

Empathizing With Migrants: Multimodality and Partnership in Teachers' Professional Development

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The demographics of the Mediterranean islands like Malta have changed drastically in the last 10 years mainly due to migration flows from the south and east. During the scholastic year 2018-2019, Maltese schools had a 12% non-Maltese population overall, but in some coastal areas, this meant an 80% shift to a cohort of non-Maltese students. Teachers have been abruptly faced with the need to adopt multicultural and inclusive pedagogical approaches for which they did not feel they were fully equipped. This article describes the creation of a multimodal video production aimed at filling in this gap. It is based on the Partnership Studies philosophy, proposed and expounded by the anthropologist and social activist Riane Eisler, and on the Blue Option, a cooperative and proactive approach that looks at the “sea” as a space for encounter, understanding, and new intercultural awareness. The video has been tested with two groups of teachers in training, in order to investigate whether, and in what ways, it inspires student-teachers to express empathy with the migrants. Positive results have been extrapolated from the written reflections of the participants.

Keywords: migration, teacher education, aesthetic experience, empathy, multimodality, partnership studies, blue humanities

Introduction

The volume of migration in the Mediterranean has been unprecedented in the last 10 to 15 years or so (Mainwaring, 2014). Malta, an island at the centre of the Mediterranean Sea, has been experiencing a controversy between the rescuers of so-called illegal migrants from the northern shores of Africa, and the guardians of European cultural integrity (*Times of Malta*, 2022). In addition to the migrants that arrive in Malta in terribly overloaded boats, there have also been incentives by the Maltese government to import workers in order to sustain the building and hospitality industries, as well as to fill in thousands of vacancies in the health sector (Camilleri Grima & Mantellato, 2021). This has meant that in most schools in Malta the population increased by up to 12% with non-Maltese learners (National Statistics Office, 2021), at a stage and at a rate when the teachers did not feel prepared for this extent of multicultural and plurilingual phenomenon (Cefai, Keresztes, Galea & Spiteri,

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2019). This article describes an initiative taken in order to provide the professional development of teachers with a tool that promotes empathy with the migrant, and thus reassures teachers, and empowers them, to provide the best possible educational experience to all learners.

Teachers play a key role in transformative education (Raikou, 2016; Wandera, 2016). This change can be brought about by creating an aesthetic and intellectual space and experience for learners (Spaliviero, 2021). There is no doubt that multimodal approaches “can stimulate students’ engagement, and challenge them to extend their perspectives to critically reflect on self and on the world” (Wandera, 2016, p. 323). The project, titled *Bridging the Divide: Partnership and Migration*, consists of a video production involving dance, music, poetry, and land-and sea-scapes, with the ultimate aim of raising awareness, and stimulating empathy, among teachers, about the predicament of the migrants, especially the ones arriving in Malta by sea on overloaded boats from North Africa. This is a transdisciplinary experiment bringing together the views and research work of the authors of this paper, Professor Antoinette Camilleri Grima, from the University of Malta, and Dr. Mattia Mantellato, from the University of Udine (click on this link to watch the full production: <https://youtu.be/ALfBMLKS4LA>).

The methodological framework proposed for this project follows the premises of Riane Eisler’s “Partnership approach” (Eisler, 1988; 1995; 2000; 2002; 2007; 2015; 2017; Eisler & Fry, 2019), an innovative slant that recognises the need for a “cultural transformation” (Eisler, 1988, p. 17) at the heart of societies, in the search for caring, non-dualistic, and peaceful relationships at work, within communities, and amongst ourselves. In a second direction, this project embraces the recently established area of the “blue humanities” (Hau’ofa, 2008; Ingersoll, 2016; Mathieson, 2021) in the acknowledgement of a desirable change towards our perception of water/sea/ocean environments. Indeed, according to the “blue turn” (DeLoughrey & Flores, 2020) archipelagic, coastal and island contexts are privileged spaces for investigating different intercultural behaviours, encounters, and exchanges. Water-spaces and liminal territories between land and sea are creative laboratories in which humans can negotiate and intermix cultural viewpoints, in the hope for a more equitable and respectful world system.

