



Staging Europe Adrift: The Trope of “Europe” in Theatrical Representations of the Migrant Experience

◆ Pour citer cet article :

Michelle Cheyne, « Staging Europe Adrift: The Trope of “Europe” in Theatrical Representations of the Migrant Experience », *Cahiers du CRINI n°1*, 2020, Création et crise en Europe, url : <https://tinyurl.com/cheyne-staging-europe>

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Abstract

Theatrical works staging Europe through the prism of human trafficking and European-bound migration across the Mediterranean have situated the Italian island of Lampedusa in the public imagination as the geographic symbol of Europe's failure to respond adequately to humanitarian needs. A wide range of performance pieces on the subject of Lampedusa use different media to explore how migration and human trafficking call into question the authenticity of the European Union and European culture's commitment to integration, human rights, and diversity. Engagement with what can arguably be termed the artistic trope of migration in the first decade of the 21st century, and notably those focused on Lampedusa, are key to understanding how the trope of Europe and its symbolic representations are constructed and deployed. This paper juxtaposes an analysis of a select corpus of theatrical works by Lina Prosa, Marco Martinelli, Anders Lustgarten, and *Zentrum für Politische Schönheit* with a selection of political cartoons in order to sketch the key tropes in the broader spectrum of symbolic figures of Europe in the early 21st century and to consider the stakes and consequences in how artists and artistic institutions engage with tropes of Europe and the political reality of Europe in the early 21st century.

Résumé

Les œuvres dramatiques qui mobilisent la traite des êtres humains et la migration trans-méditerranéenne vers l'Europe comme éléments structurant pour une mise en scène de l'Europe ont réussi à fixer l'île italienne de Lampedusa dans l'imaginaire public comme symbole géographique de l'échec de l'Europe à tenir ses engagements humanitaires. Les praticiens des arts

du spectacle vivant se servent de plusieurs médias pour créer des œuvres consacrées au sujet des naufrages au large de Lampedusa pour démontrer que la migration et la traite des humains remet en cause l'authenticité de l'engagement de l'Union européenne et de la culture européenne en matière d'intégration, de droits humains et de diversité. Analyser le trope esthétisé et esthétisant de la migration dans la première décennie de la XXI^e siècle, notamment les figures qui se focalisent autour de Lampedusa, offre une clé importante pour mieux comprendre comment s'entend et se déploie le trope de l'Europe et ses représentations symboliques. Cet article juxtapose une analyse d'une sélection d'œuvres dramatiques de Lina Prosa, Marco Martinelli, Anders Lustgarten et *Zentrum für Politische Schönheit* avec une analyse de dessins satiriques tirés de la presse. Ainsi, il identifie les tropes fondamentaux dans l'éventail plus large des figures symboliques de l'Europe à l'aube du XXI^e siècle et interroge les enjeux et les conséquences au cœur des représentations artistiques de l'Europe et de la réalité politique actuelle de l'Europe.

Mots clés : Crise, Représentation, Europe, Mise en scène de la migration

Key words : Crisis, Representation, Europe, Staging migration

Introduction

In 1536, the geographer Sebastian Münster produced his now iconic *Mappa Europae* representing Europe as a sovereign. His portrayal of Europe imagines this entity as a queen, halfway between the Greek myth of Europa and the allegory of empire. This map provides a strong reminder of the interconnected nature of the three civilized continents that Münster and his contemporaries believed comprised the world: Europe, Africa, and Asia. While the new world of the Americas had been discovered by then, Münster's map does not integrate it into the Renaissance political geography. Instead, in this 16th century representation, Europe as a human space stands between the other two continents. The borders and geological formations give this stately queen her form. If we fastforward to our present, what do we see? What does Europe look like on the world stage in the 21st century? Today, empire has become an economic supranational union. Given this change, how do the 21st-century visual representations of Europe compare to Münster's map? What specifically are the visual and theatrical tropes used to represent Europe? How do theatre and art participate in the negotiation—both artistic and political—to define this “space” by confronting spectators with tropes of Europe and of its outer limits?

This paper looks at how Europe is performed in an attempt to address these questions. By “performed”, I mean how the institution or entity of Europe is realized, that is to say rendered real, through symbolic public performance. Here, however, we will not examine the political performance like elections and other political rituals used to create and breathe life into Europe. Rather, our attention will focus on artistic performances through which Europe is represented, like political caricatures in the press and performance arts (*arts du spectacle*). A quick inventory of art representing Europe shows a daunting and ever-growing number of pieces of work. This current paper analyzes a representative sample in an effort to better understand the major trends and mechanisms at play. Thus, without pretending to provide an exhaustive analysis, this study

seeks to elucidate how Europe is staged today and the stakes and consequences involved. It is sensitive to the fact that any representative sample is bound to the historical context. These findings must be framed within the broader over-reaching narrative of the evolution of tropes of Europe. Thus, this paper is one piece of a larger picture.

In fact, I would suggest that the second decade of the 21st century stages Europe as adrift, paradoxically imagining it *a contrario*, that is to say defining Europe by that which it is not, more specifically defining it through its failures. Arguably, migration, more than any other “policy failures” (agriculture, fishing, energy, bureaucracy, fiscal responsibility), appears intimately linked to what Europe is not in an ontological sense. In many respects, this is logical. If elections, diplomacy, legislation, and regulation articulate, on the one hand, what Europe is, then migration defines, on the other hand, what is not European. Such distinctions place great tension on the underlying principles that lie at the heart of the European project, namely human rights, democratic values, and liberalizing the movement of people, goods, and services. Migration, in concrete and human terms, stages Europe, even as it appears to call Europe and its self-proclaimed values into question. While political rhetoric and action highlight this tension with the aim of resolving it, artistic representations and productions highlight the tension and problematize it. Artistic representations, as I hope to show, play a key role in helping the public cope with this unresolved tension and ambiguity, shuttling spectators between ideals, failure, and hope, highlighting the active, creative search to find a way to introduce the human into Europe. Where political rhetoric promises solutions, artistic rhetoric raises questions. While artistic rhetoric, and theatrical rhetoric might sometimes, but not always, offer hope, it does not claim to have answers. Analyzing how artists using tropes of migration and tropes of failure to stage Europe helps better understand the mechanisms and power of such tropes as well as the distinction to be made between political and artistic rhetoric. This paper uses a small corpus of political cartoons, performance art, and theatrical pieces to trace this phenomenon. We begin by looking at how five political cartoons by Patrick Chappatte, Tasos Anastasiou, Emanuele Del Rosso, and Nicolas Lambert dramatize Europe as a failure, lampooning the modern face of Münster’s sovereign queen, in particular in relation to migration. Then, we turn to plays and performance art by Lina Prosa, Marco Martinelli, Anders Lustgarten and Philipp Ruch’s *Zentrum für Politische Schönheit*, as well as sculpture by Mimmo Palandino to examine how the dead bodies from the “migrant crisis” are mobilized as symptoms of Europe’s many failings. These failures are characterized as structural. These failures need to be considered critically to understand how they are articulated, their validity and to what end they are mobilized.

