

The TransMediterranAtlantic Decolonial Turn. Can Imagination Un/Wall Geo-political and Disciplinary Boundaries?

Abstract: The essay aims at de/clining and at the same time questioning the methodology of de/linking, des/prenderse, dis/connecting from the politics, aesthesis, and geo-psycho-corpo-graphies of modern/imperial powers and epistemologies still at work. The inspirational writings, performances and actions nurturing the critical, poetical, political and ethical perspective I here define “other than TransAtlantic archaeology of coloniality” – a Southern archaeology contemplating the ‘transmediterraneanization’ of the Atlantic and of the postcolonial and the decolonial routes – come from the encounters with non-nationalistic intellectuals, activists and diasporic talents expressing transgressive visions of the state of things in their po(li)et(h)ical works and epistemologies (ref.: the colonialidad/modernidad school; the philosophy of consciousness filtered through Maria Lugones’ gendered decolonial lens; African and Afro-diasporic post-colonial forerunners; Gloria Anzaldúa’s elaboration of border thinking/crossing and its development into the decolonial space of *conocimiento* she calls ‘nepantla’, 2002). As a component of the activist cultural and aesthetic research project *UN/WALLING THE MEDITERRANEAN - S/MURARE IL MEDITERRANEO. Local, national and trans-border ARTivist practices for a poetics and politics of hospitality and mobility* (Bari Univ., 2009-today) predicated by decolonial thinking, in this paper I speak from a Southern Mediterranean geo-corpo-graphical peninsular perspective and history in order to develop a Southern border critical thinking delinked from the normativity of geo-political, hetero-normative and ‘modern’ disciplinary boundaries.

Keywords: *un/walling geo-political and art boundaries, TransMediterrAtlantic, gnoseological turn, southern decolonizing imagination and imaginaries, imagination and disciplinarity, ARTivism, geocorpographies, conocimiento versus knowledge, border aesthesis, poli(e)(h)ics, crisis of disciplinarity*

Je vais aborder la vaste question de la décolonisation des savoirs sous un angle précis, celui de l’imaginaire. Car décoloniser les sciences humaines, l’histoire entre autres, c’est aussi indéniablement, décoloniser l’imaginaire.

Claude Bourguignon Rougier, *Chaos et colonialité de l’imaginaire*

1. Introduction

UN/WALLING THE MEDITERRANEAN/S/MURARE IL MEDITERRANEO: Local, national and trans-border ARTivist practices for a poetics and politics of hospitality and mobility is a research project conceived by myself and started in Bari in 2009 with a team of scholars, PhD researchers and cultural/political activists.¹ Informed by postcolonial epistemologies, its activist, cultural, epistemological, geo-political and aesthetic components stem primarily from the reconsideration of historical phenomena and cultural genealogies in the light of the *colonialidad/modernidad* solicitations. It equally emerges from the interaction with new imaginative works that demand the elaboration of new spaces-gazes-thinking-and-feelings by establishing a call-and-response movement across borders, as well as across all sorts of anthropological, cultural, gender, and aesthetic differences. Postcolonial

¹ The Un/Walling the Mediterranean project is today composed by activist national and international researchers from Bari, Montpellier-France, Chicago-US, Rio de Janeiro-Brasil, Naples-Caserta, L’Aquila, Johannesburg-South Africa, Debrecen-Hungary, Palermo, Rende-Calabria, Innsbruck-Austria, <http://smuraremediterraneo.wordpress.com>. Accessed 9 November 2020.

epistemologies are involved in considering, for example, geopolitical, creative and disciplinary boundaries, including new ‘types of limits’ that have stemmed from globalization, such as the three conceptualized by Olivier J. Walther and Denis Retaillé as “the confines, the threshold and the horizon, which result from the divergence, convergence or intersection of flows”.²

The most inspirational analysis in the development of our collective research project came especially from Walter Mignolo and Madina Tlostanova’s essay on border critical thinking and from Mignolo’s works on subalternity and aesthetics.³ But the real turn occurred for me when I entered my personal postcolonial-decolonial feminist *camino*, mapped on the creative and theoretical works on border and de-bordering by chicano/a authors, and when I encountered the border critical thinking disseminated in the mestizas’ gendered, transcultural and diasporic theories and poetics.⁴

The two questions I want to answer in this paper are: how do ‘postcolonial’ and ‘decolonial’ scholars, interpreters, theoreticians and artists avoid still having a colonial, racialized and hegemonic gaze when entering the (subject of) social and human co-existing in the age of TransMediterraneanAtlantic (TMA) flows? How to always be aware of the dynamics of segregation, discrimination and racism still at work in contemporary ‘democratic’ governmental policies that determine societal class dynamics? This is a kind of apartheid demarcation that delimits any sort of peripheries: from the ‘reservation spaces’, often ghettos for the ‘not admitted insiders’, to the national/global economic bounties, to the detention camps for ‘outsiders to be checked’, to the underworld of the social/class/gender and race demarcations in the not yet decolonized policies of the nation-states.⁵ The still surviving methodologies of coloniality were uncovered by Mediterranean, Eastern and Atlantic postcolonial thinking through notions such as the Foucaultian notions of biopolitical surveillance, disciplinary apparatus, disciplinary institutions, biopower, panopticism, etc. Around the 1980s, the local and transnational postcolonial thinking and the new decolonial epistemologies interacted with Foucault’s works as well as with Gramscian and Indian subaltern analysis. They engaged with the geo-philosophical perspectives elaborated from 1975 to 1989 by Gilles Deleuze e Felix Guattari and, at the same time, resumed the readings on the psychic effects induced by the violence of coloniality developed by the Afro-Caribbeans, the African activists, exiles, and thinkers of Franz Fanon’s generation⁶ in the Fifties and Sixties, also inspired by the creole,

² Olivier J. Walther and Denis Retaillé, “Rethinking Borders in a Mobile World: An Alternative Model”, in Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary and Frédéric Giraut, eds., *Borderities and the Politics of Contemporary Mobile Borders* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 191-203.

³ Walter D. Mignolo and Madina V. Tlostanova, “Theorizing from the Borders: Shifting to Geo- and Body-Politics of Knowledge”, *European Journal of Social Theory*, 9.2 (2006), 205-221; Walter D. Mignolo, “On Subalterns and Other Agencies”, *Postcolonial Studies*, 8.4 (2005), 381-407; Walter D. Mignolo, “Reconstitución epistémica/estética: la aesthesis decolonial una década después”, *Calle 14: Revista de investigación en el campo del arte*, 14.25 (2019), 14-32. “Ricostruzione epistemico-estetica: l’aesthesis decoloniale un decennio dopo” [2019], trans. by Nicola Nesta, with an Introduction by Luigi Cazzato in *Echo*, 1 (November 2019), 229-242.