Once the video production was finished, it was shown to two groups of student-teachers who were allowed to respond to it freely, being aided only by a few questions acting as prompts. The video production, and the student-teachers’, and teachers’ reactions are detailed below.

The Multimodal Video Production

From a multimodal point of view, our video production was conceived as a three-fold narrative or story: (i) the temple, (ii) the tower, and (iii) the beach. The idea was that of recalling the movement of a wave, the tidal movement of the Mediterranean Sea. This structure reflects firstly a historical point of view because it begins with a focus on one of the Neolithic temples on the island of Malta. It continues by recalling its different periods of domination through a “dialogue” with one of island’s Towers, to end at the beach, which is connected with the liberating but also threatening power of the sea. In a second perspective, the three videos follow an embodied and corporeal progression highlighted through the choreography, which begins with static and statue-like movements—that are direct reflections of Neolithic statues of the Goddesses that were found in Malta—continuing with the uncertain and unbalanced movements expressed under the prominence of the tower, the symbol of different eras of domination on the island, to end with the fluid and soave gestures by the beach, a place of transition between the safety of the land and the danger of the sea. A few shots from the video are presented in the Appendix.

In the video, the dancer (Mantellato, who is one of the authors of this paper) epitomizes the “migrant”/the

“Other” and at the same time the figure of a European who is reflecting upon his/her Mediterranean heritage or legacy. The performer’s dance represents an embodied dialogue of the migrant with the Maltese landscape and history (see Figures 1 and 2 in the Appendix), the conciliatory exchange that a dispossessed or rejected individual engages with a new and inhospitable land or home. In this perspective, the dance becomes a search for safety, peace, and “roots” (see Figures 3 and 4 in the Appendix). Most of all, the dance highlights and expresses the precarious state in which migrants live and survive once they arrive in Europe (see Figures 5 and 6 in the Appendix). This longing for acceptance and acknowledgment is expressed through repetitive gestures and movements that recall of an embrace, an inconclusive gesture of the arms, and bending of the back, as if the performer wanted to hold onto something or someone. Apart from this ever-recurring sequence, the dance is characterized by movements of balance and imbalance, falls and recoveries, swings and sways in a continuum of gestures that draw from contemporary dance (Adshead-Landsdale & Layson, 1994). Another feature that is discernible in the choreography is the dancer’s barefoot walk. This represents the migrant’s suffering and journey to Europe, the perilous crossing of unknown land—and seascapes in the hope of a better life and future.

Apart from the choreography, our multimodal video contains the audio recording of six literary texts coming from contemporary Maltese writers and poets. The texts were recited both in Maltese and English, because it was our intent to create two versions of the same production. The texts in Maltese were translated into English by one of the present authors (Camilleri Grima), except for Portelli’s (2008), whose publication is bilingual in Maltese and English. The poems deal with the topic of migration, thus echoing the predicament of the migrants, their dangerous journey by sea, and the problematic arrival on land. Another aspect that is tackled is the analogy presented by two of the poets (Ebejer, 2011; Grima, 2017), between modern-day and ancient migrants, in particular the Neolithic occupants of the island of Malta, and later other occupants, all of whom also arrived by sea. The verses create a sense of rejection, desolation and fear, yet they also allow a ray of hope to emerge in between the lines. Our final goal was to make viewers reflect on our “common” European legacy and heritage as peoples of the Mediterranean Sea (Mantellato & Camilleri Grima, 2022).

The music chosen for the video, entitled “Music of the Temples of Malta”, is the work of Charles Camilleri (who was born in 1931 and died in 2009), a Maltese composer of international repute. Camilleri composed a number of works based on folk music and legends of his native Malta. He is particularly well-known for encompassing a wider musical soundscape beyond the Mediterranean, overcoming the constraints of insularity. Camilleri artfully employs intertextuality, i.e. he uses a compositional approach that values the context of where the new is being embedded (Ciantar, 2014). McLachlan (2022) quotes Camilleri as saying, “Paradoxically, we find our way out of historical cul-de-sacs onto the open roads of the future by rediscovering our roots”. Thus, Camilleri’s conceptualisation fitted perfectly with our theme.

