

TALKING BODIES OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

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Introduction

“I wonder what a country is like where all the children have hare faces. Maybe hares have a child's face”³.

The environmental hazards and expenses are disproportionately felt by certain socioeconomic groups, as has been mentioned. The causes of environmental disasters are frequently attributed to a small minority on a worldwide scale that engages in extracting, producing, consuming, and repeatedly placing the blame on Others. Those who were unfairly disadvantaged due to factors such as gender, color, or class are required to pay an additional fee. Increasing one's exposure to the harmful effects of pollution, contamination, and abuse of the environment is a form of penance. In contrast to idealized portrayals of nature, environmental justice advocates do not seek to protect the rich biodiversity of unspoiled "without walls" locations known as locus amoeni. Environmental justice hotspots do, in fact, have barriers. The walls are usually those in the house, and they may have wallpaper from the 1970s. Or perhaps the ones at the steel plant, where asbestos and reinforced concrete form its structural framework. Humans pollute both the natural environment and themselves to the same extent, turning the outdoors into a "space of everyday life" (Armiero, 2013, p.22). From this vantage point, we may grasp the ecofeminist ecological self and reject it: an identity that is greatly affected by its environment as it develops and changes in relation to it. Overexposed and symptomatic in environmental justice is the human body. As a matter of fact, it is the gold standard—often utilized as proof in extensive trials—of the correlation between human actions, environmental

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³ Gaard, G. (2017). *Critical Ecofeminism*. Lanham (MD): Rowman & Littlefield. Gaard, G. and Murphy, P. D. (1998). *Ecofeminist Literary Criticism*. Champaign (IL): University of Illinois Press.

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exposure, and illness. The existence of a relationship that is not immediately apparent does not negate its existence.

Environmental justice, similar to ecofeminism, is a turning point in conventional environmental culture, a call to action that raises consciousness while simultaneously challenging the idea that "greater economic growth = greater well-being for all." Environmental justice is not based on delegating knowledge. No amount of hearsay or reliance on middlemen can satisfy knowledge, not even scientific knowledge. The environmental justice movement in the United States has a famous slogan that says, "We speak for ourselves." It's true that no one else talks about our problems, but us. With a bottom-up strategy based on observation and first-hand experience, the movement is building enough data to question long-held scientific beliefs and fiercely defend its stances in court. Additionally, there is a readiness and necessity to express and share a narrative and perspective that differs greatly from the majority's because "Narrating means counter-narrating, because environmental injustice is not only enforced with armoured vehicles and truncheons, but also with a narrative that eradicates any possible alternative, that imposes an official truth, and that criminalises those who oppose it" (Armiero, 2014, p. 16). Storytelling is also an act of defiance. The physical aspect of corporeal witness is the ideal meeting point for the desires to be heard in instances of environmental injustice and the indomitable will to stand alone.

The narrative carried by diseased bodies, polluted areas, natural disasters, and harmful substances show how the discursive and material realms collide. Concurrently, they serve as witnesses to the inseparable bond between humans and the natural world and as undeniable evidence of the culturally-established dysfunctional relationship between the two. They challenge the notion of human and non-human realms being inseparable, a myth that has self-assuredly embraced both causes and effects without ever bringing them together. This viscous porosity about which Nancy Tuana writes in her book: To demonstrate that "social practices and natural phenomena" do not constitute "a sharp ontological divide," but rather "a complex interaction of phenomena," one must have firsthand experience with Hurricane Katrina (Tuana, 2008, p. 193). This idea is further elaborated upon by Laura Conti in her analysis of the cultural

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and social forces that have influenced the ecological linkages in Seveso, in addition to the material ones:

I was starting to get the idea that "environment" encompasses more than just the elements of the earth, air, and water. When thinking about humans and their impact on the natural world, it's important to include not only our connections to one another but also to the things we create and the plants we grow. Taking into account just the "sevesini" was meaningless without also taking into account the araucaria in front of the houses and the vegetable fields behind them [...]. (According to Conti, 1977, page 85)

A viscous porosity of flesh—my flesh and the flesh of the world—mediates the interactions between us and the world, according to Tuana. These membranes can be social, biological, or political in character. We are both part of the world and a part of it through this porosity. Because of the presence of membranes that influence the interactions, I call it viscous. Different kinds of skin and flesh, biases and symbolic imaginations, routines and embodiments make up these membranes. Ivi, pages 199–200

Polluted air from burning plastic not only gets into people's bodies, but it also starts a chain reaction that gradually changes their bodies: "Components of the bottle have an agency that transforms the naturally occurring flesh of my body into a different material structure than what occurs in nature" (Ivi, p. 202). According to Braidotti (2009), bodies serve as both a site of material and symbolic energies coming together, as well as a battlefield for a paradoxical struggle. Indeed, human bodies reveal the dangers posed to themselves and the environment by people equipped with radioactive waste, harmful chemicals, plastic, other forms of garbage, and electromagnetic waves.

