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(Trans)MediterrAtlantic Embodied Archives

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Abstract

This article tests a comparative and trans-disciplinary methodology I am developing for a research project titled 'Un-Walling the Mediterranean Sea. New Southern performances: towards a no-border wall poetics and politics of togetherness'. The article investigates ways to develop and make visible MediterrAtlantic theories and performances inspired by grass-roots activism and artivism in order to disrupt Eurocentric geopolitical cartography. To this end, I will make reference to many (de)signs disseminated by trans-Mediterranean intellectuals, activists, artists, migrants and refugees along the Mediterranean routes and walls, as a way to shape both an Asian-African-European Mediterranean consciousness and a new TransMediterrAtlantic one. Finally, I will use as a case study *Io sto con la Sposa*, a docufiction on the experience of asylum seeking in Europe, by Antonio Augugliaro, Gabriele del Grande and Khaled Soliman (2014)

Contributor Note

Paola Zaccaria is Professor at the University of Bari Aldo Moro, Italy, where she teaches Anglo-American Literary and Visual Cultures and Visual and Multimedial Studies. Among her publications: the books *Mappe senza frontiere. Cartografie letterarie dal modernismo al transnazionalismo* (Palomar 1999) and *La lingua che ospita. Poetica, politica, traduzione* (Meltemi 2004); a large number of essays in Italian, English and Spanish, such as 'Mediterranean and Transatlantic Artivism: counter-acting neo-colonialisms in the public sphere', 2014; 'Mappe narrate, mappe dipinte' ('Painted Maps, Narrated Maps: Exercises in Deterritorialising Imagination', 2014); the Italian translation and editing of Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* (Palomar 2000), and a documentary film, *ALTAR. Crossing Borders, Building Bridges*, 2009 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pep1vMqtHYs>). Since 2009 she has been the coordinator of a University-grassroot transdisciplinary research team on 'Un-Walling the Mediterranean Sea. New Southern performances towards a no-border wall poetics and politics of togetherness'.

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'Unwalling the Mediterranean': an introduction

The wall is the founding political-figurative concept of the acts that regulate the (non) free circulation of men, women and children in the Mediterranean Sea. Fortress Europe, castled on the Spanish, Italian, Greek outposts, protects European boundaries, looking down at the travelling non-European, non-Western others from the heights of its towers/walls, hidden behind a technological curtain of radar and infrared rays, filtering the step/movement of humanity coming from elsewhere, arresting its arrival in the barbed wire fences of the continuously updated jurisdictional borders [...] The UN/WALLING the MEDITERRANEAN research group filters the colonial frame with fluidizers in order to facilitate the de-colonization of the language and thinking of those who are in the process of reading, translating, analysing.

(Manifesto of the activist researchers
S/MURARE IL MEDITERRANEO. Local and Transnational Practices of Transcultural ARTivist Poetics and Politics of Hospitality)

One rule followed by the activist researchers participating in the performative work in progress 'Un/Walling the Mediterranean'¹ (2009 to

¹ The members of the activist research group 'Un/walling the Mediterranean/S/murare il Mediterraneo. Pratiche locali, nazionali e transfrontalieri di attivismo transculturale, per una politica e poetica dell'ospitalità e mobilità' are academic scholars working in different study areas engaged in an inter-disciplinary approach and in interactive dialogue with no-border wall, anti-racist activist organizations, migrants and artists. They are: Paola Zaccaria (scientific coordinator), Luigi Cazzato, Annarita Taronna, Giovanna Zaccaro, Filippo Silvestri, Giuseppe Campesi, Ylenia De Luca, Rosita Maglie, Lorena Carbonara, Claudia Attimonelli, Lara Carbonara, Gianpaolo Altamura (Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro); Vincenzo Susca, (Université de Montpellier Paul Valéry, France), Pier Paolo

the present) is constant awareness of one's own cultural and critical positionality as intellectuals and activists, and awareness of one's own co-involvement in the entanglement of power and the production of knowledge on post-coloniality, neo-colonialism, and de-coloniality in our age of migrations and new diasporas. Indeed, this research action concerns the need for new trans-territorial cartographies due to the phenomena of migration, mobility, contemporary exodus and precarious residences.

Participants in this research group experience these acts of critical reflection in a space hosting interdisciplinary, intersectional, and relational work, and in a place where transdisciplinary and transcultural fieldwork and exchanges occur. The call-and-response dialogue structuring this work connects activist researchers from Southern Italy with western, eastern, post-colonial, de-colonial, diasporic, renegade, queer, illegal, and activist authors, theoreticians, and artists who do not cling to absolute origins, but who identify as de-centred and de-linked in

Frassinelli (Monash University of Johannesburg, South Africa), Cristina Lombardi-Diop (Loyola University di Chicago, US) who joined the group last year. Since 2009 the activist researchers, also named un/wallers, have travelled with 'Un/walling the Mediterranean' from Bari to Istanbul, Palestine, Santa Barbara, San Antonio, Austin, Los Angeles (US), Oviedo, Valencia, Vic (Spain), Parigi, Montpellier (France), Bucarest and Constantia, Padova, Roma, Salerno, Palermo, and on different reviews such as *Les Cahiers européens de l'imaginaire*, *Le Simplegadi*, *Context 8*, *Mediterranean Review*, *Signs*. The Manifesto of the research is available on line at this link: https://www.academia.edu/16290682/Un_Walling_the_Mediterranean_S_MURARE_IL_MEDITERRANEO_Pratiche_locali_nazionali_e_transfrontalieri_di_attivismo_transculturale_per_una_politica_e_poetica_dell_ospitalità_e_mobilità.

respect to any sort of 'original' political or cultural geography.