The locations were also chosen for their symbolic power. Ta’ Hāgrat Neolithic Temples is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, dating back to 5,000 to 5,300 years ago. It is one of the oldest free-standing monuments of such scale and complexity in the world (see Figures 1 and 2 in the Appendix). It consists of two well-preserved structures, and it is renowned for its monumental doorway and facade. It is the only temple site that is built entirely of local Upper Coralline Limestone. Other features include a bench running along the facade’s length, as well as a courtyard measuring approximately 2.5 m by 4.5 m, surrounded by a raised stone curb. This space, accessible from the entrance corridor of the temple, provides entry to three chambers through megalithic doorways (<https://heritagemalta.org/ta-hagratt/>).

The first section of the video presents the performer standing and interacting with the Neolithic temple, and

therefore with the history of the island of Malta (see Figures 1 and 2 in the Appendix). Mantellato re-produced the gestures and physical embodiments of ancient's female statues that were found in the area, focusing in particular on the bountiful features of the "Sleeping Lady of Malta" (<https://artsandculture.google.com/story/VAWR7KPNk-UDKw>). This is an icon of the Neolithic era and one of the main sources that Riane Eisler employs in order to explain her "Partnership methodology". Indeed, in ancient Mediterranean civilizations, a culture of respect, harmony, and gender-balance attuned centuries-long divisions between men and women, thus establishing a caring and inclusive systems of "partnership" relations in societies. This idea of a new world-order, which is respectful of differences and does not recognize a division between members of the same group, is highlighted in the production by the presence of a girl playing the harp at the side of the entrance of the temple.

From this perspective, the first section of the video emphasizes human fellowship and understanding, which is alluded to also by the poems chosen for this particular fragment. For example, Ebejer's (2011, p. 10) lines set the scene as they speak about "the expression in her eyes" which "looked as if it was coming from very very far away...as far away as the beginning". Additionally, Grima (2017) alludes to everyone's genesis, "We all came from the sea, from the currents, from the swell, from the sea floor, from the water...with the umbilical cord and placenta of identity...". In this way, viewers are driven to ponder on the common European heritage and on their own "genesis" as peoples coming from the Mediterranean Sea, thus accepting their affinity with all of humanity, and with migrants in particular.

The second chapter is located on a barren plateau overlooking Ġnejna Bay, limits of Mġarr, Malta. At the very edge of the plateau, there is the Lippija Tower, built by Grandmaster Lascaris of the Order of the Knights of St John. It was the first tower to be completed in 1637 out of a set of 10 built for defence around Malta during the 17th century. Each tower had its specific field of vision such that signals of enemy sighting could be communicated to the garrisons in the cities.

The choreography at the Tower focuses on the prominence of the building, which symbolizes domination and power. In Eisler's (2002, p. 15) terms, "The world is divided into in-groups and out-groups, with those who are different seen as enemies to be conquered or destroyed". Ironically, the inscription in Latin on the Tower states, "Peace comes about in your honour and abundance...1637" (Freller & Cilia, 2010, p. 341).

The Lippija Tower is a living symbol of 16th- and 17th-century Christian-Muslim clashes and competing powers in the Mediterranean. Beneath the limpid surface of the sea, life was full of pirates and thieves ready to attack and pillage the vulnerable islands of Malta (Buttigieg, 2018). The Ottoman Empire was looking to expand, while the Order of St John struggled to safeguard Malta since 1530 (until 1798). During the 18th-century the balance of political power in the Mediterranean changed (Luttrell, 1982), and after a brief stay by Napoleonic forces, Malta became a British protectorate in 1800 (and independent in 1964).