Flags and Fortresses: Tropes of Exclusion and Immobility in 21st-Century Caricatures of Europe

What would be the contemporary equivalent to Münster’s map? Perhaps the most iconic representation of Europe in the 21st century is the European flag itself. Yet, as triumphantly serene as the 12 yellow stars balanced in a circle on a field of bright blue might appear, caricatures in the press offer a range of more critical views that problematize this vision. Here, in the context of an interrogation of the narratives, symbols and images that theater and performance use to represent Europe, two particular caricatures representing Europe and its limits in the second decade of the 21st century bring alive a very different image from that of

geometric stability. These images illustrate the political and social tensions within the EU regarding European-bound migration.

The first caricature is a variation that Patrick Chappatte drew of the European flag in August 2015 (Chappatte, 2015a). Given that Chappatte deliberately subverts the iconography of the original, it is useful to quickly review its history. In fact, the EU flag is the same as that of the Council of Europe despite the fact that the two entities are not the same. Recognizing the overlap between the symbols and the 28 member states shared by the two separate institutions (Council of Europe, EU) is key to understanding the tension between European ideals and reality that visual and theatrical tropes of Europe in the 21st century illustrate. In 1955, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted as its emblem “on a field azure a circle of twelve mullets or, their points not touching” in a resolution explicitly lays out how this heraldic description should be read symbolically:

Against the blue sky of the Western world, the stars symbolize the peoples of Europe in the form of a circle, the sign of union. The stars are twelve in number and are invariable, the figure twelve being the symbol of perfection and entirety. (Resolution (55)21)

In 1988, a further resolution stressed the importance of the European flag as a symbol of solidarity and of membership of one community (*OJEC*, Doc. A2-104/88).

Chappatte’s 2015 caricature representing Europe contrasts sharply with these positive symbols. It replaces the circle of stars with a ring of yellow barbed wire. The stars are single wire barbs. In fact, a variety of drawings adopt this simple image and use a circle of barbed wire to represent Europe as a no man’s land. By the same token, a number of cartoons play on the use of a circle of identical (or virtually identical) images to comment satirically on EU policies. Examples range from fairly innocuous images like a ring of yellow wind turbines (Vadot) to more troubling ones like a ring of floating corpses (Chappatte b). Variations on this visual trope continue to appear. In 2018, Tasos Anastasiou reimagines the EU flag as a field of blue with a circle of yellow medieval tower-like fortifications (Anastasiou, 2018). In fact, in this caricature, Anastasiou plays on two separate tropes. On the one hand, he uses the EU flag discussed above and on the other he mobilizes the equally popular stereotype of Europe as a fortress that will be discussed below. Emanuele Del Rosso also combines these two tropes when he pens a cartoon that portrays Europe as the grey stone wall with star-like towers of an embattled circular fortress rising out of the menacing waves of a stormy sea (Del Rosso). Del Rosso’s drawing underscores both the vitality of the two tropes and their plasticity. Del Rosso pushes the image of the flag to the very limits by rendering it in geological and architectural terms. His caricature demonstrates the ease with which visual details encourage the viewer flesh out the sketch, associating words that in turn activate verbal tropes, in this case “waves of migrants”, a common trope in political rhetoric and the press.

The second caricature that I want to discuss specifically engages the trope of the fortress. It accompanies a 2013 text on “*La Butte rouge migratoire*” published by the French geographer, Nicolas Lambert, for *Carnet NEOCARTOgraphique* (Lambert, 2013). Like Münster’s 16th-century map, this drawing proposes a vision of Europe that plays simultaneously on familiar geographic references and the symbolic values that define the lands sketched out. By 2013, the iconography has changed noticeably. Europe is no longer portrayed as a stately sovereign.

Instead, the image Lambert uses imagines Europe as a fortress. The contours of a grey concrete prison-like structure are easily recognized as the outer edges of the land masses that constitute the EU. This is a high-walled and self-contained Europe. Its few windows are tiny and barred. Its drawbridge has been pulled up. The image is forbidding and carceral. We see no human figures.

In fact, the particular cartoons that Chappatte and Lambert publish play on tropes that represent Europe as a space in which political discourse and political reality are not aligned. The drawings of the EU as a circle of barbed wire or as a defensive fortification represent Europe as an isolated space and they call into question its very humanity, challenging its connection and commitment to human rights. Gone here in these images is the human body that defined the geography of Europe in Münster's map. Gone are Africa and Asia, for that matter.

The caricatures that we have just examined offer the spectator a vision of Europe as a sterile and static space that seals itself off from intruders and outsiders, whether it is sketched as a fortress or a no man's land surrounded by barbed wire. These representations emphasize the inhospitable nature of such a setting. Moreover, at first glance these two illustrations portray the European Union as empty. While we can easily link this emptiness to hollow rhetoric, let us consider the tangible nature of this emptiness. The concrete bunker and the barbed wire offer shapes and symbols that evoke Europe, but humans appear to be excluded from this space. Ironically, Europe—as the Council of Europe and as the European Union—specifically claims to create a geographic space defined by its defense of human rights. The Copenhagen criteria of 1993 articulate Europe's pretensions in this respect by stipulating that States wishing to join the E.U. must share the fundamental commitment to human rights, democracy, as well as free movement of people and goods that unites this supra-national body (art. 2 and 49, TEU). This sterility and emptiness thus appear antithetical to the values and ideals that are touted as fundamental to Europe.

A closer look at these two cartoons calls into question the impression of Europe as an empty space. In fact, both of these cartoons present Europe as a temporarily empty stage, highlighting the inherent theatricality of these images. For instance, in the Lambert drawing of the fortress, there is a disembodied voice that we see/hear located by the drawbridge: "SLOWLY... SLOWLY... take your time..." (Lambert, 2013). An invisible European "insider" urges caution. Chappatte's cartoon of the EU flag as ring of barbed wire also seeks to maintain the status quo by explicitly and theatrically staging exclusion in the margins. Centered inside the yellow protective ring of barbed wire are the bright white letters E and U. They project light outward, casting shadows behind the two figures tucked in the lower right-hand corner. Examination shows this couple to be a man with a patched coat and scarf carrying two suitcases followed by a female enveloped in scarves holding a wailing baby in her arms. The geography of the drawing orients the viewer with a reminder that these figures circling up toward the East are from the South and from the East. The two shadowy figures lurking here on the margins bear closer scrutiny. The only human beings portrayed are these two bodies—three counting the baby. Their inclusion in the image stages their exclusion. They are barred from the European space and find themselves reduced to circling around looking for the door to Europe. While caricatures, these figures depict the quest to find a gateway through which to enter Europe.

