9-21-2018

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Marxiano Melotti
Niccolò Cusano University, Rome

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The Mediterranean Sea has become a huge cemetery: many thousands of migrants have lost their lives trying to cross it in search of a better future. In 2015, more than a million migrants and refugees reached Europe through irregular means, but almost 4,000 went missing and probably drowned. In 2016, 364,000 arrived in Europe and more than 5,000 were lost en route. The arrivals in Italy by sea were 181,436 in 2016 and 119,369 in 2017. While UN organizations and EU governments seem unable or unwilling to face this epoch-making drama, the culture industry has begun to exploit it. Migrant tragedies have inspired books and events, exhibitions and art installations, films and TV series.

This article analyses the Mediterranean crisis, focusing on Lampedusa, a small Italian island between Sicily and Tunisia. Lampedusa seems to be an easy gateway to Europe but reaching it from Northern Africa is not easy. Thousands of asylum seekers have met their death on that route, sinking in deflated rafts or trapped inside old boats. The media coverage of these events has turned the island into a global icon, especially after the great events of 2013: the visit of Pope Francis on July 8 and the shipwreck with 366 fatalities on October 3. The article, based on personal field research, shows the complex relations between residents, tourists, and migrants. It also dwells on the use of migration by the culture industry: Ai Weiwei's installations in Berlin, Vienna, and Florence; Jason deCaires Taylor's sculpture The Raft of Lampedusa in the underwater museum of Lanzarote; the award-winning films by Emanuele Crialese and Gianfranco Rosi; the glossy TV series Lampedusa. In 2016, the island itself hosted a special exhibition, which was presented as the first step of a transnational and mobile intercultural museum.

A Summer of Leisure and Despair

On September 2, 2015, not far from the fashionable resort town of Bodrum, Turkey, the corpse of a child was found face down on one of the tourist beaches where happy families enjoy their summer.

That corpse, prostrate in the surf, had a name: Alan Kurdi. He was a three-year-old boy of Kurdish origin: one of the many thousands of people of all ages fleeing their countries. For him and his family, the main reasons for leaving were the harsh condition for the Kurds and the war in Syria; for others they are hunger, poverty, terrorism, violence, and the conflicts in their countries (not only Syria and Iraq but also, in decreasing order of the nationalities declared on arrival in Italy in 2017, Nigeria, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Bangladesh, Mali, Eritrea, Sudan, Tunisia, Morocco, Senegal, and others).

These migrants and refugees form massive flows directed to the richer and safer Europe. As a consequence, the Asian and African coasts of the Mediterranean Sea have become crucial

Marxiano Melotti is a professor and researcher of the sociology of culture and urban sociology, heritage, and tourism at Niccolò Cusano University, Rome, where he is also director of the master's program in museums and enhancement of cultural heritage.

points of passage, where migrants and refugees board inadequate and overcrowded boats to cross the sea, with the risk of becoming floating corpses or human remains washed up on its beaches.

Figure 1. Alan Kurdi's lifeless body on Bodrum beach. (Courtesy of Nilüfer Demir.)

Such tragedies are in no way new, but only recently have they begun to capture the attention of the media. The migratory flows from the south to the north of the Mediterranean started many decades ago.[1] Moreover, they are part of a larger process of human movements that for centuries have shaped the Mediterranean cultures. They have helped to build the history of many European countries (especially Greece, Italy, and Spain) and define their heritage and identity, though in their political discourses they have recently invented or emphasized a "national" or a "European" identity based on being white and Christian. Therefore, in Western imagery, the Mediterranean has become a divide rather than a space of contact and interconnection according to the meaning of the ancient Greek term for sea (*pontos*), which conveys the ideas of road and bridge.

In 2015, migratory movements became only more dramatic owing to the escalation of the war in Syria and the disintegration of Libya. In that year, more than a million refugees and migrants reached Europe through irregular means, arriving mainly in Greece and Italy, but almost 4,000 went missing and probably drowned.[2] In 2016, 364,000 arrived in Europe and more than 5,000 were lost en route.[3] In the same year, the arrivals in Italy by sea were 181,436 (including 25,846 under age eighteen), in 2017 119,369 (including 15,779 under eighteen), and in the first six months of 2018 16,566 (including 2,593 under eighteen), according to the latest data of the Italian Ministry of the Interior.[4]

Nevertheless, the summer of 2016 did not entail great changes for the millions of tourists who, during their holidays, populated the Mediterranean coasts. The pictures of unconcerned tourists shopping or sunbathing alongside disoriented crowds of migrants raised ethical and cultural debates. How was it possible to travel around and enjoy holidays in the context of such extreme despair? But, while philosophers and sociologists were discussing this issue, tourists continued to go to the seaside, and their pictures with the newly arrived migrants became a sort of sophisticated souvenir. Even rescuing migrants by taking them onboard elegant yachts and boats became a precious tourist experience to share with friends and colleagues through social media.

Migrants and Tourists

Tourism and despair seem to go together. Modern tourism has always had much to do with uneven and unbalanced relationships. Initially, only the most affluent of the elite could afford long tours where they would parade and confirm or improve their social status with activities aimed at leisure and education: for the lower classes, it was an inconceivable form of "conspicuous consumption."[5]

The first experience of this mobility was the so-called Grand Tour, which reached its apogee in the Romantic Age. It was fashionable for young members of the upper class (and later also the upper-middle class) from the cold, rich countries in Central and Northern Europe to travel to the mild, poor ones in the Mediterranean area. The main destinations were Italy and Greece, followed by Spain and Turkey. All of them were "beautiful" countries, not industrialized and seemingly crystallized in a premodern bubble. But they were rich in monuments, folklore, and works of art, some of which could be acquired for almost nothing. The Grand Tour, with its forms of social and cultural exploitation, persisted substantially until the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, when tourism began to involve an increasing part of the middle class.

Local poor people, such as children in rags or shepherds with goats amid smashing ancient ruins, became popular figures, proving the genuineness of a place, that is, what modern sociologists would later define as its "authenticity." It was a view far from the propensity of the hosting countries to regard the Grand Tour as an important recognition of their longstanding civilization. For the visitors, their civilization was a fact of the past and the current civilization was the one of their own countries.

Thus, the poor natives were regarded not as persons but as "signs" (in the semiotic meaning) confirming the gap between hosts and guests. Moreover, the visitors regarded their economic preeminence as proof of their moral and cultural superiority. This view enhanced their pride and their satisfaction. In some recent developments (including modern mass tourism and some sophisticated form of "pro-poor" tourism), this kind of "tourist gaze," as Urry defines it,[6] has become even more important for it gives a sensation of power to people who in their ordinary life rarely enjoy it.

As for "tropical" countries, the situation has changed very little since colonial times. Tourists, who grew up with colonists and anthropologists, tended to share their narratives. In the colonial world, the primitivist gaze, which once was focused on Italy and Greece, became "orientalism."[7] The narrative of "beauty," created for Italy with reference to its ancient treasures, became a narrative of "lost paradise,"[8] especially for the islands. They were regarded as places frozen in a sort of "eternal yesterday" (to use the words that Max Weber applied to traditional societies), where it was possible to find something that in the modern and civilized world had irretrievably disappeared. Accordingly, the "tourist gaze" passed from the poor children in Naples and its suburbs to those in Indian and Brazilian shantytowns. When tourism began to involve the European middle and lower classes, the sexual exploitation of children escalated. The abuse of young fishermen in Posillipo and Capri by British and German gentlemen was replaced by mass sexual tourism in Brazil, Cambodia, and many other countries.

Sunbathing close to migrants in Chios, Lesbos, or Lampedusa is not a novelty due to the sharp divides existing in today's society but, rather, an expression of a basic trait of Western tourism, able to metabolize the contradictions of the spaces where it takes place and exploit them for its own purposes.

The "liquidity" of contemporary society blurs the borders between different experiences.[9] Culture, entertainment, and consumerism, as well as education, shopping, and tourism, have become variously interconnected and sometimes indistinguishable. Moreover, the increasing

"carnivalization" of the present society offers continual opportunities to escape from ordinary life: for many people, leisure and tourism have become a frequent or even daily experience.[10] Thus, tourism risks losing its function as a temporary break from a boring and repetitive life and its duties, related mainly to work and family.[11]

Many sociologists have described the strategies used to maintain the efficacy of the tourist experience in a society increasingly accustomed to leisure and pleasure (and where, I might add, Western countries are no longer the only global players). Since the 1970s, the debate has long been focused on the role of authenticity in tourism.[12] Tourists need it to preserve the initiatory value of their experience as a transitory detachment and change, as well as a discovery of otherness. But they easily accept a "staged authenticity," constructed for them by the hosting community or the tourism industry.[13] Furthermore, the postmodern liquid culture has created new hybrid, relative, sensorial, and experiential forms of authenticity, which have deeply affected the very idea of authenticity.[14]

It is a really strange game. But how do migrants become part of it? They offer a new pre-postmodern kind of authenticity that helps tourism preserve its function. Cynically and paradoxically, the Bodrum beach where little Alan was found, the islands of Chios and Lesbos where migrants arrive on inflatable rafts, and the coasts of Sicily and its islands where their corpses are periodically washed up are revitalized tourist spaces where the authenticity of the drama overcomes any staged authenticity. Distress, despair, and death reshape the otherness of the tourist space and experience.