From this rather unclear position I feel that the space opened by this *JOMECS Journal* issue on Italian Cultural Studies offers an opportunity to summon and question different politics, poetics and philosophical, anthropological, semiotic, sociological, aesthetic, and geopolitical knowledges, with an aim to pursue confrontations generating fluid inter-twinings between various 'modern' and extra-modern epistemologies.

As Filippo Silvestri (a philosopher of language and contributor to this research) writes, what is at stake is a reconsideration of 'the western and European theoretical apparatus in the light of the fluidity of sense inherent in its being also Mediterranean, and hence touched by the unbounded African and Middle Eastern deserts – spaces marked by the difficulty of determining orientation coordinates' (Silvestri, forthcoming 2016). In other words, the mainstream theoretical apparatus, when 'tested in a neo-critical confrontation', taking into account Mediterranean Europe and the Mediterranean elements exported in the colonies, will develop a "fluidification" of its hermeneutical canons' once they engage the counter-responses of 'postcolonial and decolonial deconstructions'.

First station: embarkation

Confrontation is unavoidable insofar as our hermeneutical approach seeks epistemological, poetic, and translational breaks in the texture of narration and representation. By means of confrontation, creative cultural and social activism unties and goes beyond

(*desprenderse*, Quijano 1992; *de-linking*, Mignolo 2007) the re-westernization/de-westernization debate, and beyond the fixed paradigms of territorial mappings installed in the surviving colonial designs of partition and appropriation. For activist researchers, the issue is the deconstruction of the political design behind the cartography that perpetuates border signatures representing the earth as ripped apart by walls. Those boundaries were imposed by 18th and 19th century northern 'verticalist' views of the Mediterranean and were conceived not as bridges between lands and cultures, but essentially as 'a wall between Europe and non-Europe' (Cazzato 2012: 26). This colonial view remains with us today. The wall, and the border-as-wall, is the material expression of fortification (defence, rejection and expulsion) by so-called western 'democracies', on the one hand, and the neo-colonial appropriation of non-western economies and bodies, on the other.

The work of attacking such a colonial view is as practical as it is theoretical, and to this end the performative concept of *de-linking* is quite useful. Walter Mignolo derives the term from the Peruvian scholar Anibal Quijano who, in his essay 'Colonialidad y modernidad/racionalidad' (first published in South America in 1992, translated into English in 2007), described with the term *desprenderse* an effort at *disconnecting from* a colonialist world order which began with the conquest of the land now called Latin America (Quijano 2007: 168).

According to Mignolo: 'Without an epistemic delinking it is difficult to really delink from the modern notion of Totality' (2007: 502). But the epistemic disconnection required to bypass the 'conflictive co-existence of re-westernization with de-westernization'

can only be achieved through the knowledge that 'there are other options looming large on the horizon, which dispute the monopoly of the colonial matrix of power that has been controlled for five hundred years by Western Europe and the US' (in Mattisson 2012).

For Mignolo, de-linking implies de-colonizing by enacting the methodology of critical border thinking:

desprenderse from the coloniality of knowledge controlled and managed by the theo-, ego-, and organo-logical principles of knowledge and its consequences. De-linking goes together with the de-colonial shift, and the geo- and body-politics of knowledge provide both the analytics for a critique and the vision toward a world in which many worlds can co-exist. (Mignolo 2007: 463)

The idea of applying the methodology of de-linking to further develop the uncentered methodology used in and for the 'Un/walling the Mediterranean' project, and consequently to start shaping a critical Southern thinking, was supported by Gurminder K. Bhambra's essay 'Postcolonial and Decolonial Dialogues' (2014). In this work she explains how, for Quijano, the 'coloniality of power, expressed through political and economic spheres, was strongly associated with a coloniality of knowledge (or of imagination), articulated as modernity/rationality' (2014: 117). Quijano questions the emergence of totalitarian European knowledge production according to which the paradigms of modern/modernity (and rationalism) pertain only to Europe. In summarizing the main points developed by Said, Bhabha and Spivak on post-colonialism, and by Quijano, Mignolo and

Lugones on coloniality and decolonialization, Bhambra brings together postcolonial and decolonial theories.

The methodology underlying the 'Un/Walling the Mediterranean' project has developed through a similar conversational process. Inspired by border-critical thinking, and filtered through Chicano Studies, the approach to this research project requires bridges and dialogue between postcolonial theory and the diasporic, decolonial knowledge and vision presently emerging from Latin America and the Caribbean.

The aim of Un/Walling the verticalist oppositions of north/south geographies and epistemologies, old and new worlds, Mediterranean and Atlantic routes, becomes a more complicated endeavour when we take into account the wall that sets the European identity card against the undocumented African and Middle Eastern refugee, reaching Southern Italy across the Mediterranean.