In fact, these figures searching for a gateway to enter Europe are precisely what interests me here insofar as “outsiders seeking entrance” have become central to how Europe performs and represents itself. If we return for a moment to the map of Europe as a queen, she is situated in relation to Africa and Asia. The geographical boundary separating Africa and Europe is the Mediterranean, the Middle Sea. The people attempting to cross it are migrants, in the broad sense of the term. I would argue that migrants, and specifically migrant bodies, are key to the visual tropes used to stage Europe as an entity in the 21st century.

Where the disembodied voice in Lambert’s drawing is a European voice anxiously resisting opening the gates, the couple in Chappatte’s caricature seek entry. In these two cases, we have live bodies. The message appears to be that when Europe functions, its walls and fences keep live bodies out. What would be the converse of this? Would it be that the fortress or the barbed wire boundaries fail to keep out live bodies? Would it be that the fortress or the barbed wire boundaries fail to keep out dead bodies? The structures—physical and/or legal—meant to prevent migrant entry or to protect Europe from too rapid an influx of migrants fail, in fact, on both counts. This is particularly striking in the case of sea crossings that result in highly visible, mediatized bodies that raise issues of whether the “walls” are functional and whether the EU itself is functional. Specifically, European-bound migration across the Mediterranean has resulted in a variety of efforts—physical and political—to rescue migrants from drowning when the boats carrying them capsize or break apart as well as a staggering numbers of dead bodies.

Failed Structures: Tropes figuring the EU

While the drownings, shipwrecks, and rescues at sea were an established phenomenon before October 2013, after that date, the images of these crossings began to feel iconic. On October 3, 366 migrants drowned when the boat they were on sank. At the time, this was the deadliest of the shipwrecks for the Lampedusa crossings. International media coverage raised public awareness and European leaders faced public censure for the human tragedy. The idea that Europeans could allow such mass drownings to occur spurred political action to increase capacity for rescues. The Italian protagonist in Anders Lustgarten’s play, *Lampedusa* (2015), written for the SoHo Theater in London in response to this tragedy, notes with asperity the unintended consequences of this mediatization: the efforts to keep images of rescue attempts in the public eye appear to have increased the profitability of the human smuggling industry:

People keep pouring in, they run more boats than ever before, boats from Turkey and Lebanon and Libya and Egypt, boats with crews that are set to crash into Europe. Rescue guaranteed ’cos nobody wants a shipwreck off their coastline, so the price of the ticket goes up. Ingenious fuckers the smugglers. (Lustgarten 18-19)

Photographs of rescue operations regularly accompanied and continue to accompany reports of the tragedies that result when human smugglers and traffickers overload boats. Bright blue, navy blue and bright orange predominate, caught from a variety of angles. This creates a troubling aesthetic experience. The compositions feature frail boats laden with migrants, some tipping into the sea, others full of orange life-jacketed figures having been saved, bodies flailing in the water. Whether from 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019, these images are painfully similar, as are the annual cycles of shipwrecks and European-bound migrant drownings in the Mediterranean. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) tracks the statistics for the

death tolls, offering monthly and annual comparisons. As Lustgarten's protagonist notes explaining his job responding to migrant boats in distress, "rescuing people is not the key part of the job. The key part of the job is the dead" (Lustgarten 18-19). The lives lost as migrants attempted to reach Lampedusa triggered artistic response even before 2013. By this time, artists like Lina Prosa (*Trilogia del Naufragio*, 2013) and Marco Martinelli (*Rumore di acque*, 2010) were already engaged in award-winning theatrical projects that responded to the ever-increasing number of dead in efforts to educate the public and commemorate the victims. One of the key features that stands out is the extent to which their plays showed the fortress to be pregnable and the borders to be ineffective. The lack of effectiveness of walls and the need to commemorate those who died during attempts to cross the border to the EU is also central to Mimmo Paladino's sculpture on the southern shore of Lampedusa. Amani and Arnaldo Mosca Mondadori and their charitable organization, the *Fondazione Amani*, commissioned the Paladino to create a sculpture in "memory of those migrants who lost their lives at sea" (*Fondazione Amani*). The foundation explains: "[t]he monument stands as a memorial for future generations to the inhuman tragedy of so many migrants dead and dispersed in the Mediterranean, often without witnesses" (Fondazione Amani). The *Alternativa Giovani e la Comunità* of Koinonia, Italian Ministry of the Interior and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, also supported the project.

The artistic choices made by Paladino highlight the failures of the physical and mental structures of Europe. He constructed a wall five meters high and three meters wide in refractory ceramic on the southern shore of Lampedusa. This is not, however, a successful wall. There are breaks and holes in it. In fact, Paladino changes the spectator's perspective by transforming a flawed barrier into an open door looking out over the Mediterranean towards Africa. This *Porta di Lampedusa, Porta d'Europa* (alternately translated as the *Door of Lampedusa*, the *Door of Europe* as well as the *Gate of Lampedusa*), was dedicated on June 28, 2008. One could argue that it creates the very door that the migrants in the lower righthand margin of Chappatte's barbed wire EU caricature seek. Paradoxically, this symbolic door exists only to commemorate the thousands of dead migrants who drowned in their attempt to enter Europe.

The "Door to Europe" looks out across the Mediterranean that separates Europe from Africa, testimony to the dead and to the fact that walls do not work. Like Chappatte and Lambert's political cartoons, this sculpture appears to be devoid of human bodies despite their presence on the margins. Moreover, Paladino's sculpture both traces the contours of Europe and problematizes the notion of this space. The dead migrant body is key in this symbolic operation. The power of this figure of the invisible dead migrant body stems from the "present absence" that creates a powerful effect without introducing the easily politicized "distractions" of the presence of migrants. Produced by the political border cordoning off Europe from non-Europeans, the corpse of the non-European migrant helps stage Europe by process of elimination. What does this "Europe" look like? The trope most frequently mobilized is that of an important, degenerate, selfish, and hypocritical Europe that betrays its values regarding free movement, liberalism, and human rights. The dead migrant body is used to illustrate this structural failure. After October 3, 2013, the images of dead bodies in the press prove as iconic as the photographs of the rescue operations that fished migrants and bodies from the Mediterranean. The October 2013 images are particularly memorable with the seemingly countless rows of green and black body bags lined up along the quayside and in municipal

buildings. Martinelli (*Rumore di acque*) and Lustgarten (*Lampedusa*) both create protagonists whose indignant rage at the number of dead marks the corpses of the migrants as a sign of the failure of the EU as a political structure. Martinelli's monologue stages a bitter civil servant in the accounting job from (or is it for) Hell who keeps tally of the dead, aligning numbers to stories and identities. The staccato litany of unidentified dead, even in the typography of the published text, hammers home the scale before the 2013 tragedy. Each dead body points to the inadequacies of Europe at the political, legal, and moral levels:

3462 / unknown / 4359 / unknown / 6758 / unknown / 4445 / unknown / 789 / unknown / 3989 / unknown / 1290 / unknown / 15677 / unknown / 23591 / is that possible? / that's too high / maybe an error / either way / unknown / 2487 / unknown / 2488 / unknown / 2489 / unknown (Martinelli 19-20)

Lustgarten's protagonist, Stefano goes further. This character offers an "eye witness" view of the October 3, 2013 events. This character is an Italian fisherman turned rescue boat and clean up worker. He recounts with a first-hand tally the October 3, 2013 rescue operation: "This morning a migrant boat, unusually overloaded even by the standards of migrant boats, overturned within sight of Rabbit Beach. So far, we're looking at north of 350 dead. Salvo and I personally recovered seventy-four corpses today. Mainly children. Children and women" (Lustgarten 18). Stefano's anger over the numbers links the failure of Europe to cope with the influx of migrants and with criminal circuits running the smuggling operations, "The fucking numbers. We pulled out four times as many dead last year as the year before. FOUR TIMES. More than three thousand corpses. And those are just the ones that we found. But nothing changes. People keep pouring in..." (Lustgarten 18-19). The trope of recounting and accounting for the dead in these two plays emphasizes the large collective numbers of the dead in order to underscore the scope of Europe's failure. In these plays discussed above, dead migrant bodies mark the failure of Europe to rescue and its failure to open. Martinelli and Lustgarten's plays underscore the consequences of the "success" of keeping Europe as a fortress or as a no-man's land in which migrants lurk at the margins. As in the press photographs or in Chappatte's caricature of the European flag as the blue Mediterranean with a floating circle of twelve black corpses, the dead bodies in these three plays appear as markers of the failure of European ideals, European strength, and European compassion.

Thus, successful European borders are depicted as destructive of European ideals. The physical structures of Europe, the walls, the fortress, the borders all appear as failures. They fail to keep out live rescued migrants and they fail to keep out the corpses of drowned migrants, as well. Moreover, the corpses underscore the failure of European ideals, notably with respect to human rights. Philipp Ruch's artistic collective for "aggressive humanism", the *Zentrum für Politische Schönheit* (ZPS), also engages in strong critique of the failure of Europe as a structure. Of particular interest are the ZPS *Aktionen* from 2014 and 2016. The *Aktionen* may be unconventional theatre that do not occur in a playhouse, but they are theatre pieces nonetheless. They are meticulously orchestrated and blur the lines separating reality from performance and from fake news. They use digital and social media as well as conventional acting and staging.

Their multimedia and participative performance pieces *Erster Europäischer Mauerfall* (2014) and *Die Toten kommen* (2015a) with separate acts of reburying an exhumed migrant corpse and of creating a symbolic cemetery in front of the Federal Chancellery, stage the failure of European symbols and structures with respect to migrant deaths. *Die Toten kommen*, like ZPS's other

Aktionen, combines publicity, video installation, participatory performance, and provocation. The ZPS described its objectives in this project as connected to European indifference:

In light of the fact that the victims did not make it to our country alive, the Center for Political Beauty brings us their bodies. We are being confronted with the consequences of what we do or rather what we don't do. That is the one thing. The other is: the intervention transforms piles of corpses into individuals who lost their lives. It transforms refugees into people. The intervention also affirms our feeling that we are about to commit grave mistakes. We didn't ask what happened to those who died. (ZPS 2015a)

Erster Europäischer Mauerfall had gone even further. It used the trope of failure as well, but it focused specifically on staging the disconnect between memorial structures and policy at the time. For this 2014 *Aktion*, ZPS stole white crosses commemorating victims who died trying to cross the Berlin Wall at the moment of commemorative ceremonies for the 25th anniversary of its fall and they made reproductions of these to use as part of a performances staging the crosses and actual refugees to protest the plight of migrants excluded by EU border policies. The ZPS website describes the event in the following terms:

The art installation of “white crosses” collectively left the city’s government quarters to escape the commemoration festivities for the fall of the Berlin wall’s 25th anniversary. In an act of solidarity, the victims fled to their brothers and sisters across the European Union’s external borders, more precisely, to the future victims of the wall. Since the fall of the iron curtain, the EU’s border has taken 30,000 lives. § The new European barbed wire fences are unacceptable. While the official commemoration cartel was preparing for the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall, 100 people resolutely approached the EU’s external border in order to tear it down. Two buses drove 100 peaceful revolutionaries with bolt cutters and electric angle grinders to Bulgaria’s “containment facility” to make unmistakably clear that: we do not accept the breach of international law. § While Berlin’s politicians sent balloons up into the air listening to nostalgic and sedating speeches in an Oktoberfest-like ceremony, German citizens tried to tear down the EU’s illegal external borders in an act of political beauty and take a piece of the fence back home with them. This was preceded by one of Germany’s most successful crowd-funding campaigns which collected EUR 39,000 in a record time of only 5 days for buses and hotel accommodation for the second peaceful revolution. (ZPS 2014)

The head of the ZPS planning staff, Cesy Leonard, pointed out how their performance which literally removed the physical structures endowed with symbolic significance revealed a systemic problem in terms of Europe’s moral structure:

Since we sent out a press release on the campaign on Monday, the whole of Germany is getting worked up over the disappearance of 14 – albeit large and important – symbols. In the meantime, the death of 24 refugees on a boat near Istanbul was only worth a tiny notice. Our campaign is on Germany’s front pages. This reveals the true face of German society. Every society only mourns its own victims. As soon as you’re from somewhere else, people don’t really think about you. We can only fully pay tribute to those who died at the Berlin Wall if we also think about the new victims. (ZPS 2014)

Recurring claims that point to European indifference to migrant deaths as proof of the failure of European ideals demand closer attention. While it is indisputable that the loss of so many lives and the crisis merit urgent action, we must ask whether European society mourns the migrant dead or whether it does not care. This is a key question that Stefano, the Italian protagonist in Lustgarten’s *Lampedusa* poses. This character is disturbed by recurring nightmares of October 3, 2013. Both the numbers and European apathy trouble him deeply. “There’s never been a time

when three hundred and fifty have died at once. In sight of shore. With no one to mourn for them” (Lustgarten, 22) In this particular instance, Stefano’s comment that nobody cared about the 350 dead does not, in fact, reflect accurately the actual events that unfolded. Lustgarten’s character is wrong. In point of fact, the unprecedented scale of that shipwreck elicited international outcry. Italy provided the October 3rd victims with a well-publicized funeral service and burial like those European citizens take for granted. Press images of the rows of coffins each with a single rose laid on top in a hangar-like building attest to the effort made in this instance to treat the dead with dignity.