⁴ The critical perspectives of the coalition of women of colour with different origins who talked to each other in *Haciendo Caras* (Gloria Anzaldúa, ed., *Making Face, Making Soul. HACIENDO CARAS: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Feminists of Color*, San Francisco: Aunt Lute Press, 1990) helped to develop decolonial materialist feminist praxes, knowledges and methodologies, imaginary modalities and activist aesthetics introduced in previous works by María Lugones and Gloria Anzaldúa.

⁵ Miguel Mellino, in his new book *Governare la crisi dei rifugiati. Sovranismo, neoliberalismo, razzismo e accoglienza in Europa* (Roma: DeriveApprodi, 2019), retrieves Balibar’s prophetic observation in 2004 – Europe should beware of building a European apartheid dispositif – and argues that part of the European suprematist migration policies and massmedia have contributed to passing onto the general public the fake opinion that there is a direct link between racism and migration, so that racism is experienced by great part of the population as something which is not endogenous to our non-decolonized cultures, but a consequence of migration. The so-called refugee crisis is, according to Mellino, the crisis of Europe that needs a new grammar of rights.

⁶ In “Subaltern and Other Agencies”, Mignolo explains the centrality of the *damné* category for decolonial scholars such as Maldonado-Torres and himself: the *damné* – the wretched, the dispossessed – brings onto the scene the ‘coloniality of being’ (Nelson Maldonado-Torres, “On the Coloniality of Being”, *Cultural Studies*, 21.2 (2007)). In Mignolo’s view: “The *damné* is a category that described all those whose dignity has been and continues to be stripped away by the logic of coloniality; that is, the

mestizo/a, feminist, diaporic, anthropological, postcolonial and afrocentric criticism of ‘universal’ thinking.

The TMA activist researchers consider themselves inheritors of the archives of *conocimiento*⁷ that teach to learn beyond the Western framework, contributing to the relentless process of devising new ideas and the perspectives structured on the grammar of transculturation, contact zones, creolization, multi-focusing, in-between condition, diaspora, feminist and mestiza views, colonialidad/modernidad/racionalidad, decolonial thinking, border thinking, the colonial matrix of power, geo-body-politics of knowledge, borderization, epistemic shift, epistemic delinking.

The “Un/Walling the Mediterranean/S/murare il Mediterraneo” group’s decade-long work, still in progress, aims at developing an activist research methodology delinked from the Westernized-only disciplinary regimes and theories. This approach resulted in the researchers-un/wallers experimenting with the hypothesis of a Southern un-disciplinary critical border thinking/acting/imagining. The seeds of such a work, which sprouted a long time ago, are still nourishing the greatly diversified Mediterranean histories born out of the cultural differences coming from ancient, past and present colonial adventures, early twentieth century forced migrations and neo-colonial subjugations, as well as the never erased marks of Mediterranean colonialisms in its past extensions towards the Americas and Africa.

Conscious that boundaries and borders are symbolic artifacts still essential to the contemporary territorial alphabet as they “help to understand and define spatial discontinuities”,⁸ and as members of a cultural, local and transnational network of activist researchers who are politically and epistemologically situated in a trans-border dimension, with the aim of delinking our position from “the historic construction of a bounded form of thinking (spatially) within the Western world, according to a model that was disseminated worldwide through colonization”,⁹ we deem it unavoidable to develop theoretical and analytical elaborations informed by cultural, postcolonial and decolonial perspectives.

Moreover, being witnesses to the contemporary historical dramatic events that are greatly undermined by policies intentionally articulated around the concept of the defence of the borders, and keeping as our focus the geo-political paradigm of territorial belonging/non-belonging, as un/wallers we became aware that in order to contrast the ideology of boundaries built for the security of ‘national’ borders, it was imperative to delink our studies from the Western traditional architecture of disciplinary boundaries. Our activist research contemplates a different idea of space and of co-habitation on the planet, a ‘other than’¹⁰ nationalist geo-politics, a trans-border politics and poetics of reciprocal hospitality which considers free mobility a planetary right, and the physical/symbolic lines, limits, borders and boundaries an invention “linked to the process of sedentary settling”.¹¹

Within these formations, given the un/wallers Southern Mediterranean activist positionality, and according to the de/colonial procedures, it clearly appeared that not only our work needed to “de-

de-humanisation and devaluation of human beings and human lives which does not correspond to the criteria of humanity established by the rhetoric of modernity” (Mignolo, “Subaltern and Other Agencies”, 388).

⁷ The term ‘conocimiento’, instead of ‘knowledge’, is privileged by Gloria Anzaldúa and the reasons become clear in her last published essay, “and now let us shift ... the path of conocimiento ... inner work, public acts” (Gloria E. Anzaldúa and Analouse Keating, eds., *This Bridge We Call Home*, New York: Routledge, 2002, 540-578) where the word ‘conocimiento’ recurs 35 times and the word ‘deconocimiento’ 15 times. ‘Conocimiento’ is a modality of knowing and acting which decolonizes the classifications and contents of ‘modern’ knowledges; it is consciousness plus *saber*; it is the path towards change; it is cognition through all senses and it comes from listening to one’s body, spirituality and consciousness.

⁸ From the abstract to the essay by Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary, “Boundaries and Borders”, in John Agnew, et al., eds., *Handbook of Political Geography* (Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley-Blackwell Publishers, 2017), 1.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ The ‘other than’ expression is a less reductionist and more complexifying term than the ‘counter-’ or ‘a-’ prefixes stating a simply oppositional stance. I thank Silvana Carotenuto for suggesting this non-oppositional and yet efficacious delinking terminology in her contribution to the 8th AISCLI conference “Postcolonial/Decolonial. Unpacking the Prefix: Literatures and Cultures in English and Beyond” (University of Bari, 21-22 February 2019).

¹¹ Amilhat Szary, “Boundaries and Borders”, 1.

universalise categories of thought in order to diversify theoretical concepts and to relocate them in the horizon of modern/colonial local histories”,¹² but it had also to be bathed into TransMediterranean Atlantic pluri-versal waters/theories/methodologies/imaginaries. The colonialidad/modernidad theories and perspectives coming from the Atlantic had to be turned in/to an OTHER Southern Mediterranean story uncovering the Afro-European-Asian connections, thus delinking them from the North Eurocentric Transatlantic views.