The inspiration for the 'Un/Walling the Mediterranean' project derives from the critical and theoretical frameworks constructed by intellectuals such as the Indian Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak, who came to the U.S. from post-colonial countries and who put their voices and visions in dialogue with political and poetic intellectuals such as Edward Said, in exile from an imaginary country, namely the colony and walled detention camp of Palestine (one of the places identified by the geopolitics of modernity and democracy as 'territories', a designation which prevents its growth as a nation-state and which prevents, in fact, any possibility of post-colonial revolution or reinvention).

These primarily academic voices have

been then interwoven with critical thinking coming from the Caribbean and South America, areas touched by Eurocentric colonization since the beginning of the 16th century. In these borderlands many theorists speak, such as Eduardo Galeano, Glissant, Quijano, Mignolo, the 'grupo modernidad/colonialidad', and the philosopher of mestiza consciousness, María Lugones, whose feminist thinking is touched and interlaced with the 'impure' of the Americas, the natives and indios.

Lugones also finds inspiration in Quijano, whose work she inflects with gender, sexuality, class and race coordinates. At the same time, she is inspired by and inspires the *mestiza* border singer, *la chicanita* Gloria Anzaldúa. Together, both women act as a lighthouse for a transnational coalition of activist and theoretical resistance to colonial and neo-colonial power; both, likewise, encourage and inspire a small group of European scholars and activists who work in postcolonial, decolonial, intercultural and transcultural studies, and who share Bhabra's view that:

[postcolonialism] and decoloniality are only made necessary as a consequence of the depredations of colonialism, but in their intellectual resistance to associated forms of epistemological dominance they offer more than simple opposition. They offer, in the words of María Lugones, the possibility of a new geopolitics of knowledge. (Bhabra 2014: 120)

As Quijano, Mignolo and Lugones make evident, new typologies of geopolitical mappings can be drawn only after the decolonization of knowledge. As Bhabra explains, in response to Mignolo's 'The Geopolitics of Knowledge

and the Colonial Difference' (2000), this revisioning 'occurs in acknowledging the sources and geopolitical locations of knowledge while at the same time affirming those modes and practices of knowledge that have been denied by the dominance of particular forms' (Bhabra 2014: 118). This means two things for the 'Un/Walling the Mediterranean' project. First, one needs to acknowledge the inescapability of passing through postcolonial frameworks in order to find ways toward the decolonization of knowledge. Second, the use of the postcolonial/decolonial compass as a tool in orienting ourselves towards new out-of-scale maps is unavoidable. In other words, to undo the colonialist frameworks of the modern world, one must engage with the maps/atlas such frameworks have put into place.

At this point-station in the analysis of new perceptions of the geopolitical borderization of the world it has become necessary to uncover the tiles underlying the watery routes of colonialism, to expose how, in modernity-coloniality, the Mediterranean Sea was a corridor for that ulcerous abscission, deterritorialization and dehumanization of bodies called slavery, one of the most violent faces of the conquest of 'wild' overseas lands that begot the maps of no return (Brand 2001). This is necessary in order to look for, analyse, and spread the vision and novelty of new patterns of geopolitical cohabitation. This is necessary in order to understand what takes shape and voice, becoming representable, along the routes through the deserts and the waters of the Mediterranean, through all of the boarding and disembarkation points on African and European shores. This is necessary to understand the geo-positionings of bodies on the move that find neither hospitality nor anyone

listening, as well as to delink from the totalitarian fortification of borders and from the arresting of arrivants' mobility.

The stress recent scholarship has put on the Trans-Atlantic passage as the connector of Europe with the two Americas covers up the fact that many ships used as slave-cargo were owned by Mediterranean countries, that the Mediterranean opens onto the Atlantic, and the fact that slave empires were European empires. By exploiting the overlap of cultures offered by the Mediterranean, European empires constructed the institution of slavery and the enormous economy that would extend from it, and, in so doing, lay the foundations for the black diaspora.

Likewise, still nowadays the narrative of the stop-over in Africa of the European colonialist slave ships, which facilitated and commercialized the robbery of black bodies, omits the Mediterranean roots-routes, and is subordinated by such terms as the Middle or Transatlantic Passage. These terms will continue to cover up the origins of colonial violence unless we begin thinking of the routes that cross the Mediterranean, connecting its harbours with slave trading ports in Africa and from there to the New World and the Carribean as a Trans-Mediterr-Atlantic Passage.

As it is known, the narration of colonialism tried to speak quietly of slavery along the Western Atlantic coast in order to silence the violation of African bodies shipped as cargo, and has silenced the contribution of Africa to 'modern' America and Europe, expecting its audience to be as blind and naïve as Benito Cereno in the seizure and export of human 'chattel' and African cultures. For this reason, in returning to the origin for its retelling, the counter-narrative

must re-introduce Mediterranean traces into the history of the Middle Passage and colonizing modernity.

As witnesses to contemporary neo-colonisations that do not entail change in national geographies, we can realize that the interpolation of South American paradigms into the narration of North American colonial cultural history can offer an important and critical change of perspective: the 'latinization' of settler narratives involves the entrance of the Mediterranean onto the US scene. It is at this juncture that we might begin to delineate the Mediterraneanization of Transatlantic Studies.