The 2016 data on summer tourism in France, Turkey, and Egypt show that the effects of migration on tourism are more acute where it has already been affected by terrorism or fear or both. Yet, even new fears and violence related to migration can revitalize the traditional European feasts and festivals by helping the residents rediscover their pre-postmodern value. Something of this kind happened in Cologne in 2016 after the events of New Year's Eve and the subsequent Carnival.[15]

In this context, the image of the corpse of Alan (Fig. 1) marked a turning point. It reaffirmed the strong liminality of the beaches as magical spaces where life and death meet[16]: an ancient view dating to the time of Homer. The child acted as a connector between worlds, according to another idea deeply rooted in ancient Greek culture, where children were regarded as privileged mediators between the world of life and the world of death.

The fact that the child was not an anonymous corpse but had a name enhanced emotional participation, worldwide mourning, and the attention paid to the migrant crisis. More than seven hundred children died during their journeys to Italy or Greece in 2015 and at least another seven hundred in 2016: about two children every day.[17]

The photo rekindled the meaning of the beach as a special experiential space, overcoming its use as a banal tourist spot. In an initiatory view of tourism, the presence of death is important: it defines the temporary detachment from culture and the entrance into the marginal phase of otherness, one that is supposed to provide new knowledge and transform or even create experience.

Yet that image was a professional photograph that was published by all the main journals and websites in the world and was uploaded hundreds of thousands of times on the social networks. It marked the entering of migration into the production of images by the creative industry of contemporary society. It was also a stunning piece of art: a lively staged performance based on death. It can be considered the starting point of a new heritage-making process, of which the tragedy of the asylum seekers fleeing Africa and the Middle East is the emotional and conceptual core. Thus, migration (or, rather, its most recent flow) has entered Western cultural heritage and has begun to reshape it creatively, though in a Western way, where migrants remain speechless and lifeless actors.

The Culture Industry and the Refugee Crisis: Ai Weiwei's Installations

In this context, we must mention the work of Ai Weiwei, a well-known Chinese artist and political activist who, in 2011, because of his commitment to human rights and his criticisms of the Chinese regime, was detained in China for eighty-one days: an arrest that enhanced his reputation.

In 2015, the photo of Alan Kurdi and the plight of refugees attracted his attention. In January 2016, he visited Lesbos, a pivotal place in the refugee crisis and one of the European destinations that the migrants attempt to reach from the coasts of Turkey. People waiting for embarkation often receive from the smugglers low-quality life jackets, often useless when actually needed. Ai Weiwei, moved by these facts, collected memories and individual stories and decided to work to promote awareness.

His first action was a replica of the photo of little Alan. Ai Weiwei posed on the pebble shore of Lesbos, lying face down like the drowned child. It was a provocative image: the artist reenacted the tragedy of one of the most moving victims of forced migration. The image was widely shared on social media and was published in magazines and newspapers all over the world. His Chinese background contributed to the global success of the operation, which went far beyond the Mediterranean. The photo was taken for an Indian magazine, which exhibited it at India Art Fair in New Delhi. As one of its organizers explained, it was "an iconic image because it is very political and human and involves an incredibly important artist."[18]

In February 2016, in Berlin, Ai Weiwei created a temporary installation by covering the Greek-style columns of the façade of the Konzerthaus with fourteen thousand migrants' life jackets and a lifeboat used in the rescue operations. The visual and conceptual effect was impressive because of many concurrent factors: the bright orange of the jackets against the dull gray of the columns; the material traces of the new heritage brought by the migrants placed on a monument of the old European heritage; ambiguous symbols of life and death (the life jackets and the lifeboat) hanging on a symbol of European civilization; a reminder of the misery of the refugees on a building celebrating the sophisticated lifestyle of the rich and cultivated Europeans.

Ai Weiwei used that imposing piece of Western built-heritage to give material consistency to the invisible and neglected immaterial heritage of the refugees. He also reconsecrated the temple-like entrance of the concert hall by devoting it to the cause of refugees: something quite challenging in a country, like Germany, so attached to its national values. This act brought the drama of the refugees from the faraway coasts of Greece to the center of the German capital, the powerful heart of Europe and its migration policies.

Yet, once again, the European cultural system was resilient to criticism and absorbed it easily. Ai Weiwei's installation had been created for the annual gala dinner of the Cinema for Peace, an initiative aimed at promoting social awareness in the framework of the Berlin Film Festival. But business is business. Film stars may have been moved by the installation, but they were there to take part in an enjoyable social evening. During the dinner, Ai Weiwei invited them to put on the metallic emergency blankets that are given to the refugees after their rescue. As the photos show, the stars welcomed his suggestion, wore the blankets over their clothes, and took a lot of selfies to show off their sensitivity on the social media. The glossy and glittering blankets with their yellow nuances seemed like unusual elegant dresses. The performance was a success, though some commentators claimed that the disguise and the selfies were "obscene."[19] Nevertheless, this event showed how insubstantial the boundary between social awareness and commercial operations is in a postmodern society, especially in a sector like the film industry that is based on image, deception, and entertainment.

These criticisms did not discourage Ai Weiwei. Between July and November 2016, at the Belvedere Museum in Vienna, he assembled an installation, *Translocation—Transformation*,

focused on the "metamorphosis provoked by expulsion, migration and deliberate change of location undergone by people and objects alike."[20] He placed more than a thousand migrant life jackets in the elegant Baroque pond in the garden of that palace and formed with them 201 lotus flowers making a gigantic *F*, the initial of the name of his art studio.

This installation was no less successful than the one in Berlin. The migrants' crude narratives, through the colored life jackets, elegantly entered the aristocratic history of old Europe with its palaces and gardens. That sophisticated space enclosed both the exclusive lifestyle of the eighteenth-century European aristocracy and the cultured behavior of contemporary tourists visiting museums and exhibitions. The water of the pool recalled the Mediterranean Sea and gave the floating life jackets a poignant meaning. But, beyond and despite any good purpose, the use of the refugee tragedy in an art creation appeared to be a form of commodification.

Ai Weiwei's refugee project also reached Italy. From September 2016 to January 2017, a museum in Florence, the Palazzo Strozzi, hosted a large retrospective of the artist. During this exhibition, twenty-two of the imposing windows of the palace (one of the finest Renaissance buildings in Italy) were covered with orange inflatable lifeboats, a memento of the migrants' odyssey (Fig. 2). Also, that installation, entitled *Reframe—Nuova Cornice*, was devised to draw attention to the refugee crisis. As Ai Weiwei explained in a video message shown at the inaugural press conference, he was excited by the opportunity "to join the great Italian tradition with a contemporary effort" concerning a current human issue.[21]

Figure 2. Installation by Ai Weiwei on the façade of Palazzo Strozzi, Florence. (Photo by Alessandro Moggi. Courtesy of Fondazione Strozzi.)

Once again migrants, museums, the art industry, cultural tourism, and urban marketing formed a postmodern mix where business and sensitivity appeared dangerously interwoven. Yet the artist's well-known concern for human rights and the authority of the institution involved gave prestige to the initiative.

The Venice Biennale, too, was involved in similar exhibitions. In 2015, it hosted an installation by a Brazilian artist, Vik Muniz, called *Lampedusa* (a floating structure entirely covered with the front page of a journal announcing the October 3, 2013, shipwreck off that island). Then, in 2017, it devoted its central pavilion and other spaces to migrant issues, with symbolic and interactive works reflecting its wish for a world without borders.[22]

The refugee crisis also inspired some theater pieces. We must mention the *Trilogia del Naufragio* (Shipwreck trilogy) by a Sicilian dramatist and director, Lina Prosa. Its first part, *Lampedusa Beach*, was written in 2003 when the continual landings on Lampedusa were hardly

known outside the island. In 2007, it was awarded the Anima Prize for the promotion of ethical awareness and was produced and staged in Paris by the Comédie Française, in a French translation, with its two other parts, *Lampedusa Snow* and *Lampedusa Way*. The trilogy was then staged in Italian in Milan (Piccolo Teatro Studio, in 2011, 2015, and 2017) and in Palermo (Teatro Biondo, in 2015, 2016, and 2017). The work is a moving metaphor of the contemporary human condition in an evocative language able to transform the odyssey of the migrants into an atemporal myth.