Here, it's also worth noting Michelle Murphy's (2018) proposal of Alterlife in Making Kin Not Population. When discussing the detrimental impacts of industrial chemicals, the idea of Alterlife always comes up. These chemicals "continue spreading ubiquitously across the earth, transforming the epigenomes, neurobiology and metabolism of living beings, human, non-human and more than human" (Murphy, 2018, p. 113). Lead and mercury are present in high concentrations in indigenous territories in Canada, including the Grassy Narrows and the Aamjiwnaang First Nations. Murphy describes this as "a persistent form of colonial violence, an

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interruption to Indigenous sovereignty and the relations that make up land and life" (Ibidem), offering a thoughtful interpretation of this bodily invasion pollutant. Seveso and Casale Monferrato, like other small suburban towns where polluting multinationals set up shop, can be seen in this light as places where the land and people have been conquered, exploited, and drained, and then left to suffer in isolation. "Alterlife [...] is extensive, now planet wide, even as it is unevenly concentrated in some places and bodies" (Ivi, p. 116), which puts the idea of environmental justice in relation to specific territories, communities, or individuals at odds with the idea of environmental slowness, as is characteristic of the environmental violence investigated in the Casale Monferrato case. The same is true here⁴.

Indeed, dirty bodies can also be a window into societal inequality. The right to health is the first to be violated when environmental injustice targets those who are vulnerable. Bodies polluted with dioxin are most commonly found among working-class people, blue-collar wives, non-human animals, and people whose physical and social environments put them at increased risk: The political inaction regarding the environmental risks posed by plastics has left its mark on many lives, but those who live near plastics factories or garbage incinerators, as well as the workers who produce these materials, have endured the worst of the consequences. (Industria, 2008, p. 203)

The instances will revolve around Tuana's concept of porosity as well as Alaimo's notion of transcorporeality. Both Tuana and Alaimo are neomaterialist feminist thinkers; however, Alaimo argues that it is impossible to separate the material and carnal being from its environment since the subject of knowledge is always entangled with the world's substances (Alaimo, 2016). "Space-time in which human corporeality, in its carnal and material being, is inseparable from nature and environment" (Alaimo, 2008, p. 238) is what the trans-body dimension is all about, according to Alaimo's work in *Trans-Corporeal Feminism and the Ethical Space of Nature*. This dimension encompasses human and non-human bodies, which are seen as porous and open systems that are both traversed and cohabited by the substances of the world. The material effects of these substances influence these bodies. The line separating the

⁴Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). (2022). *Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change. Contribution of Working Group III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press.

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natural from the artificial becomes increasingly blurry as a result of the constant mixing of bodies, agents, and effects. The purported autonomy of human beings, like any line of demarcation, becomes blurry in the face of environmental disasters⁵.

The neomaterialist feminist movement ultimately leads to Barad's view of nature, which involves rethinking nature through what she terms "intra-actions" between material and discursive, human and non-human, phenomena. "Matter and meaning are not independent parts," argues Barad, whose ideas will be included into the Seveso case narrative: "Matter and meaning are interconnected in the "ongoing performance of the world" (Barad, 2007, p. 149). Nothing, no matter how powerful, can separate them because of how connected they are. Nothing can separate matter from meaning, not even a nuclear explosion, a centrifuge, or chemical processing. Being significant and having substance are two sides of the same coin (Ivi, p. 3). Horizontally, human and non-human elements mix. This is exemplified, for instance, by the material consequences of unchecked pollution, which mixes with and disturbs both human life and natural ecosystems. Serenella Iovino identifies a confluence of factors, each with its own tangible, impactful, and porous nature, that is causing a blurring of human and environmental health. These factors include, but are not limited to, the following: an upsurge in cancer rates in both humans and animals; pollution of our oceans, rivers, and aquifers; an increase in the number of spontaneous abortions; a threat to biodiversity; the loss of natural landscapes; issues of failed citizenship, both new and old; and insufficient social and environmental policies.