Sidestep from the first movement

In floating between different continental shores, one has to adjust to theoretical and methodological horizons that will always be out of focus, mixing undisciplined and interdisciplinary methodologies whose movements are informed by critical border thinking and by border epistemologies. For activist researchers from Southern Italy – disparagingly called by some critics in the North and in Europe 'Arabic *terrori*' and 'Africans' – the US-Mexico border issue calls to the surface, like a figure *en abyme*, the countless walls and barbed-wire fences splitting territories and cultures all over the world. Particularly, for researchers in Southern Italy, the American border conflict highlights the new immaterial walls Fortress Europe would construct around and across the Mediterranean Sea.

With an attentive eye turned to the politics behind the transnational drive to wall lands and waters – a politics that dresses its idealism and racism in

economic and pragmatic arguments – a call-and-response relational geo-critical perspective has been adopted in an attempt to foster the flow of epistemological and artistic currents *between* the de-colonizing and de-centered epistemes developed by *chicana* transatlantic border-thinkers and the decolonizing pressures applied by trans-Mediterranean intellectuals, activists, artists, migrants, and movers. Indeed, by reclaiming freedom of mobility and by disseminating (de)signs along Mediterranean routes and walls, they are inscribing new aesthetics, politics, and mappings that will shape an Asian-African-European Mediterranean and a TransMediterrAtlantic consciousness.

Following such an unexplored methodology means contributing to the path leading toward the decolonization of knowledge and the testing of epistemological scores and *over-bolalrdering* (from the Italian word *debordante*) poetics and politics. If one assigns to the second element of the compound word, 'border', the English connotation of *check point*, *over-bolalrdering* becomes synonymous with *overflowing*. However, if one retains the under-trace of the Italian nautical expression *entro-bordo/fuoribordo* (inboard/outboard), this introduces to the paradigm of mobility, of crossing over something earthly and solid, a marine and fluid metaphor, namely that of being *over-board*, in the sea, and so introducing fluid cartographies.

It seems to me that an epistemological turn is taking place in Cultural Studies. We are beginning to see more frequently theoretical and political procedures that are marked by a recovery-with-remodulation of vernacular knowledge and practices. Those who mean to delink

from the re-westernization/de-westernization conflict head towards those conspicuous points which are neither reported on traditional international maps nor on national signage, but which are known, instead, only to locals.

Nonetheless, researchers looking for deformity and cultural and political dissidence can be helped by native informants in viewing the lightening signals coming from either the 'shadow archives' of the pre-colonial age (see Pugliese 2011) or from shadow archives saved by vernacular cultures adverse to westernization policies. These pre-colonial collateral and coeval archives host maps of alter/native knowledge that contribute to the construction of alter/native narratives, descriptions of cultural contact and exchange for which the connecting texture is not linear, and neither simply geographic. Rather, this 'historyo(ro)graphy' – a term combining history (time) and geography (space) in one word – is genealogically marked by what Joseph Pugliese calls 'geo-corporgraphy' (Pugliese 2007),² resulting from the genetic and cultural blending that would eventually produce *mestizaje*.

While reading the de-colonial studies by Quijano, Mignolo, Lugones, Chela Sandoval and Walter D'Almeida, whose general aim is to shape decolonizing histories and maps, one starts to see their views refracted through paradigms set up by representatives of the Anglo-American post-colonial school and can perceive oneself landing within a coalition resistant to sectarianisms and essentialisms. One can feel as if s/he were walking in the company of timeless

² In my personal use of the term, the component *graphia* in the concept of geo-corporgraphy embraces both the meaning of the narration/history and of map-design/space.

pilgrims who set themselves outside the Eurocentric concept of nation. One can feel among, and one with, these walkers, crossers of deserts and seas, transients on bridges and thresholds. Thus, the anthropological and poetical geography of the TransMediterranean was placed in this migratory paysage, the borderless territory of geo-corpographical streams connecting the Mediterranean and Atlantic Seas (Zaccaria 2012 and 2014). There, embodied shadow archives wait to talk to the present. The Europe–Mediterranean–Atlantic juncture, to take the triangulation of diaspora, directs research steps towards horizons of diverse knowledge and vernacular imaginaries containing shadow archives transplanted along the Mediterranean by diasporas and colonization³.

The critical action of detachment from canonical geographies has found a welcome orientation in the de-linking performativity proposed by Quijano and Mignolo. *Des-prenderse* modifies ‘the terms (concepts) as well as the content (histories) of the conversations on modernity/coloniality’ (Bhambra 2014: 119). As Bhambra explains, Mignolo’s argument for ‘a decolonial epistemic shift that enables the histories and thought of other places to be understood as prior to European incursions and to be used as the basis of developing connected histories of encounters through those incursions’ can be carried on by people descending from the *mezcla* who colonization inadvertently created in the new worlds. Mignolo’s

³ These kinds of archives are analysed by a Southern Italian team of researchers without tenure whose project is called ‘dizionidiasporiche’. They are also creating a multimedia online archive, a space of artistic practices expressive of contemporary mobility and diaspora (dizionidiasporiche.wordpress.com).

search for an epistemology that is ‘geographical in its historicity’ (Mignolo 2000: 67) is motivated by the native, postcolonial and newcomers people who know all about such encounters and incursions. Moreover, they propose a geographical and epistemological turn that purports to be an ‘epistemic delinking from “the rhetoric of modernity” to involve rethinking “the emancipating ideals of modernity in the perspective of coloniality”’ (Bhambra *ibid.*, quoting Mignolo 2007: 469).