The world-famous Piccolo Teatro of Milan in 2016 staged a new production of Bertolt Brecht's popular *Threepenny Opera*. Its director, Damiano Michieletto, represented the beggars as migrants climbing up on railings wearing red life jackets, though not all the members of the audience appreciated this palpable straining.

Yet perhaps the most striking use of the migrant tragedy in the art industry was the life-sized colored sculpture of the drowned body of Alan Kurdi, which a renowned Finnish artist, Pekka Jylhä, displayed in 2016 at the Helsinki Contemporary Gallery. The child's corpse is represented exactly as captured in the heart-breaking photograph by Nilifur Demir. The result is an emblematic memento of our incapacity to respond effectively to the present human disaster. At the same time, however, it is also an example of the lucid and voyeuristic voracity of the culture industry, capable of metabolizing any tragedy and transforming it into a product ready to be consumed by any audience, from sophisticated urban citizens to curious tourists.

Between 2016 and 2017, Ai Weiwei directed and produced an epic film, *Human Flow*, a long and detailed investigation into the current migration tragedy. This touching documentary, which was shot in twenty-three countries, was presented on September 1, 2017, at the Venice Film Festival, where it was appreciated but not awarded. Not by chance, this film was premiered in Italy, the main country of entry for refugees and migrants trying to reach Europe. Some newspapers severely criticized it, for its "exploitation" or even "pornography" of grief[23] and the "narcissistic" stage presence of its director.[24] Thanks to the film, however, sixty-five million migrants disembarked on the red carpet in Venice.

The *Raft of Lampedusa* in Lanzarote

Inflatable rafts and refugee narratives inspired another important installation: the Museo Atlántico in Lanzarote, the easternmost island of the Canaries, a Spanish archipelago located just off the southern coast of Morocco. This museum was inaugurated in February 2016 and was erroneously promoted as the first underwater museum in Europe.

Its creator, a British-born artist, Jason deCaires Taylor, placed about sixty cement statues on white sand twelve meters under the sea, not far from the crowded coast of Playa Blanca, the newest resort of the island. It was not his first underwater work. In 2006, he created the world's first underwater sculpture park in the Caribbean Sea, off the west coast of Grenada, West Indies, and in 2009 the Museo Subacuático de Arte (called MUSA), near Cancún, Mexico. This museum was conceived as a pro-environment initiative, aimed at diverting part of the 750,000 tourists who every year visit the nearby protected marine area. With the title *Silent Evolution*, he placed there nearly five hundred statues representing an odd humanity (for instance, the statue *Inertia* shows a fat man on a sofa, watching television and eating a burger).

The Museo Atlántico features more than three hundred sculptures, which confirm the artist's attention to human alienation: the underwater statues convey a disquieting image of an obsessed humanity, engrossed in talking on mobile phones, taking selfies, and marching like a zombie group toward an indefinite future. The name of the museum, due to the ocean surrounding the Canaries, also evokes the myth of Atlantis, the sunken continent imagined by Plato.

From the sculptures, a huge group stands out: it represents an inflatable raft with thirteen young Africans on board. Its title, *The Raft of Lampedusa*, dispels any doubts: it represents one of the many rubber boats crammed with desperate migrants striving to reach that island.

Lampedusa, closer to Tunisia (113 km) than to Sicily (205 km), seems to be an easy gateway to Europe but a voyage to it (especially from Libya) is dangerous. According to Save the Children, a child is ten times more likely to die along this route than along the one from Turkey to Greece.[25] The poor condition of the boats, the shortage of gas, the unpredictability of the weather in the open sea, the effects of days and days in the sun and without enough drinking water cause huge tragedies. Thousands of refugees have died on this route, sinking in deflated rafts or trapped inside old boats, capsizing in storms, poisoned by exhaust fumes, accidentally crushed and suffocated by their fellow travelers, or simply dehydrated. The wooden and rubber boats used by migrants seem to be "designed to sink" according to the director of the IOM Coordination Office for the Mediterranean. These voyages are organized by a lucrative smuggling industry, estimated to be worth about five or six billion dollars annually.[26] On this point, the Public Prosecution's office of Catania opened an investigation, which also concerns the role of some NGOs involved in rescue operations.[27]

The media coverage of the shipwrecks and rescues and the visit of Pope Francis (July 8, 2013) turned Lampedusa into a global icon. Thus, it is not surprising that Taylor's main sculpture was named after this island. *The Raft of Lampedusa* was clearly inspired by *The Raft of Medusa* (*Le Radeau de la Méduse*), a celebrated painting by Théodore Géricault, a French artist who, in 1818–1819, depicted the struggle of fifteen survivors of a French naval frigate, which had sunk two years before with over 150 soldiers on board. It was a disturbing representation that questioned not only the French authorities, unable to prevent the disaster, but the supposed superiority of European culture since, to avoid starvation, the survivors resorted to cannibalism. This large painting, now at the Louvre, is regarded as a symbol of mankind's eternal struggle for life.

Similarly, Taylor's sculpture shows the human fight for change and survival. It is an eloquent remainder of the many refugees who strive to achieve a better future outside their native countries. On the bow of the cement ship is a young man looking toward the horizon: he was modeled on a real refugee who reached Lanzarote. This figure confirms that the work, far from being a mere rhetorical evocation of a sea voyage, is a realistic representation of the present migrant flows reshaping Europe and its culture. With a traditional use of sculpture and a meta-reference to the great European pictorial tradition, it gives substance to migrants' histories and immaterial heritage, transforming the meaning of the entire exhibition and making it a monument to what is happening in the Mediterranean: a monument, according to the meaning of the Latin word *monumentum*, since it obliges us to "remember."

The sculpture is inside a museum, that is, a space conceived to host items related to death, and this contributes to reducing its disturbing effect. But it is also inside a tourist attraction, that is, a space devoted to leisure and entertainment, visited by people looking for something different after their beach activities. *The Raft of Lampedusa* shockingly inserts a symbol of death in the core of a tourist system built on the famous four *S*'s (sea, sun, sand, and sex). Death is not only implied but staged. On the raft, among the figures showing sadness, despair, and bewilderment, there is also a dying man and a corpse.

This work has an ambiguous character. It represents a rubber boat among the waves, like Géricault's raft, but it has been placed on the seabed, like a wrecked ship. Visitors are supposed to know that many boats making for Lampedusa sink and disappear. The artist shows us what we know but cannot see: the afterlife of a sunken boat. The strange humans on the raft are dead seafarers. Visitors do not see a mere representation of what may happen; they see "real" dead bodies, caught in their final environment: the bottom of the sea.

It is an interesting situation. The sea is the medium that, in underwater museums and scuba diving, makes it possible to perform cultural, leisure, and sports activities and defines the identities of the actors involved: visitors, tourists, and divers. But it also gives identity to the sculpted figures, which, thanks to the water, acquire a paradoxical life that places them on the same ontological level as the observers.

Cement refugees and flesh-and-blood visitors share not only the underwater setting but an unnatural and hostile environment of which none of them should be part. Scuba diving, though a popular sport, remains a dangerous pursuit, where life is always at risk. The underwater space is a world of absolute otherness, which obliges divers to wear masks, aqualungs, and other equipment and transforms mobility, impedes speech, and alters sounds and lights. Such a context represents a peculiar and effective tourist stage, where enjoyment takes place through a symbolic suspension or overcoming of the normal cultural world.[28] Moreover, modern scuba diving is related to a long-established system of myths and ritual activities, like the ancient *katapontismòs*, deep-rooted in the Mediterranean imagery and cultural heritage.[29] Thanks to this invisible background, scuba diving is particularly suited for capturing the initiatory function of tourism, with its entrenched morbid interest in death. It effectively implements the intermediate phase of the rites of passage, the "marginality,"[30] which implies experiences of otherness, symbolic death, or contact with the world of the dead.

Though modern and postmodern tourism tend to transform these dark elements into something amusing and entertaining, their real nature sometimes reappears, even through voyeurism. The tourist success of the casts of Pompeii, which give visual substance to the void left in the soil by the corpses of the victims of the eruption, confirms this phenomenon, which was already known or at least guessed when they were created to attract visitors.[31] The cement figures of *The Raft of Lampedusa* belong to the same imagery. Like the Pompeii casts, they seem both petrified bodies and archaeological items and are close and faraway at the same time.