In this chapter, I will present two environmental justice cases—Casale Monferrato and Seveso—where, on the one hand, human-environment interactions reveal this invasive reciprocity; on the other, power imbalances and dominance show themselves clearly in the selection of the primary, expendable victims of environmental injustice. This way, the victim's condition could get worse forever:

- Multiplied by 1: victim of environmental disaster;
- Multiplied by 2: victim of social inequalities and injustices;

⁵International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) (2021).

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- Multiplied by ∞ : victim of intersectional discrimination.

Considering how bodily functions, wants, orientations, and harms align with or differ from societal categories, conventions, and discourses is an essential political and epistemological task, as pointed out by Stacy Alaimo in *Exposed: Environmental Politics and Pleasures in Posthuman Times*, [f]or feminists, LGBTQ people, people of color, people with disabilities, and others. A question of life and death for some. "Alaimo" (2016, p. 184) Indeed, an intersectional ecofeminist approach breaks down divisions between gender, race, and class. It approaches and questions a multitude of ecojustice issues, including global gender justice, climate justice, sustainable agriculture, healthy and affordable housing, universal and reliable health care, especially for mothers and infants, safe, reliable, and free or low-cost reproductive technologies, food security, sexual self-determination, energy justice, interspecies justice, ecological, diverse, and inclusive educational curricula, religious freedom from fundamentalism, indigenous rights, the production and disposal of hazardous waste, and many more.

Also, through their narratives, we will see how women have played and continue to play a key part in the fight for environmental justice. First, by quickly intervening at the terrible Seveso scene, Laura Conti provides a voice to a community that has crumbled under the shame of contamination and stands up for the women who were most affected by dioxin. However, Romana Blasotti Pavesi and the other women of Casale Monferrato begin a grieving process, demand justice, and reclaim their collective identity through resistance and storytelling⁶.

- **Seveso: a dioxin-told story**

Before 10 July 1976, the only time 2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin, or TCDD, had come into contact with humans was between 1961 and 1971, during the Vietnam War. The compound that was formerly harmlessly used in herbicide manufacture became known as Agent Orange during the conflict. The US Army razed the South Vietnamese jungles that effectively masked Vietnamese troops using 75,000 liters of it. Chemically, Agent Orange differed from other defoliants deployed by the same army during the same war—Agents Blue, White, Pink, and

⁶Iocca,G.(2011).*CasaleMonferrato:la polverecheuccide.Vocidalla Chernobylitaliana*. Roma:Ediesse.
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Purple—by virtue of its primary harmful pollutant component, dioxin. This chemical is now notoriously known as Seveso dioxin. According to Bevilacqua (2006), Seveso was the first ecocatastrophe in Italy during the industrial period. Agricultural production and fishing suffer, and people exposed to dioxin—and their children and grandchildren—are forced to live with serious illnesses. The ecological consequences of dioxin on biodiversity, groundwater pollution, soil impoverishment, and erosion are undeniable, but the social consequences are just as terrible. Political dynamics, gender hierarchies, and discriminatory behaviors are eventually brought to light by dioxin, even when the cause-effect link is not mathematically or logically identical. Givaudan S.A. of Geneva, which was acquired by the Hoffman Roche Group in 1963, owned ICMESA S.p.A. (Industrie Chimiche Meda Società) in the municipality of Meda, on the border with Seveso, about 15 km north of Milan. The company produced pharmaceutical and cosmetic intermediates. A thick, odorous dioxin cloud was emitted into the atmosphere on July 10, 1976, by the A 101 reactor in section B of the plant⁷.

I was there on the terrace that day. It was 12.15 or 12.30. There was this smell. It hadn't rained for days. There was a drought. It was rumoured in the village, either due to ignorance or... so... as a joke, that there were planes trying to cause rain. I used to work down in the bar, with my dad. Ordinary people who came to the bar said: "Did you smell that?" They said: "It must be those disinfectants they are throwing in to make it rain". (Interview with a newspaper-seller woman, resident in Seveso, quoted in Centemeri, 2006, p. 13)

- **Casale Monferrato: a place identity surviving asbestos**

Although it was costly and took a long time, Casale Monferrato's narrative is one of success. Another trait that Rob Nixon ascribes to environmental aggression is its slowness: [...] attritional violence, which is often not perceived as violent, is characterized by a slow but steady devastation that spreads across space and time. [...] a brutality that is not sudden nor spectacular but builds upon itself, with disastrous consequences felt over several time scales (Nixon, 2011, p. 2).