In my case, the inspirational writings, performances, encounters for my ‘other than’ TransAtlantic archaeology of coloniality – a Southern archaeology contemplating the transmediterraneanization of the Atlantic and of the postcolonial and the decolonial routes – were the result of the encounter with intellectuals and creative talents expressing transgressive visions of the state of things in their po(li)et(h)ical philosophies: the Afro-Caribbean Frantz Fanon, Edouard Glissant, Dionne Brand, Stuart Hall, Audre Lorde; the Asian scholars living and teaching in the United States, such as Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak and the Subaltern Studies school; the Mestiza, politically and poetically visionary works by the paramount border crosser Gloria Anzaldúa, my *magistra* and *compañera* in feminist delinking visions; the philosophy of consciousness filtered through Maria Lugones’ gendered decolonial lens; the circle of chicanos/as and Hispanic American revolutionary intellectuals and ARTivists that have de-bordered poetical, political and disciplinary territories and imaginaries: writers and activists Chela Sandoval, Norma Alarcón, Alfred Arteaga; the Mexican American performer, writer, activist Guillermo Gomes-Peña and the Cuban American writer, performer, transdisciplinary artist Coco Fusco, whose interactive installations disrupt colonialistic representations of gender, race, cultural belonging and power; African postcolonial forerunners such as Aimé Césaire, and later on, the poems, novels and books on African intellectual history by Valentin-Yves Mudimbe and other African writers; the North-African Mediterranean writers, militants and film makers, among whom beloved Assia Djebar has pride of place.¹³

Djebar is and has been the beacon for diverse generations of Mediterranean North African and exile women writers. To them she disclosed the idea that writing, especially in Islamic as well as in still colonized and patriarchal worlds, is an act of transgressing and resisting, and that writing memories of the colonial ‘self-becoming otherwise’ is an act of feminism and anti-patriarchal representation.¹⁴ She offered precious insights into the coloniality of language to postcolonial theoreticians and po(li)et(h)ical workers since the Sixties, when she went deep down the exploration of the feelings and linguistic ruptures inside both postcolonial and emigrated/exile subjects and writers. She even studied classical Arabic to try to recover the languages that inhabited her¹⁵, and went through a long literary silence in the Seventies, probably due to the painful awareness that she was never going to be an arabophone writer.

As to the inspirational works dealing with the Atlantic history of slave trade, my heart was entrapped by Toni Morrison’s poli(e)t(h)ics and literary masterpieces, based on her disruption of the colonizer’s (hi)story of enslavement combined with the rupture of the traditional separation of literary genres as well as with the delinking from the partition between different art codifications. In this way, Morrison introduced jamming practices in literature: transmedial methodologies, poetry, music, history, orality, imaginary worlds are the skeleton of her written texts.

¹² Mignolo, “On Subalterns and Other Agencies”, 382.

¹³ Pseudonym for Fatima-Zehra Imalayen, born in Algeria, collaborating with the anti-colonial Algerian liberation front and with Fanon’s newspaper.

¹⁴ Abdelkader Cheref, *Gender and Identity in North Africa: Postcolonialism and Feminism in Maghrebi Women’s Literature* (New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2010).

¹⁵ About these feeling of cultural dispossession, later on, when she went back to literature after the cinema experience, Djebar wrote two superb books: *Le blanc de l’Algérie* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1995) and *Ces voix qui m’assiègent* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1999), where we touch the pain of her recognition that she was not going to become an Arabic-language writer.

By making these ‘outsiders’ to my own cultural location talk to each other, not only through my personal library, but also by fostering a cultural engagement among the positions that reverberated in my conversation with other local and transnational activist researchers, I learnt to ‘de-universalise’ concepts and adopt a geo-critical stance of proximity. Such a position involved paying more attention to de-nationalized and de-territorialized spaces, floating in the new languages and arising from the contact with old and new migrations, as well as in old and new creative border aesthetics.¹⁶ TMA’s methodology is thus based on developing a Southern border critical thinking delinked from Westernized ‘modern’ geo-political, hetero-normative and disciplinary boundaries. At the same time, the decolonial TMA Turn pays great attention to the role of imagination in the delinking process: imagination is considered in itself a methodology to escape from old and new forms of coloniality.¹⁷

2. Un/walling Disciplinary and Art Boundaries

To dismantle the geo-politics of bordering the world in the name of nation, race, culture, religion and class boundaries, the activist researcher has to transpass the disciplinary demarcations and turn the interactions between different fields of knowledge and creative languages into resources. The bathing of the Atlantic decolonial thinking in the Mediterranean waters was not sufficient in my methodological positionality as an impure Mediterranean peninsular ‘americanist’ and ‘culturalist’, I felt the necessity to work out a Southern TransMediterraneanAtlantic Decolonial Turn. This step required the unearthing of the presence of old and ‘modern’ Mediterranean colonial cultures within the commonly defined ‘Transatlantic Studies’ concerned with the colonial processes.¹⁸ To do this, I had to take into account not only the political and historical narrations concerning the encounters and clashes of cultures determined by the European colonial and enslavement institutions, but also the works and workings of the ‘other than colonial’ imagination in the past as well as in the contemporary ‘border art’. In the Hispanic pluricultural activist-aesthetic circles, this particular type of art is also called *ARTivism*, to signify aesthetic, political and cultural (no)border tactics developed to contest and delegitimise contemporary border regimes.¹⁹

In her essay based on the analysis of contemporary art works produced along the wall built by the Israelis around the West Bank, Anne-Laure Milhat Szary writes that since border crossings implies an “active resistance process”, the notion of border art, “through its very special relation to place, questions spatial processes through the viscosity of matter in movement”.²⁰ That is why, as an activist researcher working with the help of poetical, political, aesthetic, ARTivistic paradigms and performances, I hope that the TransMediterraneanAtlantic elaboration of a Southern border critical thinking/knowledge applied to the analysis of ARTivistic border productions, can “contribute, on one hand, to the debates on the

¹⁶ Walter D. Mignolo, “Reconstitución epistémica/estética”.

¹⁷ Caroline Alphin et al., “Critiquing Resilience: Interview with Julian Reid”, *Spectra*, 6.2 (2018), 5-19.

¹⁸ Paola Zaccaria, “Mediterranean and Transatlantic ARTivism: Counter-Acting Neo-Colonialisms in the Public Sphere”, *International Journal of Cross-Cultural Studies and Environmental Communication*, 1 (2014), 41-51, Paola Zaccaria, “TransMediterraneanAtlantic Embodied Archives”, *JOMEC Journal*, 8 (2015).