In this specific instance, the ceremony and care given suggest the troubling notion that perhaps Europe is only able to offer respect, dignity, human rights to dead migrants and not to the survivors kept in immigration processing centers which are little more than detention centers. Lina Prosa’s *Lampedusa Way* (2013), the final piece in her *Trilogia del naufragio*, uses gallows humor to suggest as much in 2013. In this dialogue, *Lampedusa Way*, Saïf explains that if he finds the dead body of his adopted son, an international aid organization will help him repatriate the body, but if he finds his son alive, the aid organization cannot provide any financial or material assistance. The ZPS *Aktionen Die Jean-Monnet-Brücke* (2015b), *Flüchtlinge fressen: Not und Spiele* (2016) specifically address this as well.

In evaluating this trope of an uncaring EU, it remains important to note that these works do not merely dismiss the EU. Instead, they form—implicitly or explicitly—part of an artistic attempt to salvage it in a complex process. This depends first on staging Europe using tropes of failure and then on articulating subsequent projects (Martinelli and Prosa’s community-based projects, ZPS’s *Aktionen*) or projections (Lustgarten’s *Lampedusa*, Prosa’s *Trilogia del naufragio*). In all the cases discussed, the artists use representations of Europe’s political and ethical failures with respect to dead bodies as a means of focusing the European audience’s attention on their own individual and social obligations. The trope of the EU as a failed structure—as adrift and unmoored from its very principles by its incapacity to save migrant lives—appears to be a key instrument used to articulate a call to action in order to revitalize Europe. How the artists imagine redressing the EU and creating a place for migrants is less straightforward and merits analysis. The question remains whether these works rely on the figures of migrant corpses or whether they use those of live migrants to imagine a functional EU. Two tendencies appear to predominate. On the one hand, some performances trying to provoke more ethical behavior for the EU envision migrants remain as absent or abstract figures. Examples of this include *Rumore di acque*, *Die Toten komen*, *Die Jean-Monnet-Brücke*, *Flüchtlinge fressen: Not und Spiele*. Alternatively, other performances, like *Lampedusa Beach* (2004), *Lampedusa Snow* (2012), and *Lampedusa* portray migrants, in their most human and individual form as key ingredients needed to regenerate an effective and vibrant Europe. Analysis of two specific ZPS *Aktionen*, *Die Jean-Monnet-Brücke*, *Flüchtlinge fressen: Not und Spiele* and then of Lustgarten’s *Lampedusa* highlights the mechanisms used.

Saving Theoretical Migrant Lives: ZPS’s *Die Jean-Monnet-Brücke*

Die Jean-Monnet-Brücke is ZPS’s response in September 2015 to the mounting tally of migrant corpses in the Mediterranean. It imagines a utopic engineering project to solve the problem. Specifically, it proposes a bridge, symbolically named after Monnet, one of the architects of the

EU. This bridge would join the two continents of Africa and Europe, thus preventing further drownings. The website explains:

It will be nothing less than a landmark achievement of humanity: a bridge from North Africa to Europe, a lifeline between two continents and the largest economic stimulus package in the history of the European Union. The promotional video for this unparalleled construction project (see above) provides answers to the most important questions. (ZPS 2015b)

The inclusion of video to create a sense of authenticity is a signature feature of ZPS's work. The high degree of specificity in describing details give the impression of this rescue being a real mission that will save migrant lives. Thus, the specific intention of preventing further deaths implies the arrival of live migrants. This is pitched in optimistic terms that highlight how it will help regenerate Europe by creating what the ZPS calls "the largest economic stimulus package in the history of the European Union" (ZPS, 2015 b). Paradoxically, within this project, the very specifics that create the illusion of reality reduce the individual migrants to theoretical constructs. The project is not realizable and thus it integrates live individuals only in the abstract. We do not see human beings, just the proposed engineering feat. This goal of creating a sense of authenticity allows for the extension of this idea in a way that tries to reincorporate individual migrant lives. By acknowledging the time needed to build this bridge, ZPS focuses on how migrants can be integrated without delay. It asserts:

[M]ankind cannot wait until the bridge's completion: the Mediterranean is a mass grave. Every year, thousands of refugees drown in the killing fields at Europe's external borders. According to Jean Ziegler, the death toll is at 36,000- more casualties per year than the total number of people who died at the Iron Curtain during the entire duration of the Cold War. In order to fight this silent dying efficiently, we will install 1,000 rescue platforms: 1,000 navigation lights as an international commitment to humanity and a monumental symbol of the 21st century. So far, every civilisation has left a mark of magnanimity and generosity on history. The rescue platforms are equipped with: flags (height of flag pole: 10 m), navigation lights, food reserves, emergency call devices, photovoltaic modules, a flag pole, life buoys, cameras, radar reflectors for detection (navigation), anchors and an access ladder. Maximum weight: 12t. How far can one single person swim? We asked German world swimming champion Thomas Lurz how far someone who is well trained can swim in stormy weather. According to Lurz: "Without anything to drink, no more than 20 kilometres!" (ZPS 2015b)

ZPS proclaims on its website that it has already begun staging this monument to EU "civilization":

In order to bring humanity to the sea, the first rescue platform "Aylan 1" (6 x 6m) was loaded onto a ship in the harbour of Litaca, Sicily and installed in international waters on 4 October 2015. On board: satellite emergency call devices, direction-finding radio transmitters, radar reflectors, a flag pole, navigation lights, life buoys, a box with a steel insert and solar modules for power generation. (ZPS 2015b)

As with the bridge concept, these rescue platforms aim to help humanity. Once again, however, the focus on the technical details that fosters the impression of a "real" project leaves aside the real migrants. This *Aktion* does offer an innovation to consider. This satiric performance piece opens new avenues for audience participation. ZPS created a mechanism for measuring their ability to move their audience to action. Using Indiegogo, they launched a crowdfunding request with a goal of 19,600 euros on September 29, 2015 for the bridge and rescue platform. Within a week they had exceeded their funding target and had received donations of 21,687 euros

allegedly from over 630 people. A prototype of the rescue platform was launched in the first week of October 2015. What is particularly interesting in this example is the extent to which ZPS has found a way of staging European crises in a way that inspires concrete and quantifiable audience response, despite the ways in which the migrants in this project are conceived of in the most abstract of terms.