The towers, fortresses, bastions, and fortifications built to defend Malta lost their power once aircraft took over. However, their historical significance is indelible, and they form part of the islands' national, historical, and cultural archive. No doubt, they are also imprinted in the psyche of the Maltese nation. In the context of the video, the Tower symbolizes the continued clash of cultures, and the double role of protecting the insiders while keeping away those arriving by sea.

Following these premises, the choreography for this second section of the video reflects upon the physical reaction that one may express in response to domination, power, and control. The performer feels defenceless and small. His gestures are protective but also uncertain and frenetic. The choreography and the camera shot angles emphasize the distance between the Tower and the physical body of the performer. The dialogue is unequal

and, for this reason, the dancer tries to escape from the building's oppressive "shadow". Conversely, he entertains a positive embodied "discourse" with the seascape, thus proposing liberating gestures in the direction of the sea.

At this point, the viewer of the video is asked to find an answer to questions posed by Francis Ebejer (2011, p. 20), such as, "has intelligence truly made humans happier? Or less fierce exploiters of fellow humans and the rest of creation?" The audience is guided to reflect on whether anything has changed in fact, despite all the modern material developments.

The third section of our video is set at the beach, close to the sea, which is the symbol of regeneration and transformation, but also of despair and death (see Figure 5 in the Appendix). According to the "blue option or approach", water is one of the most important elements for human survival. As Neimanis suggests, "blood, bile, intracellular fluid; a small ocean swallowed, a wild wetland in our gut; rivulets forsaken making their way from our insides to out, from watery womb to watery world: *we are bodies of water*" (Neimanis, 2017, p. 1). Therefore, we, as bodies of water, need to start re-working a positive connection with the power of sea or water elements. In this sense, the choreography presents first the performer beside a small and shabby dwelling representing the desperate abodes in which migrants find themselves when they arrive in Europe; and second, a repetitive and almost obsessive dance performed close to a few dilapidated boats by the sea (see Figure 6 in the Appendix). These moments are preludes to the following scenes, in which the dancer tries to re-establish a positive and regenerative dialogue with the sea. Indeed, as Portelli's (2008, p. 144) verses suggest, "the shore very far away... the sea so deep", thus acknowledging the shameful indifference of policies that did not take into account that many migrants did not survive the crossing of the Mediterranean. This aspect is even more emphasized by Borg (2018), whose pages in the book published with the verses do not include page numbering as a subversive strategy (personal communication by Borg to Camilleri Grima), and who strongly suggests, "They left on a craft, hopeful they sailed, it's not our business".

In the final section of the dance, the performer contemplates both the Maltese land and sea (see Figure 7 in the Appendix). In this way, he is capable of evoking a "tidalectic" discourse (Brathwaite, 1992) that links land and sea's "dialectics" in a continuum of ever-recurrent transformative life occurrences. The goal of "tidalectics" is that of showing how life, and our common human destiny in this world, is a spiritual and spiralling force of events and individuals that clash, intermingle, mix, and re-encounter in the circle of existence. According to this approach life is circular and what is happening nowadays to what we call the "Other" may happen to us in the future. In the last fragments of the performance, Mantellato embraces the sea, in a fresh baptismal of renewing transformation and proactive life-view (see Figure 8 in the Appendix). This closing scene should be read in light of a "partnership" perspective, just as if we were about to re-experience the same history of human/world narratives over and over again, in a spiral of communal possibilities, ending with a line by Friggieri (2002, p. 29), "If I wait for you again in front of the horizon, will you speak to me tomorrow?"

The final message of our multimodal video is a positive one, for we have the duty to move away from the unpleasant and counterproductive domination model of violence, rejection, and fear, and embrace a more peaceful, caring, and "fluid" partnership existence.