¹⁹ *ARTivism* is a name for contemporary highly performative and socialized visual and verbal works usually accessible in public spaces. On activism, see Claudia Attimonelli, “Il senso migrante della fotografia in JR e Banksy”, in Luigi Cazzato and Filippo Silvestri, eds., *S/Murare il Mediterraneo. Pensieri critici e attivismo al tempo delle migrazioni* (Lecce: Pensa, 2016), 145-165, Stéphanie Lemoine and Samir Ouardi S., eds., *Artivisme: art, action politique et résistance culturelle* (Paris: Alternatives, 2010), Paola Zaccaria, “Mediterraneo liquido. Per un pensiero critico decoloniale”, in Luigi Cazzato and Filippo Silvestri, eds., *S/Murare il Mediterraneo. Pensieri critici e attivismo al tempo delle migrazioni* (Lecce: Pensa, 2016), 21-44, Paola Zaccaria, “A Breach in the Wall: ARTivist No-Border Atlases of Mobility”, *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, 26.3 (2017), 37-53, Paola Zaccaria, “Pratiche artistiche transmediali ispirate (dagli) archivi della migrazione in America: le cartografie no border di JR ad Ellis Island”, *Scritture Migranti*, 11 (2017), 171-197.

²⁰ Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary, “Boundaries and Borders”; “L’artiste passe-muraille? La résistance au passage du mur entre Israël et la Cisjordanie/The artist walking through walls? Resistance and barrier crossings between Israel and the West Bank” (abstract).

performative power of border devices, and on the other, to the elaboration of the analysis of what is at stake in the relationship between in situ art works and movement”.²¹

Actually, Southern critical thinking requires from the critical thinker/activist/artist a triple co(n)-structural delinking from colonial practices: it entails the un/walling of geo-political, disciplinary and imagination/reality distinctions. To dismantle the contemporary re-bordering of the nation-state walls²² re-instated thanks to the issues of disciplinarity and defence of state sovereignty, a decolonial, other-than nationalistic Southern view needs to dis-engage from the still capitalistic and military politics by activating a conversation between ‘the politics’ and ‘the poetics’. This means envisioning a poli(e)t(h)ics²³ in order to re-store voice and body to the innovative proposals of social harmony and co-existence coming both from the past, unlistened to poli(e)t(h)ics proposals, and from the contemporary works of imagination. The not so much utopianist Southern critical decolonial de-bordering proposal is to re-circulate po(li)et(h)ical – a term which could be even more complexified by including also the aesthetic level of this process of rethinking the politics: poli(aesthe)tics²⁴ – performances inside the re-articulation of nonviolent co-habiting togetherness.

3. Decolonizing Imaginaries: The Crisis of Disciplinarity

Coming to the complex issue of the decolonization of knowledges through the imaginary, I share Claude Bourguignon Rougier’s view that “décoloniser les sciences humaines, l’histoire entre autres, c’est aussi indéniablement, décoloniser l’imaginaire”,²⁵ and agree with historian Serge Gruzinski who, in his ground-breaking book,²⁶ exposes the reasons why the colonization of the imaginary was one of the founding boundary markers of coloniality policies. In this article, I will refer to “colonizing imaginaries” in a broader sense. In deeming knowledge as an instrument moulded by colonial powers to shape and colonize mindsets opposed to imagination, I propose to delink this knowledge from the new boundaries intended to strengthen national borders and expel anyone labelled foreigner, different and hence destabilizing: I propose instead to become a facilitator in the circulation of dissident bodies and imaginaries as they emerge from past and new utopianist archives.

‘Utopia’ is a term commonly given to de-centered, non-normative views by the still colonial logos that have determined oppressive methodologies of gender, class, race oppression. Utopia is the imaginative and imaginary cartography of places with no borders, no reservations, no boundaries and checkpoints. Utopia is the drawing of imaginary maps being conscious that utopian architectures are not always unfeasible constructions.²⁷ We thus come to the central question at stake: can imagination and consequently its artistic transcriptions (films, visual art, literature, music, etc.) un/wall the geo-political, disciplinary and art/media boundaries? Indeed, quite a large number of our team’s works move from a transdisciplinary discussion of ARTivistic narratives and representations related to the ongoing process of mobility and extraterritoriality that instantiate new geo-corpo-graphies of resistance through a very

²¹ Ibid.

²² Zaccaria, “TransMediterraneanAtlantic Embodied Archives”.

²³ This is a term that offers trans-bordering representations arising from what conservative ideologies would rather call ‘dream’ and/or ‘utopia’, not because the poetical productions portray what it is impossible to attain, but because that kind of poetics is non-aligned with the global neo-colonialisms.

²⁴ On the necessary interlocution-conversation-convergence between politics and poetics, see my essay in Lara Carbonara, ed., *Erranze senza ritorni. Su diaspora, mari e migrazioni* (Bari: Progedit, 2017) and Paola Zaccaria, *La lingua che ospita. Poetiche, politiche traduzioni* (Roma: Meltemi, 2017).

²⁵ Rougier Bourguignon, “Chaos and Coloniality of the Imagination”. Paper presented on 29 April at a meeting of experts organised by UNESCO on the “Elaboration of a Glossary of Decolonial Concepts, Paradigms and Categorisations Applied to Africa”, in Kigali, Rwanda, 29 April-2 May 2019.

²⁶ Serge Gruzinski, *La colonisation de l’imaginaire, Sociétés indigènes et occidentalisation dans le Mexique espagnol, XVIe-XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988).