Absent Migrant Lives: ZPS's *Flüchtlinge fressen: Not und Spiele*

Philipp Ruch's 2016 *Flüchtlinge fressen: Not und Spiele* also represents Europe using the trope of perverse and flawed bureaucracy, questioning its ability and will to integrate live migrants in the EU. Here, the failures and perverse injustices of the European legal system and of Germany's legal structure are highlighted by their project to render real the structural metaphor of the arena. ZPS demonstrates how laws render the presence of migrants impossible. At the same time, the Philipp Ruch and his fellow artists denounce how the legal structure of the EU criminalizes the entrance of live migrants at the same time as Germany's laws criminalize artistic creation. The consequences of this are the reduction of migrants to the status of fodder for a perverse cycle of media "entertainment". Hence, their response in *Flüchtlinge fressen: Not und Spiele*. The online portion of this theatrical event takes the form of diachronic publicity detailing the staging of gladiator-style events in which migrants would volunteer to be eaten by wild animals publicly in Berlin:

To celebrate the big EU-Turkey deal, we built an arena with four Libyan tigers in the middle of Berlin. We searched for refugees who were willing to be eaten for the successful defense policy of the federal government and for the transport ban for refugees (§ 63 Abs. 3 AufenthG) - a hyperreal Rome on the floor of the strong European Union. (ZPS 2016)

Clearly, here, there is the claim of staging live migrants in Europe and not just the theoretical utopic vision of Europe and Europeans helping through a bridge and series of safe haven platforms in the Mediterranean. The ZPS website explains:

The summer of dying 2016 has dawned. There is no time to lose. Hundreds of thousands of people are drowning again on the Libyan coast. The deletion of a single paragraph in the German law can change this - and thereby still change the fate of Europe's humanity. The ferry, which ferries from the Turkish mainland to Lesbos, costs less than 10 EUR. The human traffickers demand for the same route in deadly boats up to 2000 EUR. Responsible for this is the EU Directive 2001/51/EC. The CPB visited and took care of the passengers in Turkey. They are Syrians who have without a doubt the right for asylum (if they take the risk of the murderous way). We sent the passport data and the declaration of intent to the chancellery, the Department for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior and the BAMF. As the first plane on behalf of the German civil society, the Joachim 1 will bring people in need on a safe route from Turkey to their loved ones in Germany. There is no political justification for people to be plundered by human traffickers for being either drowned or wade hundreds of kilometres afoot through the mud. (ZPS 2016)

They underscore the symbolism used in this vision of Europe that replaces the vision of fortress with that of arena:

The gladiatorial interpretation of Europe: the arena is the building type of a condensed deadly trap. Here, fates are generated in front of a large audience - defeats and victories. Spectacles uncover the ideological core of a society, such as letting refugees die in the name of securing the EU's external

borders. While the deterrence policy takes a break, the arena gets cleaned and filled with fresh sand. (ZPS 2016)

With this shocking announcement, the website informs the public of the problem by posing the question “Why don’t refugees take the plane?” The site explains:

It is the basic question of the entire action: it is not the money or the will that refugees cannot fly. It is due to a law. A law ensures that people are accused of nature (*sic*). Ferries that ferry from the Turkish mainland to Lesbos cost less than 10 euros. A plane from Turkey costs less than 100 euros. Human traffickers claim for the same route 2,000 euros. An EU Directive (2001/51/EC) is responsible for the death of hundreds of thousands of people. (ZPS 2016)

It offers a link labeled “More about the EU Directive (German)” so the public can further educate itself. This link does not tie directly to the text of the directive but rather to a video and presentation by ZPS of what they see as the problematic mechanisms and the dynamics of the system. The main page continues by describing the specific legal efforts, including a link to the documents they claim to have filed, undertaken by ZPS to work within the system by taking “Action against the Federal Government”:

In the name of 23 refugees, whose entry by plane during the action was refused, we filed a lawsuit against the Federal Government on 19 October 2016. The object is the direct, unlawful interference of the Federal Ministry of the Interior in the action and the unconstitutionality of § 63 of the Residence Act, as well as the EU-Turkey Pact. In the specific case, the refusal was illegal because of the fact that the residence law was specifically used to prevent the entry of documented, asylum-seeking war refugees. The EU-Turkey pact, on the other hand, breaks the principle of non-refoulement from the Geneva Refugee Convention. (ZPS 2016)

This action purports to support human beings in the individual, personal sense. But is this artistic inscription of the live migrant successful? On the one hand, it is clear in the documents of their law suit, the individuals have been blacked out. While this is normal when we think about protecting privacy rights, it still effaces the individuals. It also raises the question of whether live migrants are being used as props. *Flüchtlinge fressen: Not und Spiele* raises this question of the instrumentalization of live migrants in the video link it provides to a 17-minute speech by the “first candidate” who applies for the right to be eaten alive. In the web version of the project, the footage alternates between the female who stands at a podium and the images of a sparsely populated European audience. The woman’s words in German introduce the same narrative uncertainty that characterize ZPS’s *Aktionen*:

My name is Mary Skaf. Maybe I am an actress. Maybe an audience of millions in the Arab world knew me as a television protagonist. All of this no longer plays a role. Because I no longer play a role. The only role that I play now is the one assigned to me by the authorities in France. I am a refugee. I played my roles in Syria. They were tragic and comic roles. They were characters that people could identify with, people with a daily life, with love and relationship problems, with a bright future ahead, and with jealousy and romance on their minds. (ZPS 2016)

Here, the speaker deliberately draws a parallel between the Syrian revolution and the GDR in 1989 asking that the audience imagine a different outcome for their own country. By inviting identification, she makes a strong rhetorical gesture aimed at inciting action. This is framed within the idea that she is volunteering to be a martyr, eaten alive by wild animals in an arena in order to demonstrate the barbaric nature of the EU directive. Clearly, in this video, affective

identification is used as part of a mode of provocation. Still, it can be argued that this undermines the individual person and the story of real living migrants. The hyperrealism of ZPS's multimedia projects shocks and accuses, but at the same time it plays with the audience's ability to separate what is real and what is staged. The live female migrant becomes a prop in a performance piece by a European artistic group. Moreover, *Flüchtlinge fressen: Not und Spiele*, like the other *Aktionen*, shifts the focus from the migrants to their own theatrical skills and to the complex issue of artistic engagement that ZPS problematizes. ZPS aggressively pushes the boundaries of what is credible to generate a response and action. This introduces a variety of pressures. It leaves the audience unsure as to what is real and what is unreal. It accentuates and perpetuates the bind of the artist who must migrate by reducing her to the status of migrant, eternally locked into one subject position and tied to an aesthetic connected to personal circumstance rather than creative freedom. It also reasserts the primacy of the European artist by instrumentalizing the migrant crisis as a means of denouncing attacks on European artists' freedoms. ZPS's willingness to push all boundaries by staging "outrageousness" draws backlash from the German government. Their website announces that they have been the subject of State investigation for 16 months for "forming a criminal organization":