Teachers Expressing Empathy

The video production was utilized as a pedagogical tool at the University of Malta with a group of 14 student-teachers training to become teachers of Maltese and of Maltese as a Foreign Language, and with another group of 13 qualified teachers of various subjects and at various levels in primary and secondary school, as part

of their continued professional development. This 15-minute-long video production was shown separately to the two groups of teachers during seminar sessions dedicated to this topic. The chapters were shown one by one, and after each chapter the participants were prompted to write down their thoughts and feelings. They were allowed to discuss as a group, to ask questions, and to highlight points that were particularly problematic for them. However, the trainer (Camilleri Grima, who is one of the authors of this paper) made sure not to direct their reflections in any particular direction. The prompts were written down on a worksheet, and after the viewing of each chapter the participants were given time to write down their reflections to the following prompts:

1. Which words/phrases come immediately to mind?
2. Which poetry line was most significant for you? Why?
3. Which aspect of the work did you find most interesting?
4. Can you relate the emotions you experienced?
5. How effective do you think that a multimodal video production can be to foster empathy?

The participants' written reflections were collected at the end of each session. The various paragraphs that the participants had composed were manually annotated according to the following criteria: positive or negative reaction; reference to an experience or a feeling; the meaning of symbols used in the video; and the use of a multimodal video as a teaching tool. This is a grounded approach to the analysis of text, following Charmaz (2014, p. 136), who specifies that, "coding relies on having solid data... This approach assumes an objective transparency of what participants say and do". Thus, our analysis relies completely on what was produced by the teachers.

After the coding of all the texts was done, we found that there were no qualitative differences in the reactions of the teachers and student-teachers, and therefore the reflections were merged into one set. The quotations presented below were translated from Maltese (by Camilleri Grima), and the names of participants are pseudonyms as required by ethical policy.

In reaction to the first prompt, the words and phrases that the teachers wrote down can be divided into two categories, that is, as having either positive or negative connotations. Most teachers focused on the negative aspects of migration, and wrote words like death, fear, danger, panic, tragedy, isolation, disillusionment, and desperation. A few others transposed themselves into the migrants' frame of mind, i.e. that of searching for a better life, and wrote words like hope, freedom, liberty, and refuge. A number of reflections specifically referred to the contrast between the affluent and the beggars around us today, a fact which increases the risks taken by immigrants.

In relation to the second question, the poetry lines that practically all the teachers selected were the following:

Friggieri (2002, p. 29)	Without anyone having recognized my face.
Portelli (2008, p. 144)	The shore very far away.
Borg (2018, n.p.)	Hopeful they sailed. It's none of our business.

One teacher commented that while Ebejer (2011) brings to the fore the rampant egoism of humanity, these other poets illustrate the effects of our egoism. One teacher reflected that these poems highlight that progress is only materialistic considering that the suffering of migrants is a clear sign of regress. Another teacher pointed out that the media normally treats migrants as a collective, but these poets present them as individuals, with each having their own family, country, experience, and emotions.

From a choreographic point of view, Mantellato pointed out how these three particular verses were

paramount for the conception of his work. Indeed, the image of a lost and solitary body or figure, in the middle of the ocean, immediately came to his mind, thus foregrounding the need to re-construct the physicality of unknown individuals who died in the Mediterranean. The act of re-remembering and re-assembling lost identities through the act of dance is a strategy to overcome and empower the intangible and yet compelling valence of the poetic word. From this perspective, Mantellato began the dance with a clear reference to the performer's face (in the first part of the video: the temple) in order to adapt Ebjer's line (2012, p. 10), "the expression in her eyes", which is recalled also in the second part of the video through Friggeri's line (2002, p. 29). Through these punctual references, between intertextual references and corporeal allusions, Mantellato was able to ponder on the gap existing between the recognized and the non-recognized individuals of this world, thus prompting a needed change towards "partnership" and everyone's inclusion in this world.