⁷Iovino, S. (2017). *I racconti della diossina. Laura Conti e i corpi di Seveso*. Torino:Università di Torino.

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This example of environmental violence is so gradual that the term "latency" must be used to describe it. The time it takes to become aware that you've been exposed to asbestos is practically random, and the borders of when asbestos exposure occurred are hazy due to latency. From the beginning of the industrial revolution forward, asbestos was extensively utilized in various sectors, including construction, shipbuilding, electrical, chemical, aeronautical, automotive, railway, and textile industries, due to its sound-absorbing and heat-insulating properties as well as its low cost, ease of manufacture, and resistance to temperature changes and corrosive chemicals. This began with the so-called industrial revolution and was most pronounced in Italy, the first European country to become a major player in the asbestos industry until the 1990s. About 40% of Italian structures built between 1967 and 1975 reportedly contain asbestos, illustrating the material's extensive usage in that country⁸

Italy did not formally list asbestosis among occupational disorders until 1943, despite the fact that the findings of the earliest medical research on asbestos-related diseases acknowledged the condition as one to which workers were exposed as early as 1924 in *The British Medical Journal*. Indeed, worldwide scientific investigations did not definitively acknowledge asbestos as a carcinogenic substance until the mid-1970s, confirming the worst news of all: that exposure to the substance causes tumors, particularly pleural mesothelioma. The fact that mesothelioma takes 40–50 years to manifest is a major contributing factor (Ziglioli, 2017). Given that the peak of asbestos extraction, production, and consumption occurred in the second half of the 1970s, and that Italy imposed a ban on all asbestos-containing products (including their import, export, marketing, and production) with Law No. 257 of 27 March 1992, it is evident that Italy was one of the countries hit hard by the asbestos boom of the 1970s during this time. It became painfully clear, as in the Seveso case, that the contamination spread throughout the entire urban network, not just to those who worked directly with asbestos. "[Mesothelioma] hits without order, a blow here and a blow there. It has spread the field, taking those who have worked with asbestos and those who have never touched it but who, by some inscrutable ill fate, inhaled its evil fiber" (Testimony of Daniela Degiovanni in Mossano, 2010, p. 125). Balangero, in the province of Turin, is home to one of the biggest asbestos mines in the world, as well as

⁸Merchant, C. (1980). *The Death of Nature*. New York: HarperCollins.

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the largest in Europe. Primo Levi's first employment was as a chemist within the quarry in 1941, where he was responsible for analyzing serpentine rock samples and investigating the prospect of nickel extraction. In his 1975 book *The Periodic System*, he details the asbestos mine and the dangerous working conditions of the miners that worked there:

A cyclopean, cone-shaped valley, an artificial crater with a diameter of four hundred meters, lay buried on a bare hill covered in sharp rocks and stumps; it bore striking resemblance to the Hell depicted schematically in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. the following: The activity continued as a cloud of dust descended upon the plain, creating an apocalyptic commotion. The material underwent further crushing until it became gravel, followed by drying and sifting. It was evident that the ultimate goal of this massive effort was to recover the pitiful 2% of asbestos that was embedded in those rocks. ("Levi, 1984," pp. 67–68)

Their name, Eternit, comes from the fact that the Balangero asbestos plant was the biggest producer of fibre cement, a substance used in construction that is a combination of cement and asbestos. Forever present. Roofing materials and pipe insulation were made by the Eternit company, which was a part of the larger Eternit Group in Switzerland. Casale Monferrato was strategically selected as the site for the facility due to its proximity to water, its status as one of Italy's main cement hubs, and the ease of transport operations provided by the existing railway station. The Eternit Pietra Artificiale firm, headquartered in Genoa, oversaw the plant's 1906 opening and 1932 expansion (Ziglioli, 2017). The factory did not officially close until 1986. In a story-report published on 28 February 1954 in the Turin edition of the newspaper *l'Unità*, Italo Calvino discusses the Balangero quarry and its impact on the environment and human health. In the piece, titled "La Fabbrica nella Montagna," Calvino laments the disappearance of the mountain's natural features and warns of the dangers posed by asbestos dust: "[...] there are no hares in the woods, no mushrooms grow in the red earth of the chestnut husks, no wheat grows in the hard fields of the surrounding villages, there is only the grey dust of asbestos from the quarry that burns, leaves and lungs where it arrives, there is the quarry, the only one like it in Europe, their life and their death" (Calvino, 1954). Calvino's remarks from the mid-1950s