²⁷ Zaccaria, *La lingua che ospita*.

often trans-medial, cross-cultural embodied poetics that is at once plurilingual, plurisensorial, plurimedial and plurilinguistic.²⁸

From a TMA stance, imagination is at the foundation of both the migrant's activist drive to escape a destiny designed by new colonial powers, and of any artistic drive leading to creative performances. The colonization of the imagination and of the artistic imaginary has been at the foundation of ancient, modern and contemporary subjugation of the 'other than myself' thinking/*conocimiento* – as is the case, for example, of the gender and race imaginary. As we know the colonial 'conquest' meant the destruction of the natives' images being substituted by 'modern', mostly Christian ones. To decolonize the imagination of colonized spaces and persons implies thus to decolonize the history of representations-narrations by re-circulating and questioning the ancient signs of the imagination survived into our times: "Décoloniser l'écriture de l'histoire, c'est identifier l'imaginaire qui a été le terreau des histoires coloniales pour ainsi libérer l'imagination historique indispensable à la mise en récit propre à cette discipline".²⁹

At this stage, as an un/waller, I look on transborder mobility as the (em)bodi(ment) of narration encompassing the resistance and imaginative rebellion that is exploding inside border ARTivism, inside the new conception of the language as a place to be shared and a border to be crossed, shaped in multi-situated ethnographies,³⁰ in pluri-lingualism, translanguaging, postcolonial and decolonial literary genealogies and futuristic envisionings. That is why I consider and propose ARTivism as a Southern TMA decolonial geo-corpo-aesthetics.³¹

In her beautiful essay "Bodies Across. Ahdaf Soueif, Fadia Faqir, Diana Abu Jaber",³² Marta Cariello analyses the written bodies of women "sitting on the edge" of the nation, sitting "on the curb", as Assia Djebar writes in *Ces voix qui m'assiègent*, in "a space for the dislocated subjects of the post-colonial world".³³ Through her postcolonial/decolonial, feminist reading, Cariello focuses on a geocorpography of TransMediterranean dislocations, colonizations and decolonizations inscribed on the bodies of women in movement across "borders and identities, (across) uncertain, stolen and disillusioning ground, the subtraction of a homeland and its material sites".³⁴ In this way, she shows the "tropes of a literature of dislocations, of an interrupted memory of colonization and decolonization that calls for a deeply inscribed anatomy of the body. In other words, the written body comes to perform a 'sign of history',³⁵ it proposes irreducible differences and produces narrating complexities that undermine the ubiquitous, unilateral Western discourse on female Arab bodies and their relation to sexuality and sexual politics".³⁶

4. Delinking Imagination: Writing Old and New Colonialisms Back

Lo estético nos impregna, está en todo lo que hacemos. Liberar la aesthesis de la estética des-cubre la geopolítica del sentir, pensar, hacer, crear y la extrae también del imaginario abstracto del sujeto moderno,

²⁸ Zaccaria, "A Breach in the Wall".

²⁹ Rougier Bourguignon, *Chaos et colonialité*, 2019.

³⁰ See Maria Livia Alga, *Etnografía "terrona" de sujetos excéntricos* (Barcelona: Ediciones Bellaterra, 2018).

³¹ On body, creativity and locus see Anzaldúa's sixth and seventh chapters in *Borderlands/La frontera. The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987), Mignolo, "Reconstitución epistémica/estética", John Turturro, *Passione*, the movie (2010). The latter beautifully stages – through a script made only of songs – Naples as a 'terrona' (Alga, *Etnografía "terrona"*), 'bastard', brown geo-corpo-graphy.

³² Marta Cariello, "Bodies Across: Ahdaf Soueif, Fadia Faqir, Diana Abu Jaber", in Layla Al Maleh, ed., *Arab Voices in Diaspora* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), 313-338.

³³ *Ibid.*, 314.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Homi Bhabha, "Frontlines/Borderposts", in Angelika Bammer, ed., *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana U.P., 1994), 269. This note is included in Cariello's essay.

³⁶ Cariello, *Bodies Across*, 314.

despegado de las energías geopolíticas gestionadas por la MCP.³⁷

Delinking once colonized natives and today's residents as well as contemporary dislocated subjects from the concept of belonging, and translating the experiences of silenced, marked bodies into postcolonial, futuristic narrations, unveils the idea that imagination is a decolonial performance. The portraiture of Africa as the most weak and poor continent and the stigma inscribed in the past on Africans as commodities, to be constrictively moved from one place to another by hegemonic European powers, re-surfaces in contemporary European border policies. The methodologies of oppression enacted in rejecting the African migrants as persons without rights to be blocked at the frontiers together with the powerless, class-discriminated persons from the lowest class coming from the South of the world, function in a similar way.

As activist researchers geographically thinking from a geo-corpo-graphical Euro-Mediterranean Southern peninsular positionality that is encrusted with a complex background of colonizations extending to Asia and the Middle East, mingled with various layers of extra-European and non-European dominions, we are faced with many questions, starting from one of the subterranean main points of this essay: what does it mean to decolonize? The act of opening up the modernidad/colonialidad methodology of de/linking, des/prenderse, dis-connecting from the geo-political-corpo-graphies of modern/imperial powers and epistemologies still at work, so as to contaminate the delinking methodology with the specificities of the Mediterranean Southern critical thinking and history, raises other issues:

- How should the dissident Mediterranean peninsular Europeans working from a 'no-border wall' activist and ARTivist perspective, position themselves in the decolonial *pensamiento* to explore the multiple horizons opened up by the decolonial perspective?

- How should they figure out their own cultural, individual and collective stance in the light of decolonial epistemology and in consideration of the new colonizations and resistances to coloniality embodied in the politics and poetics of global mobility?

When I started examining migration and creative protest works and their relation to walls, borders, and sites of border crossings in the Mediterranean region, as a woman activist, scholar and teacher, who since the last decade of the XX century has been inspired by written and visual chicano/a works on the border, I felt the need to deal also with the following issue: what do *ARTivist* strategies of resistance to the erection of walls along the Mexico-US 'liquid' borders of the Rio Grande and Gulf of Mexico³⁸ have in common with similar strategies at work in the Mediterranean? And how might these strategies of resistance contribute to contrast European immigration policies becoming more and more obsessed with frontiers and border walls?

These questions, arising from a postcolonial, decolonial, Southern Mediterranean European perspective, turned into: how can one 'read' the strategies of the 'walling up' in the migratory movements East to West, and South to North? How could 'the wall', figuratively and materially, disrupt the colonialist glorifying transatlantic history of commerce, migration and success in the contemporary slave narratives of migration towards the global New Worlds? In *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*, Wendy Brown asks the basic geo-political questions: why erect walls now, given the growing global connectedness?³⁹ To what extent do new material and technological walls support the image-ideology of statehood, and to what extent do they reinforce reactionary national imaginaries? Brown argues that the wall functions as a kind of theatrical stage aimed at giving citizens an image of power, order and national self-determination.

³⁷ Mignolo, "Reconstitución epistémica/estética", 26.

³⁸ *Altar: Cruzando Fronteras, Building Bridges* (2009), a documentary filmed and edited by myself and Daniele Basilio, contextualizes many ARTivistic works of Mexican-American border culture in Texas and California.

³⁹ Wendy Brown, *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty* (New York: Zone Books, 2010).