Second move, first landing: Southern critical thinking

The next step in our activist research involves a further interrogation into how this epistemological geo-political turn, assuming critical border thinking (as found in Border Studies) and ‘thinking with the world’ (as found in Glissant and Creolization Studies and Black Diaspora Studies), can contribute to ‘Un/Walling the Mediterranean’ action.

To face this question, it is necessary to describe first the background and foreground reasons for the need to enfold the Mediterranean in Transatlantic Studies, and then, above all, to bring to light what the research team considers shadowed representations of ‘mediterraneity’. The deep, complex routes constituting ‘mediterraneity’ offer an alternative paradigm to the geopolitics of containment and the rejection of differently-coloured bodies implemented by Fortress Europe.

Mediterraneity, that is, confronts Fortress Europe – which would regulate the ‘traffic’ of newcomers arriving from the other side of our common sea – with an ungainly mixture of languages, cultures,

prayers, and architectures. *Mediterraneity* presents to those who would forget that it is our sea that opens to the Atlantic and New World, and that it is our sea that contains the threshold crossed countless times since antiquity and throughout the age of colonization, our chart, charter and maps, which helped structure economies of enslavement and afro-exploitation grown in the twentieth century. It is the *mediterraneity* and southernness soaked in African salts, still speaking Arabic in the alleys of our old cities; speaking the vernacular of old Greek in Salento (Southern Apulia), and speaking thousands of active, vernacular variants of Latin, Spanish and French in its towns and cities. *This mediterraneity* and southernness, etched in the historical heart of our community (de-linking itself from both the Renaissance and the Risorgimental Italian style), offers walking lanes inside Moorish Kasbahs, Spanish quarters exhibiting Moorish facades and spectacular views beneath which one can find a Greek foundation. *This mediterraneity*, as found in Bari, leads us from windy Roman churches to the architectural signs of a 9th century Arab emirate, to the Norman-Swedish castle on the harbour, and to the Napoleonic district, the legacy of French dominion. *This mediterraneity* and southernness of languages, cultures, music, litanies and architectures constitutes the peculiar materials that the team of Southern un/wallers assumes to be a model of *de-linking* in a time of endless debate about polarities: East and West, colonial and post-colonial, de-westernization and re-westernization, hospitality and rejection, cosmopolitanism and nationalism.

At the bottom of today's inflammatory diatribes and policies, in the heart of Europe's refusal to de-link from rejection-and-expulsion geopolitics,

Southern critical thinking reveals weakness, hopelessness, an absence of imagination and political intransigence in the face of an irrepressible mobility of cultural differences of all kinds. In our discussions with other research teams at the Padua 'postcolonialitalia' conference (February 2015), we found strong understanding, support and consensus around our proposal of a Mediterranean epistemology, of a perspective from the South and of the South as a place of transculturations. We felt as if the community gathered in the room shared our view of a kind of wide fracture opening up in the middle of the territories, where waters and currents from everywhere mingle and where cultural specificities converge and sometimes even blend. The South as a space that rejects any form of conceptual essentialism, any univocal view of the South that simply defines it as non-North, as happened with the polarization West/Oriental (see also Camaroff & Camaroff 2012 and Frassinelli 2015).

Southern critical thinking, as conceived by the 'Un/Walling the Mediterranean' project, is a methodology devised to de-link from binary and oppositional thinking. We want to think of the European South (and other souths, in Africa and the Middle East, for instance) not simply as the site of departure to the North, East and West, but as an episteme in its own right, as a different manner of thinking and vision. The South is now the destination for a post-colonial mobility that does not stop at walls, since the mobility itself is caused by another kind of wall: the neo-colonial wall of global liberalism. This wall was imposed on the descendants of people who were robbed of their own languages and cultures by Mediterranean conquistadors and Anglo and European settlers in the age of

empires and in the post-independence era. Then they have been recently robbed again with re-westernization policies depriving ex-colonies of means of self-determination, hence creating opportunities for all forms of fundamentalism.

By collecting odours, languages, bodies and colours, the South, and the Mediterranean as Southernness, inherited and borrowed archival tapestries, and in bringing migrant mobility into focus, it offers new geographies of *convivencia*. The South, and the Mediterranean as Southernness, contributes to the invertebration, liquification and break up of European verticalist walling up. The South, and the Mediterranean as Southernness, shows to the West and to Westernized states branded by its model of universal democracy, other models of living together as movers on land and water, not only as erectors of steel and concrete. The South, and the Mediterranean as Southernness, teaches us how to find the embodied archives narrating how European history is structured by contacts and fights, fecund geo-cultural encounters, and a drive to excise the non-similar through cultural and racial cleansings. The South, and the Mediterranean as Southernness, is learning to shed light on the embodied shadow archives that wait everywhere to become part of local and global narratives.

Such narratives, once expressed and accounted for, will contribute to an archive of the future that de-stabilizes geographical scales and maps, eliminates the black used to encircle nation-state boundaries, and re-traces the diversified geo-physical territories that the little European continent might become if it does not deny its history, the conquest of *el otro mundo* included.

With the resurgence of embodied archives of the past, in the future it will be possible to call the resulting un/walled Mediterranean the 'TransMediterrAtlantic Sea', because the subtext of the proposal to work from the south toward a different inscription of Southern Space follows from the methodology of cultural border crossing, cultural mestizaje and no-border wall policies by border critical thinking.