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provide a clear picture of the connection between the Casale Monferrato neighborhood and the Eternit factory and asbestos. The plant provided jobs and attracted workers, which in turn distributed money and life. In return, the community's well-being and the possibility of mortality are on the line. Despite the emergence of multiple cases of cancer, the risks of asbestos exposure were drowned out by the gratitude of the workers and the entire community. Midway through the 1970s, a group of employees and unionists chose to free themselves from the "monetisation of risk" (a complex system of pay raises for individuals who dealt directly with the raw material) and end the blackmail. The community was rescued from what Nicola Pondrano terms as Eternit's "deadly embrace" (Pondrano in Iocca, 2011, p. 16). This embrace consisted of blinding benefits like "the seaside holiday camp, the Befana for the children, olive oil twice a year, superminimes, the food shop, work shifts calibrated to favor even double activities [...], salaries with surcharges for uncomfortable or dusty workers" (Ibidem). The young worker Nicola Pondrano, backed by Bruno Pesce, launched an unsuccessful campaign against the working conditions and their impact on the health of the entire community. The entire Monferrato community was involved in the information and awareness-raising efforts that originated from the factory. The community's attention was divided between the alarming number of mesothelioma cases and the difficulty of accepting a reality that was both overwhelming and deeply connected to the factory, which had shaped and entangled the community's identity. With the goal of bringing citizens even closer to the criticality of reality, describing it, and rousing them up from that deadly spell, the Associazione Familiari Lavoratori Eternit Defunti (AFLED) was formed in 1988 and renamed as Associazione Familiari Vittime Amianto (AFEVA) in 2020. In the following, Pondrano describes the origins and character of the association in his own words⁹:

In the past, we considered forming an association... We experimented with many acronyms until this one, Afled, emerged. Romana Blasotti was requested to assume the presidency by us. [...]. Despite her initial reluctance, she eventually agreed. [...]. We were able to have more conversations because of that container. A more powerful message may be conveyed to the city

⁹Merchant, C. (1996). *Earthcare. Women and the Environment*. New York: Routledge. Merchant, C. (2003). *Reinventing Eden. The Fate of Nature in Western Culture*. New York: Routledge.

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in this way. The employees had an established point of contact: the unions, with the majority corresponding with the CGIL. As time went on, the association became more of a ploy to represent non-CGIL members, family members, and the environment. (Nicola Pondrano's confession, Casale Monferrato, 25 March 2015, as reported in Ziglioli, 2018, p. 57) Romana Blasotti Pavesi is the perfect person to encapsulate the association's values and mission. Romana was forcibly removed from her native Salona d'Isonzo, near Gorizia (now Slovenia) when she was eighteen years old, as a result of the annexation of Yugoslavia. She was born in 1929. Casale Monferrato is her next stop. Her parents were employees of an Eternit Group factory, therefore the company was already a part of her family tree when she was a little girl. 'We were looking for a job at Eternit, but it wasn't like that, there was a queue to get in.' (Testimony of Romana Blasotti Pavesi in Mossano, 2010, p. 102) In 1955, Mario Pavesi joined her in her marriage, and they both eventually found employment in the factory around 1948. For all the people for whom the plant was a beacon of hope, a means of subsistence, and a potential home for future generations, Romana's connection with the Swiss conglomerate was emblematic of that. Gratitude and calm. A sad chain reaction occurs as a result of this relationship's development: asbestos kills her husband, sister, niece, and daughter. Even with all the ups and downs in her life, Romana's tale is tragically still a reflection of many others. Romana exemplifies the sentiment shared by the survivors—a hint of shame—while also standing in for "the wife, the mother, the sister, the daughter of all the Eternit workers, of all the victims' relatives, of all the potential future victims, in short of the whole city" (Ziglioli, 2018, p. 58).