The Museo Atlántico and Its Tourists

Underwater tourism is acquiring importance in the tourism industry. Its diversified system already includes underwater archaeological sites, such as the ancient Roman villas in Baiae, near Naples, the archaeological paths on the seabed of Ustica, an island off the north coast of Sicily, and the remains of the Roman harbor at Caesarea Maritima, in Israel; underwater museums, such as the huge Pharos of Alexandria Museum planned in Egypt; underwater buildings, such as the luxurious hotel under construction in Dubai; underwater spas, restaurants, and disco-bars, such as those in some Maldivian resorts; and underwater events, such as the weddings officiated in some sea resorts. In these places, the idea of otherness shifts from "death" to "uniqueness" and "novelty." The underwater world represents an ultimate boundary for tourism (the next will probably be space).

Lanzarote is a tourist island and its authorities have actively supported and funded the museum, regarding it as an important means of attracting visitors. Museums, especially if designed by star architects or housed in iconic buildings, play an important role in urban competition.[32] An underwater museum is an innovative space that marks a tourist context and redefines its identity. This was the view of the president of the Municipal Council of Lanzarote, Pedro San Ginés, anyway, who, at the opening of the museum, said emphatically: "Today is a historic day for the island, because we open a door to the ocean that reinforces our position as a unique tourist destination and makes us much stronger and more competitive than the other tourist destinations nearby."[33]

The data show an increasing interest in cultural tourism and ecotourism. Small museums, diffused museums, eco-museums, cultural routes, and eco-friendly and sustainability-oriented

activities are becoming more and more popular. Nature tourism, green-tourism, and adventure tourism as well as holidays in rural and natural settings, wellness, and multisensorial activities are growth sectors.[34]

An underwater museum like the Atlántico, involving cultural tourism, ecotourism, and sport, seems to be particularly effective. The traditional form of art museum, with its sculptures and itineraries, is here combined with a unique natural environment where it is possible to observe underwater flora and fauna and practice snorkeling and scuba diving. Furthermore, thanks to the *Raft of Lampedusa* and its cement migrants, the visit is presented and perceived as an educational and social activity enhancing awareness. An official narrative about its ecological value completes this approach. According to the municipal web-pages, the museum "has been conceived as a place to promote education and preserve and protect the marine and natural environment as an integral part of the system of human values." Furthermore, with its pH-neutral concrete sculptures, "it will help the marine biomass flourish and facilitate the reproduction of species on the island." The official narrative goes beyond politics and history through mythology and an elegant bit of New Age culture: the artist "has created mysterious underwater worlds" and has entered a longstanding tradition since "Greek mythology already used the ocean as a metaphor for the origins of humanity, embryonic waters, where gods such as Zeus and Aphrodite were born." In brief, the museum shows "a connection between humans and nature, present in the work of the artist, with a romantic and apocalyptic touch that questions our future."[35] But we cannot forget that, in this museum, everything (culture, education, sport, ecology, ethics, and politics) is part of a leisure experience. Visiting a museum by diving with masks and fins is fun. Summing up, this museum offers an experience that satisfies the emotional and sensorial expectations of today's tourism and is a good example of the present societal "liquidity" (a perfect word).

Yet, on TripAdvisor, the museum is not particularly well-rated: visiting it is only the nineteenth of the thirty-six "things to do in Playa Blanca." As often happens, despite government support, the museum is not sufficiently advertised. Furthermore, the best way to visit it is by scuba diving, which requires specific certificates and the services of a diving center, with additional costs. The comments published on TripAdvisor form an interesting document.[36] According to them, the museum is an "original" experience conveying pleasure and bewilderment at the same time, because of the intriguing character of the underwater sculptures, but most visitors seem to appreciate its natural aspects more than its artistic ones. Some of them affirm that the visit is "superb" since it entails a "discovery of an unreal world" where flora and fauna have already begun to cover the statues, and one maintains that it is "impressive" since "life seizes the sculptures, making alive something inert." Very few comments concern its sociopolitical values and make reference to the refugee crisis. Most visitors are surprised but not moved. The museum seems to create emotion but not awareness.

In fact, emotions are becoming a filter through which we read reality. This tendency has been enhanced by the weakening of historical consciousness in Western societies (and their educational systems). An emotional approach is overcoming and replacing historical and political knowledge, paving the way for an effective supranational language, suited to the new global context. In a liquid society, where traditional values and strong institutions have been undermined or have become unreliable, emotions seem to be the last solid certainty.

The media (TV programs, journals, films, social networks, and electronic games) are continually bombarding us with crude images of violence, death, destruction, and despair. Thus, we have become inured to such images and do not react to them with adequate passion. Alan's photo was exceptional in that it was able to breach this wall while thousands of other images are not. The *Raft of Lampedusa* on the seabed of Lanzarote is one of the many images related to the migrant crisis and, despite its disquieting aspect, remains only a sculpture.

The Lanzarote exhibition is a museum and a tourist experience, two realities that transform the relationships between subjects and objects. Death is institutionally present in museums, where it is elegantly crystallized and transformed into a harmless educational or entertainment tool. *The Raft of Lampedusa* is a museum item and, unlike mummies and skeletons, is only a concrete artifact, though artistically shaped.

As for tourism, the problem is more complex. In an initiatory context, death is an important element that strengthens the experience: it creates an effective liminal situation where tourism can be carried out satisfactorily. Death is otherness in time and space. Thus, it marks the difference between the tourist and the ordinary context.

Archaeological tourism is constitutively based on this fact: archaeological sites are usually gated spaces of death, where it is possible to come into contact with cultural, spatial, and temporal otherness. Yet, as in a rite of passage, this temporary contact with otherness helps us to define our identity. The diffusion of edutainment and even mere entertainment on archaeological sites have altered this situation, anchoring the past in the present, with its consumption initiatives related to food, shopping, and special events.

This change is balanced by other pursuits. Dark tourism (including visits to concentration camps and reenactments of bloody events) can convey this need for otherness and even voyeurism. But tourism is fundamentally a leisure activity and metabolizes death and otherness, making them socially acceptable forms of pleasure and entertainment mediated by culture and education.

Migration and Tourism on Lampedusa

For many years a tiny Italian island, Lampedusa, was obliged to face a huge number of migrant arrivals. Its geographic location has transformed it into an important point of transit for people trying to reach Europe from Africa. But, despite the short distance, the journey is not easy at all and over the years many thousands of migrants have lost their lives attempting to cross that stretch of sea.

Lampedusa has been variously described as the island of "emergency" and "risk" or the island of "hope" and "hospitality." According to the different narratives, migrants and refugees have been depicted as either "invaders" to be turned away or "victims" to be helped and welcomed.[37] The island has become a stage where the local and national stakeholders perform their "show of the border."[38]

Its seclusion has contributed to defining the image of the island, which already has a longstanding history of political isolation. It once belonged to a Sicilian family, the Tomasi. In 1667, the king of Spain bestowed the title of prince on one of its members, an ancestor of Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, the author of the well-known historical novel *Il Gattopardo* (*The Leopard*). Later, the island was colonized by small groups of Maltese, British, and French settlers. In 1843, it was sold to the king of the Two Sicilies (the union of the previous kingdoms of Sicily and Naples), which was the largest Italian state before the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy, which it joined in 1861.[39] During the Italian conquest of Libya, it was used as a deportation center for war prisoners, and, during the Fascist regime, it became a confinement place for political opponents, homosexuals, spies, and Jews. Tourism developed quite recently but rapidly: in 1967 it received only seven hundred tourists and in 2011 about fifty-two thousand.