Third move: the dance of the embodied shadow archives

At this stage, the journey into the space of 'Un/Walling the Mediterranean' leads toward a geo-territoriality that brings together Mediterraneity, the Middle Passage triangulation, its rebounds on contemporary Europe, and its relationship with the ex-colonies. This dimension requires an enquiry into the ways in which TransMediterrAtlantic bodies are inscribed into the 'embodied shadow archives' analysed by Joseph Pugliese (2011), an Italian-Australian scholar who proposes new cultural geographies marked by an awareness of corporeality. Pugliese develops the notion of the shadow archive first described by Alan Sekula who postulated a more inclusive archive, one containing both histories not taken into account by 'national' history or official archives, and 'subjugated knowledge', namely what is considered non-conceptual and tacit or corporeal (1986).

The discursive practices of knowledge/power, exercised along geopolitical and geo-cultural frontiers through procedures ascribable to the assimilation/restriction regime, have shadowed and still shadow the archives that write 'geo-corpographies'. Such

shadow archives narrate a corporeal sharing of space that consequently make the space corporeal. These corporeal shadow archives exemplify the biologisation of the cultural' (Pugliese 2011: 2), namely they de-link space from both the concept of a presupposed neutrality and from marks of belonging to a single cultural matrix. The embodied archive, then, is unsettling because, being corporeal, it makes the geo-physical and geopolitical space relational.

As it is evident, Pugliese's definition of the *embodied shadow archive* is thick with geo-physical and geopolitical semantics. Besides the centrality of the knot that is knowledge/power, his definition exalts in the living being's physical power, since the archive is biologized by the adjective *embodied*. The expression *embodied archive* represents territorial archives, such as the Southern Italian archives of subalternity and crossed colonisations expunged from the 'national' archives. These archives were removed because of their haunting corporeality – the traces of colonialist repression – and because of their acknowledgment that African and Turkish blood and cultures moisten the *bios* and *cultus* of Italy, roots which the country prefers to describe, naturally and nationalistically, as 'classical', namely Greek and Roman.

Joseph Pugliese has taken into account the archives of Calabrese and Southern Italian Arab past, looking for the dissemination of Arabic traces left over by the southern emirates of Tropea, Amantea, Santa Severina (Calabria) and Bari (Puglia) that constitute the suppressed history of Southern Italy.

These gestures of dismissal need to be situated in the long, entrenched

and contradictory history of whiteness in Italy. As I have discussed in detail elsewhere (Pugliese 'Race as Category Crisis'), the history of whiteness in Italy is perfectly encapsulated by the racist aphorism 'Africa begins south of Rome.' The racist North/South divide operates along this racialised geopolitical axis that demarcates the North as Aryan and European, and the South as African and Arab (Pugliese 2011: 3).

Post-colonial and de-colonial epistemologies are instrumental to his argument that:

In the face of the violence of historicidal erasure, I found that many things have survived from our Arab past that belie the 'facts' of official histories – traces that have been transmitted intercorporeally from generation to generation. The seemingly erased past is not dead. Contrary to official historicidal claims, the traces of this Arab past have not been obliterated from the lives of contemporary Calabrese. One has to learn to look and listen. (2011: 3)

Pugliese's considerations are fundamental to any criticism that will lead to the construction of archives of the future that do not obliterate the un-subjugated views offered by embodied shadow archives. Official archives are built on the regulatory exercise of division and subjugation, and hegemonic thinking assures citizens that the official archive safeguards legitimate and hierarchically organized knowledge. For this,

[what] cannot be accommodated to this regime is dispatched to the



disordered domain of subjugated knowledges, as that 'series of knowledges that have been disqualified as nonconceptual knowledges, as insufficiently elaborated knowledges: naïve knowledges, hierarchically inferior knowledges that are below the required level of erudition or scientificity' (Foucault 2003: 7). Escaping the grid of scientificity... operating below the radar of erudition, and *nonconceptual because corporeal*, these other knowledges articulate other ways of being and knowing. In contradistinction to the official archive, the alternative epistemology of the embodied archive is predicated on *relationality*. (Pugliese 2011: 5, citing Foucault 2003: 7)

The epistemological implications of Pugliese's views are illuminating. He digs up the embodied archives from the shadows and rejects the label of 'nonscientific' attached to vernacular knowledge. Paying attention to the 'indissociable links that bind the body to histories, cultures and geographies', he suggests that embodied shadow archives develop an epistemology of relationality that crushes the wall between 'categorical borders'. He argues that this unearthing of archives will uncover

dense sedimentations of the past that enact ruptures, transformations and continuities, producing an embodied present that is always anachronically tied to what has preceded it and to what will follow. The body here as lived fulcrum of a future anterior: in the future, the past will already have left its traces (Pugliese 2011: 5).

One hypothesis guiding the 'Un/Walling

the Mediterranean' project is that the revolutionary energy of artistic works – namely those contemporary artistic and activist positionalities deriving from the combination of activist social responsibility and commitment to justice (activism) with art creativity – undermines any kind of territorial fence. Pugliese's prefiguration of an 'embodied present', composed of past and future traces, has proved to be very helpful in the analysis of various artefacts found during our research and considered to be forerunners to un/walling strategies designed to fight all types of enclosures restraining the body's freedom of movement.

