, with its freedom of movement, of socialization and solidarity, clashes with a new external entity that knows how to make itself loved by some, passively accepted by many and hated by a few. Billions of euros are invested in the island, but if you want to give birth, you must go to Sicily with all the expenses and the sacrifices that it	The hotel keeper initially worked with tourists from April to October; then the mediatic noise about Lampedusa has reduced the number of tourists. Instead of tourists, the military personnel arrived, police, carabinieri, finance guards, humanitarian organizations. The hotel keeper no longer complains, the summer period continues to work, compared to before, but now he works a lot during the winter period. First, he kept the hotel closed and moved elsewhere during the winter. After a few

[128] The text written by Lucas was in Spanish, and I could not decipher it in its entirety.

	entails; non-drinking tap water is supplied, penalizing families and tourist activities.	years, however, he is no longer so satisfied, even though he works for 12 months (a year), he is no longer the same as when he worked for his beautiful island. Now the beauty is blurred, restricted, mortgaged to the political will that does not listen and imposes its choices.