Islands are special places in Western culture. Since the time of the ancient Greeks, they have been regarded as liminal spaces (often inhabited by sirens, sorcerers, enchantresses, and monsters), marked by otherness and, therefore, ideal for ritual marginality. Modern tourism has inherited this view and has long used them for a successful diversion from everyday life. Tropical islands, which entered our imagery in the colonial age, were inserted into this system

of ideas, which, because of their alleged primitiveness, makes them a sort of "lost paradise."[40] Also the official narrative by the Italian authorities, who tend to suggest that the present migration problems are confined to Lampedusa, tends to crystallize it in its geographic identity, making it something "other" from Italy and Europe. In contrast, Pope Francis, during his visit to the island, denounced this confusion of "geographic and existential periphery."[41]

Nonetheless, Lampedusa has witnessed periods of great national and international attention and periods of total oblivion; hence, it was defined as "the island that exists and does not exist."[42] But migration waves and shipwrecks have affected it deeply. Many of its inhabitants have been involved in rescue and first-aid activities: a generous assistance for which in 2004 its population was awarded the gold medal for civilian merit and in 2014 a nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize. In 2017, its then mayor, Giusi Nicolini, together with a European NGO, received the UNESCO Peace Prize for her commitment to the cause of migrants. This prize (officially called the Félix Houphouët-Boigny Prize) had been previously granted to internationally renowned personalities such as Nelson Mandela, Yasser Arafat, Shimon Peres, and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. The choice of recipients for 2017 confirms the international visibility achieved by the island and its inclusion in the current global trends. Despite these successes (or perhaps because of them), Nicolini was soundly defeated in the local election in May 11, 2017.

The tourist economy of Lampedusa was initially seriously affected by the emergency and its media coverage. Compared with six thousand residents, eleven thousand migrants arrived in 2007, thirty-one thousand in 2008, and fifty-two thousand in 2011. The island hosted up to five thousand migrants at a time. This influx caused a remarkable decrease (about 30 percent) in the number of tourist arrivals and a shortage of water (which, strangely, does not occur when the island is crowded with thousands of tourists).

For many years, local authorities and stakeholders have been divided between two different stances: one minimizes the number of migrant arrivals and denies the existence of a state of emergency in order to defend the tourist appeal of the island; the other denounces an increasingly unsustainable situation in order to get more support from the state.

A pivotal element of today's Lampedusa is the migrant First Aid and Reception Center (Centro di Soccorso e di Prima Accoglienza: CSPA), which opened in 1998 but has passed through various names, functions, and kinds of management. With the continual arrival of migrants and the numerous shipwrecks, this center has deeply affected the image of the island, which was increasingly perceived as a place marked by danger, violence, and death: a remarkable problem for an island largely living off tourism.

Many observers have remarked on the "ambiguous" and "opaque" behavior of the national authorities on Lampedusa. In particular, they have pointed out that it is not clear whether the function of the center is to provide hospitality to the migrants or detain them before their expulsion.[43] This situation persists, as the parish priest of Lampedusa confirmed when I interviewed him in September 2016. The pope himself later claimed that many of Europe's holding centers for migrants and refugees were really only "concentration camps."[44]

In 2011, a reporter entered the center disguised as a migrant and described the poor condition of the place, hosting up to 2,500 people though it was built for 239. In 2013, a national TV network broadcast a video, allegedly shot by one of its guests, showing a brutal disinfestation against scabies, with naked migrants doused with water from hydrants in the open air in the middle of winter. This "concentration camp practice," as mayor Nicolini defined it, aroused sharp criticisms, which induced the authorities to modify the rules.[45]

Yet life inside the migrant centers remains miserable and unsatisfactory, to put it mildly. In 2016, a journalist denounced the presence of "Nigerian gangsters" inside the Reception Center for Asylum Seekers (Centro di Accoglienza per Richiedenti Asilo: CARA) in Borgo Mezzanone, near Foggia (Apulia), where, at night, young girls were taken away to work as

prostitutes and, during the day, boys were forced to work in agriculture as underpaid laborers.[46] In 2017, similar facts were discovered in two structures of the St. Lucy Center of Extraordinary Reception (Centro di Accoglienza Straordinaria: CAS), in Spezzano Piccolo and Camigliatello Silano, near Cosenza (Calabria), where fourteen people, including managers, were arrested.[47] Some weeks later in Isola Capo Rizzuto, near Crotone (Calabria), where a confraternity of alleged Roman Catholic orientation manages the largest CARA in Europe, sixty-eight people were arrested for aggravated fraud, extortion, and other offenses carried out in association with a local criminal organization.[48] These cases have spread the image of these centers as alien places where anything is possible.

A turning point in the global awareness of the refugee crisis and in the construction of the image of Lampedusa was marked by the unexpected visit of the pope in July 2013. Significantly, he decided to inaugurate his pontificate by visiting the island, where he delivered a tough message against the "globalization of indifference."[49] That performance was consistent with the stage character assumed by the island and was probably the first global event to take place on it. The arrival of the pope put Lampedusa in the spotlight not as a secluded place far away from Europe and its civilization and embroiled in Italian quarrels but as a challenging political and ethical space.

Some months later, another event had created a resounding echo, also because of the recent visit by the pope. On October 3, not far from the Rabbit Beach, the most photographed tourist place on the island, there was the earlier-mentioned shipwreck with 366 fatalities. It was a shocking fact, all the more so because it happened near a shore much loved by tourists, which that very year had received the TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice Award for "the most beautiful beach in the world."

Thanks to that tragedy and the subsequent discussions, many Italians recognized the drama of these voyages, already stigmatized by the pope, and the awkwardness of a place where leisure and tragedy coexist. The event enhanced the awareness of the migrant crisis in the whole of Europe and led to advocating a new European policy to rescue and assist the migrants.

That tragedy became a sort of symbol: in 2016, in Italy, October 3 was proclaimed the "National Day for the Memory of Migrant Victims of the Sea." According to its sponsor in the Senate, the bill was "born from the need to preserve the remembrance of that shipwreck in the collective memory of the country."[50]

The official celebrations of October 3 show the growth and consolidation of a new heritage system connected with the recent migration flows. It is a kind of "civil religion," to repeat the expression used by Emilio Gentile to define the secular liturgies introduced by the Fascist regime.[51] Though seemingly irreverent, this definition accords with the complex official narrative the state is trying to construct about its management of the crisis and its professed international role as a leader in this field. By shaping and controlling the collective awareness of the refugee tragedy, the state shows its strength as an educational agency: a partially postpolitical substitute for its more controversial military presence. But the celebration of its role in the crisis also concerns its traditional military functions: border controls, navy and army patrols, police activities, and the organization and control of migrant centers. And, as for any official event, it implies conferences, inaugurations, and political speeches.

This is fertile ground for exhibitions and art installations, films and documentaries, books and events. They convey the "awareness" on which the national celebrations are based, obtain political and financial support quite easily, and are widely advertised by the media, which are equally involved. Official mourning transforms tragedy into big business.

Lampedusa, before and beside its exhibition of migrants' relics, had other memorials to migrants and death. The most spectacular is the *Gate of Lampedusa—Gate of Europe*, which was inaugurated in 2008: a five-meter high and three-meter wide ceramic and iron work designed by a famous Italian artist, Mimmo Paladino (Fig. 3). It was meant to be a "monument"

and a "symbol" recalling "the inhumane death of migrants drowned or missing at sea, which we have passively witnessed," and to transmit its memory to future generations.[52] It is a giant gate open to the Mediterranean Sea, indicating the role of the island as an entrance to Europe. It gives visual substance to the idea of Lampedusa as a border and, at the same time, transforms the land beyond it into a stage. Not by chance, it has become the favorite place for official photos of participants in social and political events on the island, including the recent summit of the police chiefs from nine Mediterranean countries. Even Matteo Salvini, leader of the Northern League, a political movement with a strong anti-immigration stance, posed in front of it for the photographers.

Figure 3. The *Gate of Lampedusa—Gate of Europe*
by Mimmo Paladino. (Photo by Marxiano Melotti.)

After years of struggles, fears, and controversies, the situation on Lampedusa now seems to have become quieter. Most migrants rescued by Italian navy ships are not disembarked on the island but are accompanied to other Italian ports. Those landing here are usually received before sunrise, when tourists are still sleeping, and are immediately transported to the CSPA, where in principle they should remain for no more than seventy-two hours (though in fact many of them remain much longer). Formally they are not prisoners; nevertheless, they are confined inside it.

Anyway, the island is now efficiently "sanitized" and the spaces of residents and tourists are mostly migrant-free. Some hotel owners even promised free hospitality to their guests if they had seen migrants around the island. Visitors see only the "black" cultural mediators working in the reception center, as well as the "black" and "Moroccan" hawkers on the beaches. Though once migrants themselves, they are no longer perceived as dangerous aliens but are considered part of the tourist landscape. The presence of migrants and refugees is now mainly latent and implicit. Tourists are aware of it and take for granted their ghostly existence.

A recent tourist guidebook describes the natural features of the island and its cultural heritage and recent history, with particular attention to the arrival of migrants and refugees.[53] It also points out the social commitment of NGOs, cultural associations, and ordinary citizens.

The October 3 shipwreck, the CSPA, and the activities of Frontex (the agency in charge of the control of EU borders) are also presented as parts of the island's new heritage.