The procedure of searching for the (de)signs enshrined in embodied shadow archives that enact(ed) breeches and transformations in colonial designs, casting seeds for the future, i.e. for today, is proving a valuable process not simply because it exposes how current acts of un/walling and civil disobedience fit into a continuity of related practices in time, but also because it illuminates past actions of *de-linking* from colonial power and its official knowledge. Moreover, it reveals that the processes of *de-linking* from the coercive disciplinarization of knowledge and bodies Foucault analysed have been accomplished by assuming the spatial-corporeal positionality of contiguity, interraciality and cross-culturality, thus creating resistance coalitions, such as the anti-slavery American underground railroads or the secret passes in the mountains of the France-Italy border, frequently used by Italian emigrants in the 50s and 60s. In other words, embodied shadow archives, once unearthed, teach us to detect traces of resistance that the past launches towards the future.

To illustrate the revolutionary compass of



this procedure, which requires *de-linking* from coloniality and retracing the geographies/passages/marks left over by the superimposition of past corpographies and migrations on the present, I will briefly refer to a case study, *Io sto con la Sposa (On the Bride's Side)*, a 2014 docufiction by Antonio Augugliaro, Gabriele del Grande, and Khaled Soliman al Nassiry (See www.iostoconlasposa.com/en/ for the synopsis and film).

The film, which is a kind of reality show or form of narrative journalism, not only takes the shape of an archive of migrant displacements (hence also becoming an archive of future archives), but it assumes the function of a cartography in progress of supranational maps embodying another idea of Europe, a possible Europe where one can bypass customs, national regulations, and where non-extra communitarian people can become traffickers, acting as smugglers (as is the case of Italians helping Syrians in flight to reach Northern Europe). Also, in becoming cunning and artful, the resident traffickers can help people on the move to jump walls or find hidden openings in the border.

As activist researchers, we are discovering that national walls and borders occur in various grades of solidity and porosity. The discovery of these hidden openings is somewhat dependent on the colour, gender, and social status of the trespasser. These days, as Filippo Silvestri said in his paper at the Padua conference (2015), the walls facing Africa seem to be barred, whereas in the east one finds cracks and holes. As undocumented crossers and unauthorized helpers of the crossers, the fake bridal party searches for breaches and cuts in the wall. Italians and Syrians alike perform and communicate the idea

that mobility is power, as the co-director, writer and blogger Gabriele del Grande affirms. After all, a migrant's mobility presupposes a right to travel, thus it disrupts the concepts of national belonging, citizenship, and cartographies/politics of containment in performing deterritorialization through trans-territorial mobility.

Del Grande, who in 2006 launched his blog 'Fortress Europe'⁴, rejects the association of the migrants' boats with 'prisons' and 'traps' and in January 2015, when he was guest lecturer at the one-day open seminar held at the University of Bari organized by our research group, he explained his thinking.

He argued that in the imagination and experience of the person who departs, a boat is the vessel towards the possibility of changing one's own destiny; it is a means to freedom. In the same way, according to del Grande, searching for holes in the wall or throwing oneself on the other side of the six-meter high wall in Ceuta and Melilla is a gesture of rebellion, vitality and modernity staged by the descendants of the post-colonized and the neo-colonized resisting the walls of re-westernization.

Therefore the holes in the curtain, vulnerabilities in the European check-point system, are sought both by the Mediterranean crossers and by the

⁴ Fortress Europe is one of the first and best independent observatories on the victims of the border, travelling around the Mediterranean shores and along the borders of Europe, narrating histories of youth on mobility, of border policies and of people's deaths due to geo-political entrapping maps. Its website, <http://fortresseurope.blogspot.it>, receives an average of 2.000 contacts for day, it is translated in 21 languages and for many people it is the written book of the unwritten history of xxi-century exoduses.

Italian activists and artists who organize the bride's journey in Augugliaro's film. At the first border trespass, between Italy and France, underground activist facilitators and undocumented migrants climb the Grimaldi Superiore pass, an old pass which remains an unauthorized border crossing point still today and which was used in the 1960s to move undetected into France, as the shadow archives of post Second World War migrations remind us.

The barbed-wire fence, with holes punched in at various points, is reached by the wedding party after a hard trek. Shot together with the walls of the secret stop over station – a house on the top of the mountain – the pass, the fence, and the station-walls take on the configuration of a shadow archive becoming, in shot after shot, an embodied archive, an archive of migrant knowledge and emotion, an archive of inscriptions of a borderless Europe, an un-fortified Europe where communitarian and extra-communitarian individuals and masses in motion have dug tunnels to bypass walls and check-points.

The wall of the ramshackle railroad station that once offered refuge to the Italian emigrants illegally entering France appears to the Syrian and Italian border-crossers, and to viewers in quite a large number of nations, as a palimpsestic cartography that is host to innumerable passages of individuals, their languages and cultures, their written words, traces of past narratives and future visions of self-fulfilment.