For me, another subject of inquiry is: can ARTivism promote innovation in immigration policies, innovation in how/what wall-divided communities (that is, both those stopping at the closed gates at the arrival, and the “residents” inside the gates) think about the history they shared in the past and are sharing right now?

My own contribution to the project has greatly focused on how ARTivism – which combines the activist’s responsibility and commitment to justice with politically engaged artistic creativity – in Mexican-American border culture and art (re)presents counter-narratives to the colonial accounts of arrival and settlement that engage many layers of colonization and cultural entanglements, all of which bear both Mediterranean, Transatlantic and Native traces. Additionally, in proposing counter-narratives, or counter-cartocorpographies, to colonial border ideology, to the notion of the border as an index of conquest, appropriation, and belonging, the TMA work-in progress wants to contribute to new representations of human and cultural geography. To be more explicit: from a broader, global and trans-historical perspective, the project wants to promote the imagining and visualizing of the map of TransMediterranean, trans-cultural, inter-cultural ‘geographies of contact’,⁴⁰ i.e. the geo-corpographies contributing to “Atlases of emotions”.⁴¹ By locally and site-specifically re-thinking the concepts of nationalism and citizenship, cultural identity, belonging and transculturality, location and locality⁴² in the light of what decolonial epistemologies unveil about the deceptions of the Western narratives of modernity/rationality, the project takes on the responsibility of re-thinking the tools of analysis, including Cultural and Postcolonial Studies theories, indebted as we are to them for being at the foundation of our fracture or *desprendimiento* from Western and un-decolonized ‘rules of analysis’/disciplinarity and white, hegemonic ‘geo-political’ design of modernity.

Taking a detour, let us go back to the question of how activist researchers could position themselves in the decolonial *pensamiento*. Our geographical position classifies us as Western scholars. However, we surely are not entirely Western (to name just a few ‘impure’ genealogies: the Greek, the Phoenicians, Byzantines, Ottoman and Arabic dominions; in South of Italy, the French and Spanish ‘modern’ dominions have marked places, bodies, thinking, imagining). As peninsulars, we have inherited ‘modern’ cultural archives but live surrounded by Southern Mediterranean archeologies of the past colonial times. This complexity testifies to both oppressions/conflicts/oppositional thinking, and the construction of inter-crossing trajectories shaping transcultural transcontinental confluences. As Mediterranean peninsular Europeans, we feel that we should think of ourselves as part of ‘the other Europe’ inside the western ‘democratic Europe’. In the ‘other Europe’ I also include the South of Spain – so close to, so mixed up with North Africa and with the populations and cultures that have headed toward Southern Europe through the Mediterranean from Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia; the Greek populations – they too are considered ‘impure’ because of their proximity to the Asian Middle Eastern influences; and, of course ourselves, the peninsulars of the Southern Mediterranean Italy, named and represented as the ‘terroni’ of Southern Europe, being so close to Africa.

As Southern Mediterraneans contaminated by African, Asian and European cultures bathed by the Mediterranean Sea, we cannot passively apply the postcolonial and decolonial options. We have instead to contribute to the decolonial pluri-versal epistemologies, or gnoseology (the term Mignolo nowadays prefers to ‘epistemology’), in order to open up the (hi)story, consciousness and corpo-graphic traces and imprints of Southern Mediterranean critical border thinking and its talking back to the ideology based on the idea of a universality of concepts.

In his last essay, Mignolo declares his debt to the African intellectual Valentine Mudimbe for his decolonial shift from epistemology to gnoseology. A debt underlined in the quotation from Mudimbe

⁴⁰ I developed and explored the concept of *Mediterranean Atlanticism* in Zaccaria, “Mediterranean and Transatlantic Artivism”.

⁴¹ Giuliana Bruno, *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film* (New York and London: Verso Books, 2002).

⁴² Doreen B. Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

chosen as epigraph: “Specifically, *gnosis* means seeking to know, inquiry, methods of knowing, investigation, and even acquaintance with someone. [...] *Gnosis* is, consequently, different from *doxa* or opinion, and, on the other hand, cannot be confused with *episteme*, understood as both science and general intellectual configuration”.⁴³ In Mignolo’s view, Mudimbe recovered “del olvido el concepto de *gnosis* y le dio un nuevo significado. Lo utilizó para nombrar la praxis del pensar en África, borrada por el vocabulario eurocentrado de misioneros, antropólogos, historiadores, periodistas, economistas, politólogos, filosofía, arte, etc”.⁴⁴

In rescuing Mudimbe’s terminological shift, Mignolo introduces “*gnoseología* en el vocabulario decolonial”, a word which I feel is close to the pre-columbian *teoría del conocimiento*, which embraces general knowledge, but is also close to *el sentir*, whereas epistemology has to do with scientific knowledge. What I find interesting in his essay is not only the widening of the decolonial perspectives to African and Afro-descendant thinking, theories and narrations, but also, thanks to the African modalities of being-thinking, the opening up of the decolonial methodology of delinking from the Western concept of knowledge as a rational act. *Gnosis* is more than simply knowledge and it encloses the process of “seeking to know”,⁴⁵ which implies the desire to investigate, to get acquainted with someone or something which is different. *Gnosis* and *aesthesis* are thus not simply mental processes (*saber*), but they are imbricated in feeling (*sentir*), memories and past histories. The link *saber-sentir* is a powerful tool to *desprenderse* from coloniality and from the epistemic/aesthetic duality: decoloniality discards all hierarchies among knowledge, feeling, thinking, creating and desiring: “Lo estético nos impregna, está en todo lo que hacemos. Liberar la *aesthesis* de la estética descubre la geopolítica del sentir, pensar, hacer, crear y la extrae también del imaginario abstracto del sujeto moderno, despegado de las energías geopolíticas gestionadas por la MCP [Colonial Matrix of Power]. Nos lleva a descolonizar el concepto”.⁴⁶

The TransMediterranean Southern Border Critical thinking is building a bridge between the Latin praxis of engagement, in drawing a *gnoseology* leading to the project of delinking from the colonial matrix of power, and the work in progress of the ‘Others of Europe’ aimed at elaborating intersectional and pluriversal strategies of delinking from the colonial matrix of power. The ‘Others of Europe’ is a decolonial portraiture-narration for both the people who were and are part of European histories -but whose lives and impure, subaltern cultures and thinking were/are obscured and delegitimized by the official powers- and for the newcomers to Europe from non-European places/cultures, who were and are socially and imaginatively seen by the normative European views of governance and governability as outsiders, uncultered, different, and hence dangerous.