How often have I pondered the question, "Why me?" in relation to my daughter and husband? Who are my nephew and sister, anyway? Can someone just tell me what I need to know? Indeed, everyone's safety is in jeopardy in Casale Monferrato. I don't understand why I was completely unaffected. I can relate; I've been there. As a matter of fact, after years of washing the overalls my husband would bring home, I believe I've had more opportunities to be infected than any of my deceased relatives. (Romana Blasotti's testimony is presented in Iocca (2011), on page 86.) "I will never tire of saying this, even if it is my last breath: more must be done so that research can provide an answer of hope, of healing. Taking over as president of the association five years

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after her husband Mario Pavesi's death allowed Romana to embody not only the dramatic feeling shared by the Eternit victims' relatives, but also the anger, energy, and overwhelming desire for justice that has always defined the association's activities. I am not requesting this out of sympathy, but rather in pursuit of fairness. It is for the sake of justice, indeed (Romana Blasotti Pavesi's testimony is cited in Mossano, 2010, p. 106). Romana is chosen by the public as a symbol of the Casale tragedy, and she is also honored at the highest institutional level for her dedication to combating this "sick" (Bullian 2008, p. 218) production model, being appointed Commendatore of the Republic in 2014 (Ziglioli, 2018). Teachers, doctors, journalists, volunteers, victims' families, and victims themselves all lend their voices to the affirmation of the place's identity, so hers isn't the only female voice involved in the slow, unstoppable, and constant process of processing and transforming grief into justice. When it comes to asbestos, the female citizen narrative dismantles social and familial barriers. Collective memory is reconstructed, preserved, and made clear through the gathering of human stories and testimony. In this setting, the female narrator of recollection goes well beyond a simple recounting of family history; unlike Seveso, it does not try to hide or control what transpired. As a result of the women's efforts, the community is able to cope with the catastrophe, work through its anguish, and ultimately seek justice. The community gains a sense of pride that puts it above asbestos in this way.

[...] women are on the front lines: their roles in the home and community inform their mobilization to defend territory, but this also causes them to become politically subjected and, in many instances, leads to changes that extend beyond the immediate goal and duration of the mobilization. According to Barca and Guidi (2013), on page 8,

Silvana Mossano focuses on the ways in which women cope with suffering and the role that women from many fields, including medicine, academia, journalism, and the Casale Monferrato association, play in shaping the community's story of contamination.

When men in a family are grieving, women typically step up to the plate while men retreat. However, it must be done by some. We do it because someone else has to, so maybe it's simply

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our temperament. The following may or may not be true: Assunta Prato, too, used the tool that was most comfortable for her—teaching—to narrate it with remarkable effectiveness. Daniela Degiovanni, in her role as a poet and an accomplished doctor, narrated pain not only through words but also through action. I, too, narrated it—I am a chronicler—but I found myself narrating it anyway. Whatever the case may be, this is what transpired. According to Ziglioli (2018), on page 67, Silvana Mossano testified orally in Casale Monferrato on February 19, 2018. In 1984, while still a young reporter for the local newspaper "Il Monferrato," Silvia Mossano made a difference by publishing the disturbing findings of an epidemiological survey that had been conducted in Casale Monferrato for a decade. Since then, she has been the go-to person for any news pertaining to asbestos. She never would have thought that her own life and family would be at the center of those frightening facts: her husband Marco Giorcelli was diagnosed with mesothelioma less than a month after the release of her popular book *Malapolvere Una città si ribella ai signori dell'amianto* (2010), in which she gathers nineteen testimonies from "women in the dust," reports on the Eternit settlement's history, and fictionalizes a mother and widow's experience with a pleural mesothelioma diagnosis, forcing her to prepare for what she has left to survive in the coming months. Theatrical monologue *Malapolvere Veleni e Antidoti per l'Invisibile*, performed by Turin actor Laura Curino across Italy since 2012, will draw inspiration from the works of Mossano. Mossano, in the aforementioned testimony, alludes to two other female figures who played an essential role in elevating asbestos from the realm of solely trade union reclamation and compensation concerns to that of everyday commonality and discourse that sustains communal identity. In fact, the community's vision is able to break free of an immobile and painful past and project itself into the future, all because the younger generation is getting involved and the dialog is being repositioned on a daily and familiar level. Both Daniela Degiovanni, an oncologist, and Maria Assunta Prato, a lecturer who works closely with students and has daily interactions with them, help to spread the word about this topic. Daniela Degiovanni always wanted to be a doctor, even when she was a little girl. During the early years of cancer treatment, when "Umberto Veronesi's group at the Tumour Institute in Milan was beginning to record the first positive results" (Testimony by Daniela Degiovanni in Mossano, 2010, p. 124), she specialized in oncology after completing her medical studies in