The wall takes on the configuration of an archive of textualities made of overlapping languages, one written over, and speaking over, the next. The wall on which the Syrian fake-groom Abdalla,

one of the survivors of the October 11th 2013 tragedy in Lampedusa, writes in Arabic, while crying, the names of the drowned, so that they will not be forgotten, becomes a space-time of written memory, a multi-lingual script where no new language, no new migrant narrative can strip or erase past *graphos*. The camera's long, caressing shot of the words in different languages has the effect of representing *an* archive that is not at all in the shadows. The camera reveals and brings to our gaze a geo-, corpo-, psycho-graphic and multilingual, plurisensorial, pluricoded, plurilinguistic embodied archive.

The intersected methodology of call-and-response between different experiences and languages developed for the 'Un/Walling the Mediterranean' project, and the relational perspective resulting from the reading of the archive as a container of past knowledge and *de-linking* practices informing contemporary decolonizing theory and practice, allows the viewer of the film to be aware not only of the temporal continuity of the writing(s) on the wall, but also of the wall as a site of activist work. In this scene, the public-private scripts etched on the walls of the *casina*-underground station are viewable as the embodied archive of public-private sentiments and policies. Furthermore, these 'marks on the wall' – in the acts of reading, writing, and conceptualising the embodied archive they portray – resist the western, metropolitan interpretation that would take them merely as a form of street art or tactical media. Rather, they come to more closely resemble *chican@* and *mestiz@* acts of *ARTivism*, a contemporary cultural/political positionality sprouted inside hybridized, transcultural communities and exposed in public spaces rather than in museums or borderized spaces. As a critic working

between Atlantic and Mediterranean histories and theories, chican@ border ARTivism has revealed to me the inextricable knitting together of colonizing and colonized cultures. And in light of our considerations so far, we might now call this knitting – like the palimpsest of geo- and corpo-graphic text found on the station wall in the film – representative of a TransMediterranean archive.

By filming the archives hosting traces of past clandestine movements of people from Italy into France, *On the Bride's Side* opens up the shadow archives to fluid temporal and spatial no-border wall encounters and shows us how the steps of contemporary migrants crossing the Mediterranean to Lampedusa do not stop on that island or in Italy, and do not touch only the sea. The bride's clandestine journey on foot and by car to Stockholm through France, Germany and Denmark, teaches us that the Mediterranean passage, before and after arrival in Italy, also involves land. Then, insofar as the Mediterranean passage is a crossing of land and sea, we should reconfigure the liquid/solid divide: the Mediterranean, the sea between continents, is a seamless sea-earth compound.⁵

To my question about his shift from blogging to film-making, Gabriele del Grande – who in the January seminar in Bari defined himself as a postcolonial journalist who is not concerned with 'the mass' media but with real people and individual subjects – answered that since *On the Bride's Side* his activism has been conveyed through the

⁵ On the various meanings and symbols attributed to the word 'Mediterranean' by different cultures and in different languages, see Zaccaria 2012 in Parati (ed).

dissemination of aesthetic works. In the 'Directors' Notes' on the film's website we read:

The fact that we were sharing a great risk and a great dream inevitably united us. And this experience also changed our way of seeing things and helped us in the search for a new perception of the border – for a language, which, without falling into the trap of victimism, was able to transform the monsters of our fears into the heroes of our dreams, the ugly into the beautiful and numbers into names.⁶

The cinematic language of the documentary has functioned throughout Europe as an antagonistic representation of what some journalists have called 'the migrant invasion' and 'the silent assent' of Europeans to anti-migrant laws. *On the Bride's Side* reinstates subjectivity to the migrants and agency to the Mediterranean dissidents and no-wall activists who help them. It disrupts the wall of our presumed complicity with the European detention and deportation machine and at the same time it reveals how, as the Italian sociologist Giuseppe Campesi writes, '(detained) migrants possess an extraordinary ability to resist and undermine the deportation machine (Fekete 2005), reproducing a condition that, reversing Nicolas De Genova's formula (2002), I would define as of their "undeportability"' (Campesi 2015, forthcoming).

Del Grande and Campesi, in different languages, show how the wall paradigm is not 'universal' and that the rights to enter the West and North are subordinated according to an 'ethnic

⁶ www.iostoconlasposa.com/en

segmentation'. Consequently, 'Un/Walling the Mediterranean' research-action has to take into account that as well as material walls, crossers have to face economical, racial, gender, and age barriers. From this awareness, two Italian men and a Palestinian-Syrian poet, a refugee in Italy, contrive the idea of the fake-wedding party to move across, and cut across, national boundaries. The complexity of the wall paradigm, then, can bring about comic-dramatic mockery of travesty and of the fictional wedding party on the road. The strategy devised by the crossers to bypass border inspections – the masquerade, which is always a means of signifying revolt for subjugated people – results in, more importantly, an unshadowing of unofficial archives.

Last move: undocumented landing

The revolutionary message/action of an activist work such as *On the Bride's Side* is the reason why the activist researchers of the 'Un/Walling' project commit themselves to the decolonizing agencies expressed in performances by the TransMediterranean migrants, refugees, movers, activists and artists. By disseminating in public spaces along Mediterranean routes artistic works and writings on the wall, they lay the foundations for new border aesthetics and politics, and illuminate the mobilizing power of art. Already in design, finally, there is a Trans-Asiatic-African-European map-consciousness which, in building on what TransMediterrAtlantic thought and vision has established, should provide more extensive maps with which we can *se desprendre*, de-link, *decollare* from the wall paradigm.

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