With reference to what they found most interesting in the video, the teachers referred to the symbolism that is enacted, and emphasised the allegoric power of the sea and of the tower, and a number of effective contrasts:

The sea is both a symbol of hope and of tragedy. (Chris)

The sea is a symbol of the vastness and greatness of nature, and at the same time the human person appears minute and weak. (Anna)

The tower is static, signifying continuity over time, while the sea ebbs and flows and swallows the boats carrying the immigrants. (Frank)

The tower was built to protect and give a sense of security, but at the same time it is scary and it offers little relief. (Jennifer)

The fragility of the migrant, his bare feet and colourless clothing, the closing of his arms around himself, and the location...he is minute next to the tower, he is in a desert-like arid environment by the tower, and lost in a vast sea. (Paul)

One teacher brought up the issue of exploitation and racism toward people of colour, and compared it to the discrimination against women:

The abuse of innocent lives, for example, when it is related to skin colour, is similar to the discrimination against women which many of us still experience. (Joan)

With reference to the prompt about emotions, some teachers narrated personal experiences. One teacher expressed the subtle and unfair attitudes she faces due to the fact that she is a married woman without children. Most teachers wrote that the video evoked a deep sense of solitude, unhappiness, and desperation:

I felt very sorry for the migrants. They left their country without knowing where they will end up. Then, once they reached a new land there was no one to at least talk to them. (Maria)

I felt a sense of remorse because I am doing nothing to alleviate the suffering of refugees. (Frank)

It was a painful experience, and there was an extreme contrast between the artistic beauty presented in the video and the suffering of the migrants. (John)

It was so emotional that I not wish to dwell any longer on the suffering of the immigrants. I am very fortunate not to have to go through such a loss of identity, and at the same time I tremble to think what it would be like if I needed to emigrate one day. (Clara)

I reflected on our ethnogenesis. We look inside ourselves to discover who we are, where we came from, and the chapter at the temple tied the present with the past, our being at present with our origins. (Mark)

With regard to the use of multimodality as a teaching aid, the teachers wrote, for example:

The girl playing the harp at the entrance to the temple reinforces the idea of ethnogenesis, embodies the poetry, and balances the act of domination with one of partnership. (Lorna)

The pink hue in the sky at the beach scene proposes a romantic approach and suits the atmosphere generated by the

poetic line at the end. (Claire)

A multimodal production manages to reach deeper and wider; deeper because it touches emotional chords that a single medium cannot reach; wider because it leaves an impact on students with different learning styles. (Pauline)

Using digital technology that includes music, poetry, dance, and all the visual aspects brings the message home. I felt I was experiencing what I was perceiving, and I empathised with the migrant like never before. No to discrimination, yes to respect towards all of humanity! (Alessia)

Discussion and Conclusion

We believe that our video created a deep sense of empathy with the migrants. There is no doubt that multimodal approaches “can stimulate students’ engagement, and challenge them to extend their perspectives to critically reflect on self and on the world” (Wandera, 2016, p. 323). In line with sociocultural theory (Lantolf, 2001), we believe that the individual person does not establish a direct relationship with the world, but that this relationship is mediated through, for example, an aesthetic experience. As scholars often argue (Wandera, 2016; Spaliviero, 2021), teachers play a key role in creating aesthetic and intellectual spaces and experiences for learners, leading to transformative education (Raikou, 2016).

Eisler, in a recent study (2019, pp. 1-2) published together with peace anthropologist Douglas P. Fry, states that “the new interdisciplinary perspective of the Biocultural Partnership-Domination Lens reveals how cultural beliefs and social institutions such as politics, economics, and education affect, and are in turn affected by, childhood and gender relations”. It is our belief that working through partnership may enhance students and people’s awareness on how to relate with the “Other”. Indeed, this methodological slant puts into question predetermined paradigms instilled by patriarchal-dominator views, and debunks assumed beliefs on how to categorize or view others. Working in the partnership direction is particularly important in students’ and pupils’ early age because, as Eisler and Fry (2019) explain, the impact of these early experiences and observations determines how our brain develops, and shows how we can use our knowledge of human development to construct equitable and sustainable cultures that maximize human well-being. In this sense, a multimodal production felt like the right choice for moving towards this direction. Indeed, this is the expression of modern days’ societies, and a challenging and new way of approaching school and the humanities in educational contexts.