This book aims at helping visitors "to see, reflect and understand, as well as to appreciate the beauty, rarity and value of the places and the cordiality and friendliness of the inhabitants." It is part of a project of enhancement of sustainable forms of tourism on the island, with "responsible" tours focused on the recognition of its identity aspects and the understanding of its material and immaterial heritage, not avoiding "problems and critical issues."[54]

This interesting approach hints at a new interaction between tourism and social issues on Lampedusa and reveals the new use of migration in tourist dynamics. By including the CSPA (though not a tourist place and not open to visits) among the points of interest of the island, it gives visibility to something that is generally outside the tourist gaze. This process leads to a normalization of the exception: the CSPA becomes part of the tourist landscape.

Lampedusa and the Culture Industry of Migration

The refugee crisis has fostered a strange phenomenon: the development of exhibitions, art installations, films, and glossy TV series inspired by migration. In such a context, Lampedusa has become a stage not only for political narratives but for creative and artistic activities destined to shape its image. The visit of the pope enhanced this development by making the island a symbol of a global tragedy.

It is an increasing and self-perpetuating process. "Do-goodism" is an effective media language as well as a lucrative business. It implies a transpolitical or postpolitical attitude, based on emotions, a sense of guilt, and voyeurism, in a sector that private and public institutions, on national and international levels, seem disposed to fund and support.

The Italian film industry played an important role in this trend. The first director to recall is Emanuele Crialese. His film *Respiro* (2002), which was awarded the Grand Prix Semaine de la Critique at the 2002 Cannes Film Festival, depicts the magic and secluded culture of Lampedusa, according to the mythical model of islands' otherness. His next film, *Nuovo Mondo* (2006), which won the Silver Lion–Rivelazione at the 2006 Venice Film Festival, is about the Sicilian migration to the United States in the early twentieth century. Another of his films, *Terraferma* (2011), which was awarded the Silver Lion–Gran Premio della Giuria at the 2011 Venice Film Festival, deals with the surreal interactions between inhabitants, tourists, migrants, and civil servants on Lampedusa, though the island is not explicitly mentioned. The film shows the oddity of postmodern spaces where the traditional fishing culture is challenged by the new tourist industry and the old law of the sea, obliging fishermen to help people in danger. Fishermen at sea no longer "catch" fish; they catch shipwrecked migrants; fishing boats are abandoned or converted to tourist use; former fishermen now "catch tourists" on the island; happy tourists sunbathe on the beaches where shipwrecked migrants end up; inhabitants deny the evidence of migrant arrivals to save the tourist activities.

Terraferma, with its sharp division between tourists (in search of leisure and using boats for fun) and migrants and refugees (in search of safety and using boats to flee hunger and war), is probably the best visual portrayal of the dichotomy described by Bauman, who, in contrast to the vanishing boundaries between different experiences in the "liquid society," points out the existence of two distinct groups of travelers: those "high up," who travel for pleasure in an attractive world, and those "low down," who flee an inhospitable world as "drifting vagabonds."[55] Bauman denounces the sad condition of the latter, "rubbish bins for the tourist filth," and the practice of tourism, regarded as intrinsically connected with exploitation, inequality, and discrimination.[56]

The harsh images of *Terraferma* clearly show this divide and invite the audience to reflect on this situation. It entered (and kindled) the national debate about the refugee crisis and its management. Yet, despite its social commitment, this film, with *Respiro*, helped to construct a

"staged authenticity" for Lampedusa: a beautiful and primitive paradise, undermined by mass tourism, consumerism, and the unfair policies of a distant state.

We must also mention an important documentary by Gianfranco Rosi, *Fuocoammare* (2016), which was awarded the Golden Bear at the 2016 Berlin Film Festival and was then chosen to represent Italy at the 2017 Academy Awards, the so-called Oscar prizes (it was nominated but not awarded). It combines scenes of the everyday life of an ordinary family of Lampedusa with stories of migrants and shipwrecks narrated by the real municipal doctor, Pietro Bartólo, involved in rescue and first-aid activities. It is a strange film where reality acquires a fictional aspect. The migrant arrivals, the CSPA, and the island itself seem to be part of a fairy tale but the words of the doctor and the evidence he provides about women in labor and children dying ("How is it possible to become inured to this fact?") sustain the film in the harshness of the actual world. The then–Italian premier Matteo Renzi gave a DVD of the film to his European colleagues with these words: "It describes the magic of welcoming."[57] The drama of migration, narrated through fine images, becomes something "magical" and enters the current political narrative.

The style of this film was harshly blamed by a local group concerned with the most critical issues of the island. It remarked that its emotional images do not go below the surface of the problems and do not "break the leaden coffin where migrant issues are sealed by the main sources of information." It also denounced the "lyrical" representation of the "military power," which was "nearly presented as an autonomous protagonist."[58]

The Italian national broadcasting corporation, Rai, in 2016 organized its annual Prix Italia on Lampedusa. This prize, founded in 1948, is probably the most prestigious international competition aimed at promoting high quality, creativity, and innovation in radio and television programs.[59] It is usually held in important tourist resorts, with a touch of international glamor, in order to convey a winning image of Italy (its first edition took place in Capri). Like other similar events, it is connected with the local policies of urban marketing and tourist branding. Its location on Lampedusa was obviously meant to raise "awareness" about the refugee crisis. Yet, like the Cinema for Peace in Berlin, Prix Italia is mainly an international glossy "event": it is hosted in fashionable venues and implies the presence of media stars, gossipy starlets, sophisticated *maîtres à penser*, and political and economic figures. And it is, first and foremost, a business occasion where media products are sold and bought.

Prix Italia on Lampedusa was the perfect stage on which to present the RAI miniseries *Lampedusa* (2016), focused on the refugee crisis. But, as happened with Ai Weiwei's life jackets and emergency blankets at the Berlin gala dinner, the stories of migrant shipwrecks and rescue attempts were used to give a touch of social concern to a fashionable event.

RAI has considerable experience in presenting migration and multicultural issues. Its talk shows and educational programs have helped to create a new awareness, but they have also contributed to typifying and crystallizing the problems, even in contrast to authors' intentions.[60] Moreover, their prevailing rhetorical approach and their marginal position in the broadcasting schedule seem to indicate that they were due to an intention of political correctness rather than real social concern.

The widely viewed and successful miniseries was something else. It showed migration from the point of view of navy and police personnel, NGO workers, volunteers, and ordinary citizens. History was filtered through exciting individual stories, interpreted by actors well-known for their presence in blockbusting TV series. The drama of migrants was the background of a love story between an official of the coast guard, who saves migrants at sea, and a pretty female doctor, who takes care of them in the reception center. Its postmodern approach was evident, since it was shot "in the place housing one of the largest and most crowded migrant reception centers in Europe."[61] To make the series more authentic, some scenes were shot with real migrants: they were even asked to reenact their landing on the ground. Even the numbers

of the crisis were boosted as marketing tools. Yet *Lampedusa* marked a milestone in RAI's interest in migration. After many years of talk shows and educational programs, its new approach was almost a revolution.

In short, the Mediterranean migrant crisis is slowly entering the productive system of the European cultural and media industry. Among the many examples, we can recall the documentary essay *Sea Sorrow* (2017), which marked the debut as film director of the then eighty-year-old British actress and political activist Vanessa Redgrave. At first glance, its title seems an echo of Gianfranco Rosi's *Fuocammare* (*Fire at Sea*), but actually it is a quotation from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, where Prospero tells his daughter the history of their "sea sorrow" and how they came to be exiles on a remote island. The film has valuable insight, sincerity, and force but, when it was presented at the Cannes Film Festival, it did not score heavily in terms of the art and craft of film making. The following year, however, Vanessa Redgrave received the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement at the 75th Venice International Film Festival.

A Museum of Trust and Dialogue for the Mediterranean

In this context Lampedusa hosted a special exhibition intended to enhance the awareness of the crisis. This exhibition, entitled "Toward the Museum of Trust and Dialogue for the Mediterranean," was presented as the first step of a planned transnational and mobile intercultural museum. It took place from June 3 to October 3, 2016, in the small archaeological museum of the island, which was renovated and temporarily reopened for the occasion. It was promoted by the Municipal Council, with the October 3 Committee, a local association willing to keep alive the memory of the boat disaster, and First Social Life, a national organization that specializes in events with large media appeal. It was supported by some major Italian institutions, such as the Presidency of the Republic, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and was overseen by an important scientific board including representatives of the museums involved.