Severe attack on the freedom of art: The state classified the Center for Political Beauty as a criminal organization under §129 of the German Criminal Code. This is a direct violation of the which (*sic*) guarantees the freedom of art. And so, the Center for Political Beauty is denounced as an organization whose primary purpose is to commit serious criminal offences. On a list published by the Government of the state of Thuringia, we find ourselves next to twelve terrorist organizations such as "Islamic State"(ISIS) and "Al Nusra Front". The State Security division of the Federal Criminal Police Office relocated the state prosecutor responsible for the investigation. Who assumes the political responsibility for this? We need every kind of solidarity to ensure that this break with the constitution does not go unnoticed. Attacking artistic freedom equals attacking the constitution. (ZPS)

The tension here between artistic engagement for a cause and the engaged artist's profession and career stands out starkly. This introduces a very important question with respect to artists who migrate and how they struggle to continue as professionals. The migratory process tends to reduce them to the status of "migrant". The live migrant appears to have gone missing once more.

Living with Migrants: Lustgarten's *Lampedusa*

Anders Lustgarten also uses strategies of affective identification to incite audience engagement with the issue of integration of living migrants, but his poetics differ substantially from ZPS's. Lustgarten's play, *Lampedusa*, is comprised of two parallel and complementary monologues. One is that of Stefano, a fisherman turned rescue boat and cleanup worker. Stefano's monologue focuses on the Lampedusa migrant rescues and economic problems on the Italian island in 2013 against the backdrop of his encounter with an African asylum seeker, Modibo. The other monologue interwoven with Stefano's stages is that of Denise, a second-generation immigrant in Great Britain who works as a debt collector. The words of both paint a despairing portrait of European and Britain lamenting their failures as cultures and as an economy. Denise's words serve as a foil to Stefano's account of the October 3rd shipwreck. Her story serves to underscore the extent to which the "migrant crisis" reveals a deeper systemic crisis in Europe. In fact, her

monologue focuses precisely on the hostility to migrants as a defining feature of a segment of the British population:

Spat at on the bus this morning. Couple of public schoolboys, I'd say. I'd not heard 'chinky cunt' in that accent till (sic) recently. But lately I get it quite a bit. Middle class people think racism is free speech now. Tip of the iceberg. Farage. Tip of a greasy gin-soaked iceberg of cuntery. The matchless bitterness of the affluent. [...] I can't stand this country now. The hatred. The hatred and the bitterness and the rage. The misplaced, thick, ignorant rage. (Lustgarten 10-11)

Denise's ancestry (daughter of a British woman and an Asian father) and her job mean she sees this damaging xenophobia first hand as well as the inconsistencies in it.

Me me me. Want want want. Blaming 'fucking migrants' for every single thing we don't like about ourselves." [...] yet another snide little prick yawned in me face [...] and spat at me when I asked him to pay, like I was the one in the wrong. And he did not have a Syrian or a Romanian or a Ugandan accent, let me tell you that. Migrants don't hide their taxes in the Cayman Islands. Migrants don't privatise the NHS. And migrants don't scrape together their life savings, leave their loved ones behind, bribe and fight and struggle their way onto the undercarriage of a train or into a tiny hidden compartment of a lorry with forty other people, watch their mates die or get raped, all for the express purpose of blagging sixty-seven pound forty-six pence a week off of Kirklees District Council. People just don't act like that. (Lustgarten 12)

Stefano's monologue is the core of the play because it discusses the tragedy in Lampedusa. His words describe this as part of the larger failure of countries within the EU and the EU itself. He explains that the deterioration of the situation in Italy ties into a larger pattern: "My father was a fisherman. And his father before him. And before and before. I always thought, always knew, I'd make my living at sea. But the fish are gone. The Med is dead. And my job is to fish out a very different harvest. Three years without work" (Lustgarten 7). Stefano frames the influx of migrants against this:

We read the papers and we see a disaster, a crackdown, a famine, and we say: 'They'll be here next.' Makes me laugh when people call them 'economic migrants'. It's like an earthquake—you feel the tremors far away and you know the tidal wave is coming [...] My beef is why us? This is a small island. The refugee centre is swamped, twelve hundred in a place built for two or three. People sprawled on blankets in the street, kids playing in the dust behind barbed wire. It's embarrassing. Looks like Guantanamo. We're a hospitable people but that centre makes us look cruel and closed. [...] And do the migrants not understand Europe is fucked? And Italy double-fucked? And the south of Italy triple-fucked? My younger brother, much smarter than me, degree in biochemistry (I think), and he had to go to London to find work...as a chef. He says the sous-chef is a biologist from Spain and the kitchen porter is a geneticist from Greece, and in their free time between courses they work on a cure for cancer. It's a joke. They don't get any free time. [...] In Italy there's no hope. Everything is corrupt, the middle-aged cling grimly to their jobs and suffocate the young, and nobody has any idea how to fix it. Pessimism is our national sport, you can see it in our football. And these people, the survivors, the lucky ones, they come on land with these shining gleaming eyes. And I resent them for it. I'll be honest, I do. I resent them for their hope. (Lustgarten 8)

Stefano's pessimism is palpable when he recounts the harsh reality of the October 3rd events:

This morning a migrant boat, unusually overloaded even by the standards of migrant boats, overturned within sight of Rabbit Beach. So far, we're looking at north of 350 dead. Salvo and I personally recovered seventy-four corpses today. Mainly children. Children and women. [...] The fucking numbers. We pulled out four times as many dead last year as the year before. FOUR TIMES. More

than three thousand corpses. And those are just the ones that we found. But nothing changes. People keep pouring in, they run more boats than ever before, boats from Turkey and Lebanon and Libya and Egypt, boats with crews that are set to crash into Europe. Rescue guaranteed 'cos nobody wants a shipwreck off their coastline, so the price of the ticket goes up. Ingenious fuckers the smugglers. (Lustgarten 18-19)

How does the play turn this despair around? Lustgarten has constructed the portions of the monologue dedicated to the October 3rd tragedy to provoke his audience with the objective of motivating political action. To this end, Lustgarten balances the notions of stoicism and indignation in the passages in which Stefano continues to grapple with the memory of that particular rescue. The playwright cultivates traits associated with various nationalities and aligns them to create a more positive European combined reaction through affective identification. Stefano reflects on the situation:

We're fishermen and fishermen die. You're not supposed to make a big deal of death, you mourn and you get back to life while you've still got it. But there's never been a time when three hundred and fifty have died at once. In sight of shore. With no one to mourn for them. (Lustgarten 22)