At the same time, by reflecting on our Mediterranean heritage and archive, we have acknowledged how the restorative, amniotic, and fluid power of the sea can enhance our appreciation of water-spaces or contexts, which may become highly creative and imaginative laboratories for re-creating and re-thinking the world. The “blue turn” has been in this sense useful to re-imagine future partnership encounters with the “Other”, and in allowing us to reinvigorate the idea of being part of a communal and unifying world.

The response of the teachers to this kind of project was very positive, and their depth of interpretation encouraging. Ultimately, teachers can only implement a positive intercultural pedagogy following a transformation in their own meaning-making and interpretive capabilities, which, as we have witnessed, can be enhanced by an aesthetic experience (e.g. Marini, 2021; McCormack, 2018).

In an ever-growing divided reality, in which people are not afraid to build up walls of incomprehension and fear, it is our duty to come back again to the power of the encounter, acceptance, and care of “Other” peoples, especially migrants, who are mostly leaving their countries for necessity, safety, and new opportunities. We expect from our globalized and Western-European interconnected reality a more caring and respectful attitude towards those who are in need, peoples who run away from wars, tyrannies, and famine. A multimodal video production like ours has the ability to touch our most sincere human chords, in the comprehension of our

communal destiny in the past, present, and future. We need to build a new world-order, a world which will be based on partnership values, and in which we will be able to “bridge the divide” between individuals, ourselves, and the world.

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Appendix

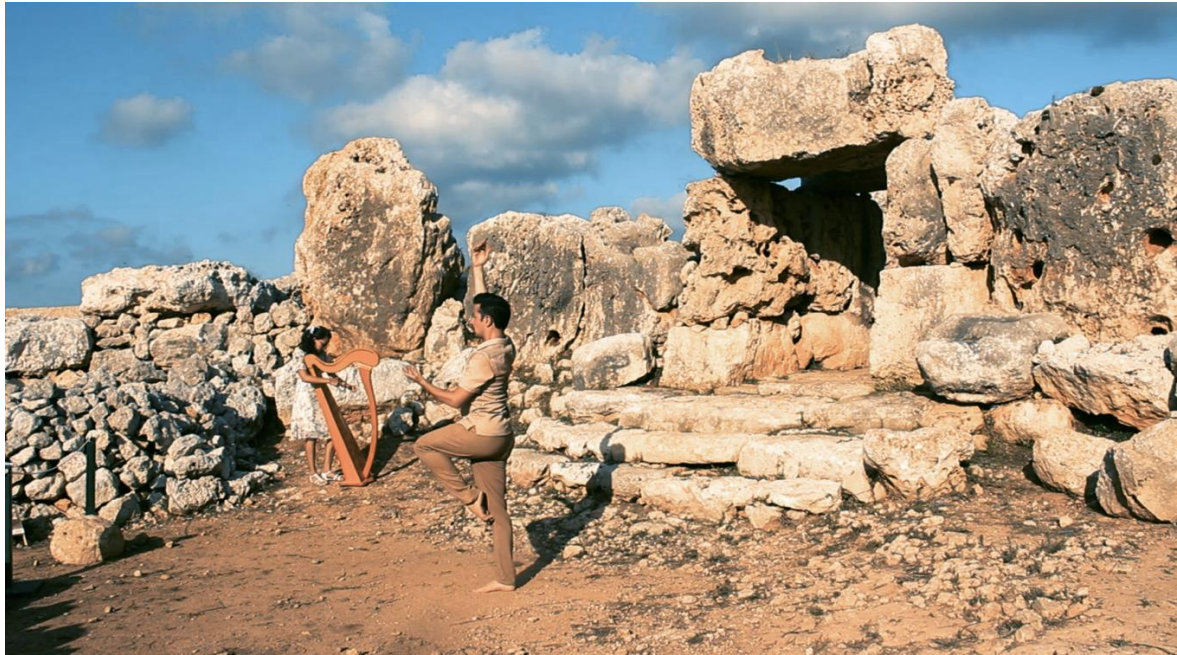


Figure 1. The temple. The dancer embodies and recalls one of the feminine statues found in the Neolithic temples in the island of Malta. In this way he prompts on the need to embrace a gender-balance and partnership vision of life.