The exhibition assembled pieces from several Mediterranean museums: the European and Mediterranean Civilizations Museum (Marseille), the National Bardo Museum (Tunis), the Regional Archaeological Museum of Sicily (Palermo), the Civic Museum Correr (Venice), and the Uffizi Gallery (Florence). The items displayed had to show the time-honored history of the various Mediterranean civilizations and their interconnections. The museum of Marseille lent a collection of sculptures made with bread and objects related to salt from the whole Mediterranean area to recall some Mediterranean rites, beliefs, and practices connected to these two basic elements of human life. The Venice museum lent some Renaissance geographical and nautical maps and astronomical instruments, to document the close relationship between Arab and European cultures in navigation and trade. The museum of Palermo lent a fine head of Hades, the Greek god of the Underworld, to represent the role of death in the ancient Mediterranean cults. The museum of Tunis lent a Greco-Phoenician sculpture, to represent the interrelationships among the ancient Mediterranean countries.

The highlight of the exhibition was *L'Amorino dormiente* (*Sleeping Cupid*) by Caravaggio (1608), lent by the Uffizi. This famous painting was chosen (and largely used) as a prefiguration of the picture of the corpse of Alan Kurdi. The intention was to create a link between the painting and the photo: a masterpiece of the Renaissance and an image of the present tragedy; art fiction and real life; an object of the European cultural and tourist gaze and one related to the cursory and distracted gaze of today's information society.

There was also a poignant display of some objects belonging to migrants who died en route to Sicily. The musealization and subsequent touristization of tragedies is always a delicate and controversial operation; but dark tourism exists and is increasingly popular.[62] This fact

confirms the importance of death in cultural experiences. [63] Yet, beyond the possible appreciable purpose of raising awareness, the use of death always entails serious risks, including its commodification. The Mediterranean refugee crisis offers considerable opportunities for business and seems to be less disturbing than other European tragedies. Nonetheless, the words that the noted Holocaust survivor and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Elie Wiesel used to refer to the Shoah apply perfectly to the Mediterranean drama: there is an urgent need for museums of learning and memory since "forgetting the victims would mean having them die again."[64]

These museums ought to go beyond mere emotions. The Lampedusa exhibition, however, seemed unable to do so: most items were linked to chronicle rather than history and were chosen for their relation to events widely covered by the media, such as the October 3 shipwreck. According to the caption on a showcase, they attest to "the same story told in the documentary *Fuocoammare*." This reference could help visitors to grasp the value of the pieces and remember them, but it also revealed the difficulty of writing the history of the present and transferring it to the world of tourism. An exhibition that remains within the realm of breaking news, emotions, and film culture may even be successful but hardly fosters real and lasting awareness.

The exhibition had a mainly political aim: raising awareness not only of migration but of terrorism. The Italian minister of culture, Dario Franceschini, claimed that Caravaggio's sleeping Cupid recalled "little Alan, lying lifeless on a Turkish beach" and the items from the Bardo Museum reminded us of the "cowardly terrorist act" that was carried out in the previous year "on one of the symbolic places of the Mediterranean."[65]

Through Caravaggio, little Alan came back. The toddler (or, rather, his image) had become an icon, to be used and exploited to define emotional narratives. During the preparation of the exhibition, some websites related to the event juxtaposed Caravaggio's painting and Alan's photo. As happened for Ai Weiwei's installations in Berlin, Vienna, and Florence, an "old" example of European heritage was used to create a contrast with a "new" sociopolitical issue. In this case, only the ancient element (the painting) was displayed, but the contemporary one (the photograph), thanks to its strong iconic value (emphasized by the press office before the exhibition and many speakers at its opening), was powerfully present.

Something was lacking, however, in the photograph itself, for it referred to an absent body. Thus, the child in the painting and the child in the photo had the same ontological status and the painting appeared as the "double" of both of them. Thus, the painting of a child replaced the missing corpse of another.

The curator of the Uffizi, Eike D. Schmidt, strove to create a direct relationship between Caravaggio and the dead child: also, the Italian painter was a castaway and met his death on a beach. Schmidt was aware of the dangerous relationship between the photo and the painting, but he thought that this "abstract or even blasphemous" connection was appropriate since "art can lead us to reflect on our being capable of solidarity."[66] Completing his journey in Western imagery, Alan became an artistic and political icon.

The exhibition had another poignant highlight: two little display cases with personal belongings of migrants who had died during their trip: among them, a small car, a boy's toy, some small pieces of jewelry; a passport, some family photographs, and some religious images related to a Christian background, probably to remind visitors that not all the victims were Muslim (Fig. 4). The objects were provided by the Italian Ministry of the Interior, the Tribunal, and the police of Palermo. The captions were clear and direct: "What remains—personal belongings of 52 people who died suffocated in the hold of a wooden vessel during the journey across the Mediterranean."[67] Here we may see the difficult and often disturbing point of contact between two different levels, which usually have their own fruition: chronicle and history. The display cases give archaeological dignity to these objects, transforming them into relics of the

past. But they are part of an on-going process, deeply rooted in news and everyday culture. The text continues with a meaningful phrase: "This is the same story told in the documentary *Fuocoammare*." The duality of the items, between chronicle and history, is crystallized in an ambiguous third level: story. Here present film culture shows its power of myth building and storytelling, which, like archaeology and museums, helps to transform voyeurism into a socially acceptable practice. At the same time there is an evident process of banalization of history, in which a real tragedy, the shipwreck, is transformed into (and presented as) a mere subject of a famous documentary.

A second display case similarly exhibited items from the shipwreck of October 3, 2013, which, owing to its media impact, was one of the main elements that have constructed the image of Lampedusa.

Figure 4. Relics of dead migrants displayed at the exhibition *Toward a Museum of Trust and Dialogue*, Lampedusa, 2016. (Photo by M. Melotti.)

The local association Askavusa was very critical of this exhibition. They claimed it was an alien project, disconnected from the local space and culture: "It has apparently no contact with the reality of the place, with its history and contradictions."[68] For its part, some years before, Askavusa displayed some items belonging to migrants (including music tapes, bottles, pots for couscous, shaving-brushes, kohl, and even a life jacket), deliberately "without texts or explanations": "Looking at the exhibits is like a punch on the jaw."[69] This initiative was undoubtedly interesting: a way to give consistency to migrants' material and immaterial heritage and to create new heritage or, rather, to give a museum existence to a new invisible cultural heritage. Later they renamed their exhibition *PortoM*, where *M* stands for Mediterranean, migration, memory, museum, and also sea (in Italian *mare*). It was something quite different from the Museum of Trust. In fact, this great exhibition, organized by big institutions, was only minimally connected with the territory and aimed at entering national narratives. But it had its merits: its use of the belongings of shipwrecked migrants as archaeological items wrote the history of the place. Thus, despite its limits, it marked an

important step in the relationship between society and heritage, social issues and museums, the culture industry and exploitation, awareness and rhetoric. It reflected the fluidity and vitality of a cultural system capable of metabolizing death and tragedy and transforming them into art and education, but also capable of using voyeurism to enhance tourism and the culture industry.

As for tourism, the exhibition was an interesting litmus paper. Is it possible to induce tourists to reflect seriously during their holidays? Is it possible to use museums to raise consciousness about the refugee crisis while migrants continue to arrive? One of the duties of a museum is to create awareness but in this respect the exhibition was not successful. In accord with its political aim, it was widely advertised in the national press but not enough on the island. The local community, after its glossy opening, almost completely ignored it. I spoke with many inhabitants but none of them had visited it. Even some people working in local cultural activities criticized it: "it was organized by the continent"; "it does not show our heritage but pays to display alien items"; "residents were not involved in its scientific organization"; "residents were not consulted"; "only people from outside work at it." The members of Askavusa went even further. According to them, the exhibition had "all the characteristics of a colonial museum imposed from above" and its approach to migration was inspired by conventional ideas.[70]

In contrast, the few visitors were favorably impressed and left positive comments in its guestbook, though mostly of an emotional kind. But, as I could personally observe, many tourists passed in front of the exhibition without noticing it or, after being informed that to visit it they had to pay for a ticket, they preferred to either visit only its admission-free general part or not even enter the museum. The bars and restaurants nearby were full. Awareness works better with a free ticket and, perhaps, with an aperitif.
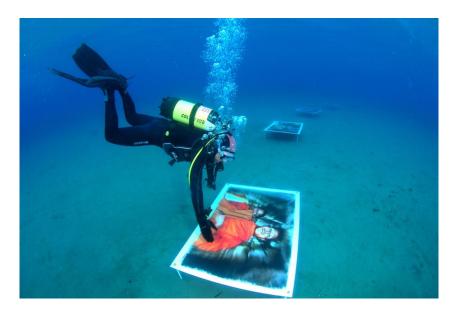

Figure 5. Underwater photo exhibition in Lampedusa. (Courtesy of Salvo Galano.)