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Turin. The incident involving dust diseases happened by chance: as the consultant for pulmonary diseases at the Inca CGIL patronage was about to retire, Daniela stepped in and joined other determined doctors, unionists, lawyers, and volunteers in fighting "on the right side" (Ibid.) against Inail and asbestos. Her permanent position in the oncology department of the Casale hospital began in 1982. People who had never been to the plant before came to see her, and she also saw familiar faces among the employees she had previously investigated while dealing with the patronage. In doing so, Daniela gained a more nuanced grasp of the disease's impact on communities and the environment, and she set out on a mission to raise scientific awareness in the field through organizing conferences, meetings, and partnerships with prominent medical professionals, who helped spread her message of "Be careful, you will die of asbestos" to a wider audience (Ibid.). Even still, Daniela wasn't content. In 1996, she established Vitas, a nonprofit that offers palliative and home care to cancer patients and their families. In 2009, she was one of the prominent figures behind the Hospice at the Santo Spirito hospital in Casale, which serves as an alternative to patients' homes when they require sheltered care. When President Sergio Mattarella bestowed the title of Cavaliere della Repubblica upon her, the reverberation of her dedication reverberated through the highest levels of Italian institutions (Ziglioli, 2018). After relocating to Casale in 1975, Maria Assunta Prato left her hometown of San Salvatore Monferrato. Paolo Ferraris was her husband at the time of her marriage. Given that they shared merely a municipality of residency, it was implausible that they would encounter Eternit—she a teacher and he a revered representative of the Christian Democrat left. It was still seen as an issue affecting the blue collar workers: "[...] I feel sorry for all those who died, but [...] I'm certainly not working at Eternit." (Maria Assunta Prato's statement, given in Casale Monferrato on February 16, 2018, as cited in Ziglioli, 2018, p. 62). Two years and eight months elapsed between her husband's 1994 pleural mesothelioma diagnosis and his death at age 49. Because Maria Assunta knew that the messages that came only served to confuse rather than educate the young people, she channeled her own grief into a potent form of communication with the express purpose of reaching out to them.

There were a lot of teachers who weren't from Casale, and a lot of them weren't sensitive to the problem. Some teachers might not have known how to handle the situation with 12-year-olds,

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because it's not easy. Also, I couldn't help but wonder what sort of child would pick up a book detailing the experiences of orphans and widows who are grieving the loss of a parent or spouse. All of the previous publications failed to address this issue in a way that children could understand... (Ibidem)

An idea for a graphic novel based on the life of Casale Monferrato, Eternit, came from this. In 2011, Assunta Prato wrote the words and Gea Ferraris drew the pictures for *Dissolvenza in Bianco*, an effective tool for disseminating knowledge and garnering attention to a group of people to whom no one had yet figured out how to transfer the narrative torch. However, Prato continued his work and in 2013 he released the fable *Attenti al Polverino!*, which was addressed to the smallest children. The illustrations for the book were created by students at the Leardi Institute of Casale. "Now it is your turn: when you grow up you will have to continue to seek justice, to do scientific research, to make the environment healthy and clean. It is your turn to do this," the fable says, its narrative and visual effects powerfully inviting young readers to join the fight for justice.

Just like in Seveso, a 29,000 m² park called Eternot Park now sits on the site of the old Eternit factory in Casale Monferrato. Standing on the ashes of the former Eternit factory, the park carries forward the historical memory of the place and the commitment of its citizens. It also puts an end to the lethal eternity of asbestos and formalizes the completeness of the reclamation work on the site, in contrast to the distance that the "Bosco delle Querce" wants to create between its current state and its past, almost as if it wants to leave out the reason it is there. Complete and utter reclamation of this land is an example that is both unusual and virtuous in Italy. When social justice and environmental rehabilitation work hand in side, the message of our interconnectedness with the natural world becomes even more powerful.

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