Activist researchers pay great attention to non-eurocentric geo-poli(e)t(h)ics. Here ‘non-eurocentric’ hints are not to non Europeans, but to European or non-European productions and performances which have enacted the gesture of critiquing eurocentrism in all the regions touched by coloniality and have substituted cartographies of appropriation with geo-corpo-graphies of mobility and crossing. This is the reason why Mediterranean stories should not be delinked from Transatlantic or Eastern stories; this is why thinking and creating should be inscribed in a dimension of flows: the liquidity of *linguae francae* languages and of spaces touched by waters. TMA methodologies aim at creating conditions of co-living outside the rhetorics of re-Westernized beliefs taken for universal, such as the contemporary Western resurgence of sovereignty – uncaring for social equity and justice – as the universal model of ‘democracy’. Water, maps, roads, voyage: word-images on the move that give birth to new meanings,

⁴³ Valentin-Yves Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington: Indiana U.P., 1988), ix.

⁴⁴ Mignolo, “Reconstitución epistémica/estética”, 41.

⁴⁵ Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa*.

⁴⁶ Mignolo, “Reconstitución epistémica/estética”, 13.

knowledges and a new consciousness that peoples in mobility acquire through the movement-change resulting from the process of uprooting themselves from land routes and re-routing along watery courses.

Once we know that delinking methodologies cannot be universal, which cultural formations/archives can the Southern Mediterranean peninsular subjects, who are looking for epistemological non-eurocentric and non-universality-based orders, refer to? How to envision praxes of living that allow for co-existing alter/natives? Presently, thanks also to the interaction I had with other scholars both at the 2019 AISCLI conference and at the “Un/walling the Mediterranean” highly interactive symposium on “Migration and Transmediterranean Cultural Archives” (Bari, Nov. 2016)⁴⁷, I am experimenting the interlacement of two methodologies:

a) thinking-interpreting beyond the categories of Western ‘civilization’ by learning from non-European cultures and traditions, silenced, disavowed and delegitimized by the rhetoric of modernity and the strategies of coloniality;

b) going back to and allow myself to be inspired by the forms of resistance and creativity that are offered by the non-official archives of Mediterranean subaltern, ‘bastard’, inferiorized counter-narratives that did not discard or repress the multifarious cultural and social complexity of the ‘other than’ side of modernity.

The Southern peninsular activists of the “Un/walling the Mediterranean” project have had to confront themselves with these issues since they took into account the role that ships with Mediterranean crews had in colonial days. Sailing from the Mediterranean South through the Middle Passage, they stopped along the African “fortresses of no return” to embark cargoes of people taken as commodities to the new world. Something must have occurred in this passage, in the transborder cultural formation named colonization; something must have occurred later on, at the time of, for example, the Italian emigration to the Americas; something needed to be unearthed about the kind of trade called up until the postcolonial age “Transatlantic”, a definition that seems to refer essentially to the Northern Europe colonialization of the New World.

When visioned through decolonial eyes, “Transatlantic” appeared as a historicizing ‘label’ that did not go deep down the slave routes and the slavery system. Moreover, within that configuration, “Transatlantic” has submerged the complex web of relations, histories, people, geo-corpo-graphies⁴⁸ of mobility and of colonial trades which departed from the Mediterranean harbours. What went unsaid in the official narrations of the Mediterranean empires, beyond European borders, was that the ships departing from Portugal, Spain and the South of Europe did not only share a common Latin origin. They were also marked, among other cultural inter-connections with the signs of Northern African and Middle Eastern contaminations popping up in the language inflections, in the architecture of the ‘old cities’ and in the visual arts.

It was within this cultural frame that the TransMediterraneanAtlantic decolonial turn was carried out by ‘terroni’ researchers living along the Southern European Mediterranean coasts: by acknowledging the necessity of re-signifying the colonial narrative of the Europe-Africa-America triangulation, they consequently dismantled the normative, hyper North-centered, imperialistic mainstream history of colonization. This shift brought about the widening of the horizons, unveiling both the connections and

⁴⁷ Part of the materials debated in the symposium were published in Marta Cariello and Luigi Cazzato, eds., “Migrazioni e archivi culturali TransMediterrAtlantici”, *de genere. Journal of Literary, Postcolonial and Gender Studies. Rivista di studi letterari, postcoloniali e di genere* (2018), with an Introduction by Cariello and Cazzato, components of the “Unwalling the Mediterranean” project.

⁴⁸ “In coining the term geocorpography [...], I wanted to bring into focus the impossibility of disarticulating the body from its geopolitical locus, and to materialise the multiple significations that accrue from this understanding of the geo-political nexus (Joseph Pugliese, “Geocorpographies of Torture”, *Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies Association Journal*, 3.1 (2007), 1-18, see also Joseph Pugliese, “Embodied Archives”, *JASAL*, 11.1 (2011), special issue: *Archive Madness*). In my personal use of the term, the component *graphia* in the concept of geo-corpo-graphy embraces both the meaning of ‘narration/history/time’ and of ‘map-design/space’.

the differences in colonial times and consequently offering the opportunity of including the successive “dispersions” and diasporas of individuals and populations coming to the New World from Southern European areas in the counter-colonial history of ‘modernity’. Their migratory voyage was inspired by those dreams and fantasies about the New World, which, as far as the Southern Italian terroni’s dream go, Emanuele Crialesi’s movie *The Golden Door/Nuovo Mondo* (2006) has captured in a great visual narration.

5. The Decolonial Role of Imagination

Imagination, and border aesthetic creativity, has become for me the locus, the elected horizon/atmosphere/hemisphere from where, or rather inside which, I interpellate and discuss the crisis of Western policies, inscribed in the global (re)westernization, and the crisis of disciplinary knowledges.

TMA’s ‘decolonial turn’ takes into account the decolonial role of imagination, and looks at imagination as a methodology, a strategy and the first activator of escape from new forms of coloniality.⁴⁹ Imagination is at the foundation of all creative works and acts. It is the engine giving shape to ARTivistic public performances. Imagination is behind and within. It shines through contemporary works of art, expressed through different media and channels, that disseminate political, social, critical, counter-hegemonic views of the world through creative narrations, descriptions, representations, performances, music, art works. ARTivism enacts a shared Southern TMA decolonial geocorpography inhabited by dis-appropriative, delocalized languages capable of initiating transborder, plurilinguistic conversations.