That summer, the island hosted another exhibition related to migration: a photographer, Salvo Galano, displayed twelve portraits showing "positive stories of migration" four meters under the sea, in a tourist cove (Fig. 5).[71] Each portrait represented one of the twelve stars in the EU flag (the exhibition was called "StarS"): a rather rhetorical way to show the possible integration of migrants in Europe. This time migration was not presented as a sinister phenomenon. Unlike other art works (such as Ai Weiwei's installations in Berlin, Vienna, and Florence, Taylor's sculptures in Lanzarote, and the exhibition in the museum of Lampedusa),

Galano's exhibition used migration neither to suggest suffering nor to appeal to dark tourism. His migrants were smiling and, though under the sea, seemed to have a future.

Galano's exhibition, however, like Taylor's, was affected by its environment. The stillness and silence of the underwater location, the whiteness of the seabed, and the soft green slime on its large horizontal plates created a spectral atmosphere. The plates with a photo, name, and nationality of the migrants portrayed seemed to be tombstones in a quiet and fine cemetery, redefining the sense of the installation: despite its "positive" orientation, it acquired a dark meaning, confirming the close connection of such exhibitions to cemeteries and dark tourism.

Cemeteries, Boats, and Crosses: From the Sea to Museums

Between cemeteries, memories, and the gaze of tourists there is a close relationship. Cemeteries are intrinsically based on death and are usually meant to create memory and awareness. Like the archaeological sites, they visualize the past and maintain it as part of the present. Tourist experience is based on the gaze and usually enters the past through archaeological sites and cemeteries, which offer a soft gate to death and history.

Lampedusa has its own cemetery, an "expression of the huge tragedy that affects it"; though, since it did not anticipate mass migration, for many years Lampedusa just got "rid of the corpses of migrants."[72] Initially, the cemetery was only a sort of mass grave with crosses placed by its custodian of his own will. In 2007, the then-mayor reorganized it, marking the graves with an odd indication of the color of the dead. Nicolini, when she was mayor (2012–2017), improved it with plaques recording the shipwrecks that brought those corpses without names into the cemetery. Once again, storytelling was a way to create awareness, history, and heritage: the graves became monuments. According to her, this cemetery is now an essential element to understanding the island and should become a place of pilgrimage and a tourist must-see, like the mausoleum in Marzabotto, the village near Bologna that witnessed one of the worst massacres of civilians in Italy.[73]

This reference to a Nazi slaughter seems to be due to the wish to support her proposal by inserting the "new" migrant tragedies into an "old" category of distressing events deeply embedded in the Western educational and cultural system. The inclusion of the migrant cemetery in tourist itineraries is regarded as an effective way of building heritage by updating the history of the island and the list of its monuments. Furthermore, it could encourage tourists and residents to look at migration as a phenomenon related to history and not only to the news headlines and could help them accept migration as one of the tourist attractions of the island. But, as usual, this mix of awareness, heritage, and tourism is questionable and difficult to manage.

Nicolini also proposed the reuse of the migrant boats, which, after their arrival, are sequestered and stacked near the harbor, waiting to be demolished. Their reuse could be a good way of saving money and "keeping memory alive," she declared, but building tourist boats with them could appear improper.

The most interesting reuse of migrant boats was probably made by a local carpenter, Francesco Tuccio, who in 2009 built a large cross from the pieces of one of them that had been wrecked near Lampedusa. The strength and simplicity of that cross appealed to Pope Francis, who, during his visit to the island, used it in his mass in the harbor. Thanks to media coverage, it also appealed to Neil MacGregor, then curator of the British Museum, one of the most authoritative museums in the world. He requested a similar cross for his museum. The work, the last acquisition he made for that museum, is now displayed with this description: "2015 A.D. Wooden cross of Latin type made from pieces of a boat that was wrecked off the coast of Lampedusa, Italy, on October 11, 2013" (with 268 people missed). There is also a poignant story, a good example of myth-making: "Mr. Tuccio, after meeting in the church on Lampedusa

some of the survivors, who were Eritrean Christians, was moved by their plight but felt frustrated that he could not make a difference to their situation. The best he could do was to use his skills to fashion each of them a cross from the wreckage of the boat as a reflection on their salvation from the sea and hope for the future."[74] This text shows the quality of that museum and the insight and competence of its curator. The process of musealization, the construction of a masterpiece, and the creation of new heritage are managed carefully and do not kowtow to the media. At the same time, as stated by the museum itself, we see how this new heritage and these migration narratives can help a great national museum to maintain its universal value: "It is essential that the museum continues to collect objects that reflect contemporary culture in order to ensure the collection remains dynamic and reflects the world as it is."[75]

On April 2014, one year after his visit to Lampedusa, the pope blessed the original cross in Rome, inviting the believers to carry it in pilgrimage "everywhere." During the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, on the day of the "Jubilee of the Migrants" (January 17, 2016), it was displayed in St. Peter's Basilica. It had already been carried over the Alps (Fig. 6) and was later taken to many towns, including Rimini (in 2016), during the annual meeting "Friendship among the Peoples," organized by the ecclesiastical movement Communion and Liberation; York (in 2016), where it was displayed in the Baptistery of St. Wilfrid's Catholic Church; and Barcelona (in 2017), where it was exhibited at the expiatory temple Sagrada Familia.

Figure 6. Lampedusa cross on Monte Rosa, Italian Alps. (Courtesy of Casa dello Spirito e delle Arti.)

For his part, the pope gave the church of Lampedusa the cross that Raul Castro had offered him during his visit to Cuba in 2015. That cross was made by Alexis Lava Machado, a Cuban artist deeply concerned about the odyssey of migrants going to sea in search of a future. It was formed with simple oars and had a Christ sculpted in Baroque style, like the crosses once made by the slaves. The oars, like the wooden pieces of the migrant boats, tell stories of work, travel, migration, and suffering (Fig. 7).

Figure 7. Cross made with oars. Art work by A. Lava Machado. presented by Raul Castro to Pope Francis. Now in the parish church of Lampedusa. (Photo by M. Melotti.)

Do-goodism related to migration has become a main political theme. In this context, the mayor of Milan, Giuseppe Sala, recently requested a migrant boat, to be exhibited in Milan's largest cemetery. Milan is a big city, which regards itself as the moral and economic capital of the country and the "only European town in Italy." Hence its migrant boat also had to be special. Thus Sala strived to obtain the wreck of the most impressive tragedy in recent Mediterranean history: the boat that sank in 2015 with about seven hundred refugees on board.

According to the mayor, that boat would promote the image of Milan as a global city where even cemeteries are multicultural and open to the world. It had to be the focal point of a future "museum of civil rights" and to "give some life" to cemeteries and transform them into tourist spaces.[76] Once again, the material remains of a tragedy are transformed into a symbol, and a relic is used as an educational tool and a tourist highlight.

To understand Sala's idea, it is necessary to remember the importance of memorials in urban marketing and policies. Most European cities have their memorial museums, often connected with the world wars or the Shoah (under its Central Railway Station, Milan has Track 21 memorial space, so named after the platform of the trains to the Nazi concentration camps). In Bologna, the Museum for the Memory of Ustica, which was opened in 2007, exhibits the wreckage of the jetliner that in 1980 was brought down with its eighty-one passengers near that island. Between civil awareness, dark tourism, and urban competition, the future museum in Milan with its imposing migrant boat is destined to become a worthy competitor of the Bologna museum and its unnerving plane. We must remember that Milan is now crowded with refugees and migrants.

After years of shipwrecks, kilometers of footage, thousands of talk-shows, historic pastoral visits, acrimonious political debates, conflicting narratives, fears, and rhetoric, the Mediterranean migration crisis has acquired a primary status in the collective imagery. Exhibitions, installations, and museums show that it has become part of the art industry itself. It also helps to reshape European cultural heritage. Awareness is often used to cover or justify

this use. We have to recognize, however, that, beyond voyeurism, tourism, and the art industry, such projects help to create awareness. Yet, something is still lacking: the migrants. Ai Weiwei's sophisticated installations with life jackets, emergency blankets, and rubber boats concern but do not involve them. Lanzarote sculptures and Lampedusa photos show them but they are not present. The cross at the British Museum and the wooden boat in Milan tell about their life and death but without them. Migrants have no voice, though this new heritage is built on their behalf. And, in absentia, they remain ghosts.

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