Lustgarten aligns the stoicism of an Italian fisherman with the stereotypical trait associated with the British. This helps domesticate Stefano's anger while encouraging the audience feel scandalized by the idea of the "orphaned" dead. Here, however, Lustgarten takes poetic license in order to provoke his audience. Lustgarten sets Stefano (the "good", though somewhat reluctant European) against an imagined stereotypical "bad" European who cannot show respect for the dead. The audience is invited to choose to be a "good" European. At the same time, Lustgarten does not ignore the risk of backlash linked to a desire to help. He opens up the question of unrealistic ambitions to act as a savior that can lead to a feeling of impotence with potentially disastrous consequences. Stefano describes what happened to his suggestively-named friend, Salvo:

Salvo's problem is he's an idealist. He joined to rescue people. To 'help'. Those people are always the most selfish because it's to help on their terms. And rescuing people is not the key part of the job. The key part of the job is the dead. And Salvo began very quickly to hate these dead people, because they kept coming and coming and they wouldn't stop. He began to take it personally, like they were dying just to upset him, to make him feel like a failure. And now he calls them 'the niggers' and is going to vote Berlusconi in the next election. Ridiculous. For one thing, Berlusconi is banned from the next election. Read the papers you twat. And for another, because they aren't. Only. Black. (Lustgarten 8)

In 2013, Lustgarten's play focused on current events. With time, this connection is forgotten. Still, the monologue remains powerful, notably because of how it stages the rescue of Modibo's wife and son and then describes their highly-symbolic "European wedding". In addition to the historical context that Stefano's words provide, the monologue introduces multiple glosses on the various European reactions to the human tragedy. It deliberately highlights bathos and a sense of injustice by staging frustration and anger. The character proposes a model for audience reaction that encompasses both Italian and British sensibilities in a call to European action. While Lustgarten's *Lampedusa* insists heavily on the failure of Europe, Italy, and Britain, it rejects complacent despair. Ultimately, Lustgarten turns the narrative of European despair and distrust on its head, replacing it with hope. In Stefano's narrative, his encounter with the Malian refugee, Modibo, when his boat won't start offers a hopeful metaphoric narrative for Europe. The EU, like Stefano's boat, just does not work, but the story of cooperation and help between

Stefano and Modibo illustrates the idea that if Europeans rescue the migrants and help them find safe passage to Europe, then the migrants can help fix the “broken boat” of Europe, integrating in and doing work that needs to be done. In Denise’s monologue, it is her sick and disabled mother who dies and the Portuguese immigrant who asks her to share a flat enabling Denise to finish her education. Lustgarten pushes home his point regarding hope and salvation thanks to immigrants quite explicitly. Denise’s monologue ends with her recounting the answer she gave in her exam for her correspondence course in economics to get her university degree to explain a phenomenon usually interpreted as proof of greed and poor choices. Denise interprets this differently:

I wrote the empirical studies of the monkey trap experiment do not support the presumed hypothesis of inherent greed. To wit: in the vast majority of test cases, the monkeys let go of the treats. They demonstrate a clear understanding of the relative importance of grated coconuts vis-à-vis their own bollocks. That’s not me answer word for word, obviously. I wrote that the monkey trap experiment is fundamentally an indicator of *hope*. It speaks to our ability to walk away from delusions, from traps. To save ourselves from our baser instincts. Me last line, and I can’t believe I actually wrote this hippy shit but fuck it, was, ‘Perhaps the ultimate purpose of the experiment is for the monkeys to teach us something. (Lustgarten 32)

Stefano has the last word with his monologue in speaking of the migrants:

They’ve given us joy. And hope. They’ve brought us the thing we have nothing of. And I thank them for that. They don’t know what’ll happen. If either of them will get to stay long-term. But they’re here, in this moment, alive and living. And that is all you can ask for. I defy you to see the joy in Modibo and Aminata’s faces and not feel hope. I defy you. (Lustgarten 33)

Strategically, the Lustgarten is careful to temper accounts of despair, anger, and frustration with humor and hope so that the audience is not overwhelmed by untrammelled negativity. His play is critical of Europe and does seek to demonstrate problems in Europe. At the same time, however, Lustgarten underscores these with the triple goal of informing, educating, and motivating the audience to act.

Conclusion

This brief sketch allows us to see the tropes that European caricaturists, playwrights and performance artists use to portray Europe with respect to the migrant experience. These include Europe as fortress, a no-man’s land, a cemetery, a broken boat, a failed and fatal bureaucratic structure, a collection of weak, degenerate, selfish, and xenophobic populations. The question remains as to how this criticism should be understood. Is it Euroscepticism or merely criticism aimed at improving Europe?

While caricatures, because of their ephemeral nature, may elicit Euroscepticism, the theatrical stagings of cross-Mediterranean migration and shipwrecks tend to be part of larger projects that appear cautiously and critically Europhilic. These performance pieces reject idealism and use tropes of failure to stage Europe. At the same time, they are associated with various forms of cultural activism that aims to remediate the failed structures. Some, like ZPS’s *Aktionen*, stage Europe by linking fantasy and real action. By blurring the lines between fiction and reality, they emphasize the link between imagination and political action. ZPS’s *Aktionen* do, however, raise

questions over the ethical consequences of deliberately duping audiences using social media and publicity in an age where “fake news” and “facts” have become the subject of dispute. Other theatrical works use historicized fiction in a more familiar fashion. The close analysis of Lustgarten’s *Lampedusa* suggests that tropes of failure are key to these stagings as well. In fact, one can argue that the tropes of failure used to stage the EU form a key element in a process of imagining how Europe can be redeemed and rejuvenated through the integration of migrants. Having looked at a sample of plays and performance art created by Europeans that tries to imagine the migrant experience from a European perspective, the next step would be to examine how European artists stage this from a migrant perspective and then how migrants themselves stage Europe in their own artistic work describing their experience trying to enter Europe.

This current study of artistic responses to European-bound migration in general in political caricatures and theatrical works by Lina Prosa, Marco Martinelli, Anders Lustgarten, and Philipp Ruch’s Zentrum für Politische Schönheit play a key role in how Europe imagines itself in the 21st century. An analysis of their work helps sketch an overview of how the theater and performing arts engage with the trope of Europe and the political reality of Europe in the early 21st century. It suggests that these public performances, in which Europe and the migrant are figures constantly oscillating between failure, hope, and desire, create and nourish Europe. They attest to its success, albeit an inherently and inevitably flawed success. At the same time, these performances also strive to rehabilitate the image of both the artist and the migrant, emphasizing the positive contribution of artists and artistic institutions in contemporary society as well as the positive contribution and potential contribution of migrants.

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