Figure 2. The temple. Towards the end of the choreography, the dancer faces the entrance of the temple as if he wanted to confront his ancestors. In this way, he reminds viewers that we are all part of the same history and heritage, and that we all came from the sea.



Figure 3. The tower. The dance in this section is disorientating and unstable. The performer embodies the “Other”, the migrant who needs to find “roots”, identity, and recognition.

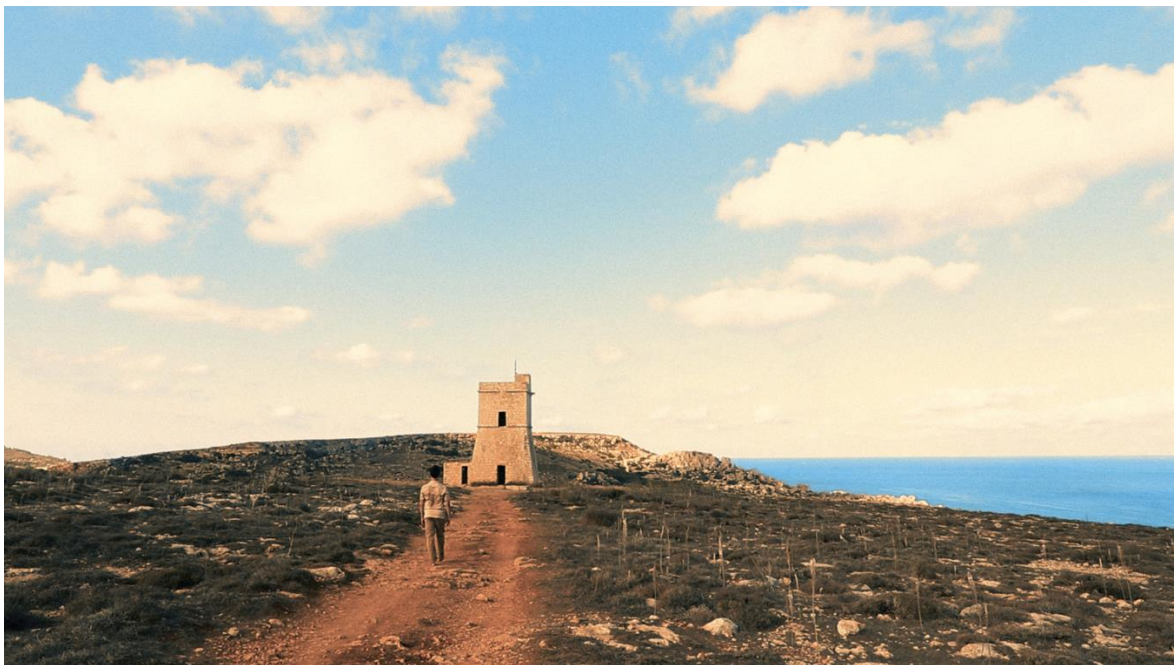


Figure 4. The tower. A lonely walk towards the tower, which is both the symbol of domination and protection. The dancer follows a straight line, giving his back to the audience and walking barefoot. He represents the migrant but also our condition as “common human beings” in the path of life.



Figure 5. The beach. The performer/migrant has finally reached the shore and therefore safety. Nevertheless, nobody is there to welcome him/her. The migrant feels as a solitary body in an alien and inhospitable land that disregards him.



Figure 6. The beach. The dancer dialogues with empty and dismissed fishers' boats and tries to step into them even though he cannot climb over their edge. This is a metaphor for all those who perished in the Mediterranean Sea, trying to escape from their home country. The Sea is history and gathers the bodies of those who did not survive from the crossing.



Figure 7. The beach. The dancer contemplates the Maltese land and sea, thus acknowledging humans' needed reconnection with the environment and the spaces that allow existence.



Figure 8. The beach. In the final fragment of the production the dancer embraces the power of the sea, in a fresh baptismal which will allow humans to re-establish a communal partnership system of hope, recognition, and love.