The resistance enacted by the actors of contemporary diasporas, solicited as they are by the prefiguration of a better life, speaks for the power of imagination. Imagination and artistic creativity have a great role in the resignification of one’s own story in relation to the (hi)stories of others. Contemporary ARTivist works have a great role in developing a decolonial consciousness. Once the Southern border critical thinker acknowledges that a TMA decolonial turn is already taking place in the artistic pieces of art exposed in different urban public spaces touched by (in)migration and e(x)migration, these can be considered manifestoes of decolonial thinking and decolonial acting. Attempting to establish connections between Mediterranean ARTivism becomes her/his method of thinking. By opening up to different languages – different not only because expressed in music or visual art or photography or written textualities but because these multifarious expressions give voice to and shape different cultural perspectives and visions coming from inside the European Mediterranean area, ARTivists talk back, interact and let themselves be contaminated by – while contaminating – perspectives and visions coming from the diverse cultures of the Mediterranean, as well as from the TMA traffic of human beings that bring to our coasts those peoples whose ancestors suffered from the slave trade, its violence and its subjugation.

Clearly, this translocal encounter through art creates new trans-border and no-border geo-corpographical cartographies which are at the same time aesthetical, sentimental and political in that they display translocal networkings of people and cultures that concur to the construction of transborder archives of revolutionary decoloniality. All of this has the effect of contributing to the rupture of the compartmentalization of languages and disciplines: they are acts of un/walling performed through/across travelling languages that bring about ruptures and innovations, excision and resignification.

⁴⁹ See Alphin et al., “Interview with Julian Reid”.

6. Imagination and disciplinarity

Working at enabling a decolonial shift from a peninsular unwalling *conocimiento* implies experimenting a counter-methodology. This can nevertheless be used as a tool in facilitating conversations among different theories, texts, ways of thinking and writing in order to research, write, teach and act in an open-ended, non-sectorialized way. Since I wished this ever-changing construction to be anarchic in its procedures, in exploring TMA's decolonial turn I had to embark on the process of questioning borders, creativity and activism; ARTivism and activism; border art and border thinking; wallings and unwallings. I hence devised a cross-disciplinary, undisciplined methodology, along the path of which, I realized I had to be always aware of how neo-colonial, no-transpassing geo-policies are strictly related to the academic request for disciplinarity. The geopolitics of borders and checkpoints, admission and rejection have informed, have given form and power to academic rules as well as to the normative prescription of the neat separation and sectorialization of the various disciplines, languages, theories. The still-alive colonial design of appropriation, property, defence of the conquered (home)land inscribed in the geopolitics of sovereignty (dominion-control) and in the no-border transpassing rules, informs the unspoken design of the academic defenders of the boundaries between disciplines. The defence of one's own academic field of studies' borders can thus be read as an arm to defend one's own territory of knowledge/power in the academic realm. At the same time, disciplinarity is the other face of the methodologies of appropriation and defence borderization of conquered, colonized territories where the West is used to exercise its ideas and politics of modernity and rationality.

Colonization and what survived of it in coloniality, as for example the idea that the academy is the space-place of knowledge/power imbricated in the mantra of discipline/disciplinarity, implies both the institution of practices hostile to criss-crossings, tranborderization, translation, transposition, transmediation, conversations, coalitions, hospitality, and, of course the resistance to the mingling of disciplinary languages. In the literary field, for example, there are still resistances towards the narrativization of 'specific' languages, as is the case of the "scientific" language contaminated by a narrative, auto-expository style; or the intertwining of different cultural practices, or, ultimately, works of imaginative eclecticism gained through the association with extra-territorial views and analysis: "I like to move through literary spaces and into new spaces, and engage with different communities" – explains Julian Reid, officially a professor and scholar of the discipline 'International relations' – "...That's what I find exciting about reading, getting out from the inside, and into new places and new spaces. I'm not interested in that territoriality of writing that is so typical of the academy".⁵⁰

While working at the translation, documentation, video-making, interviewing, investigation about/on/along border critical thinking inscribed by different cultures in different languages/codifications/epistemologies, I became aware of the fecundity of establishing interconnections between geo-political narratives and geo-corpo-graphical inscriptions and felt I was finally close to the understanding and practice of the delinking option. At the same time, I realized that imagination and the constellations of 'imaginativity' could be the breeding ground for a decolonial turn in Western and Westernized thinking/doing. Through the interpolation of translocal, transnational, transcultural, transborder 'ideative', imaginative, powerful, generative aesthetic constructions in the academic and political discourses, the languages-textualities-acts of imagination can open a great rupture in the alliance of the disciplinary knowledge with global non-decolonized powers.

If the modernidad/colonialidad school has offered new horizons, new words, new analytical tools, new ideas to read, deconstruct, write, and react to Western *saber*/power not only in our research, but also in our role as workers in both the educational system and the public domain, the emergency and centrality of this century-old transnational migration – accomplished through the perilous voyages

⁵⁰ Caroline Alphin et al., "Critiquing Resilience: Interview with Julian Reid", 4.

starting from African or Middle-Eastern territories and having as unavoidable landmark the crossings of seas and consequently of the ‘Western’ European borders – requests a further movement, a further viewpoint. We are solicited to deal with postcolonial issues and postcolonial populations whose governments have not delinked from coloniality; whose people are in a state of mobility, heading not towards the new world of the modernidad/colonialidad order, but towards the old world, the place where colonial power was conceived with the aim of occupying the natives’ territories: Europe. The place that has not yet dismantled or at least critically analyzed the imperial, hegemonic drive and the oppression procedures. Europe, the place imposing on the ex-colonies new forms of colonization: exploitative liberalism, global capitalism, support to never-ending old and new conflicts, control on non-Christian, non-‘modern’ populations and their territories.

In the investigation-interpellation-interpolation on/about the Southern Mediterranean decolonial turn, imagination – or the nourishment of aesthetic creativity – has become central in our readings, writings, confrontations. Thus, we came to realize that a meaningful turn had already marked the workings of the transdisciplinary set of tools and perspectives we had been using to approach different kinds of knowledges and consciousness. Having gone through the voices, signs, traces, theories of postcoloniality, deconstruction, bio-power, gender studies, decoloniality, I myself have entered the space of decolonial delinking from the Euro-American hegemonic imprinting and branding of the “new world” today presented as the model for a planetary order of things.

In bringing these TransMediterranean currents and currency of thought on the scene, I look for the opportunity to produce a space of interlaced engagement that shares and evokes multiple resonances and conceptual terms/images/imaginaries for building decolonial worlds of *convivencia* and *conocimiento*.