

Introduction

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The metaphorical image of “liquid borders” captures, both visually and conceptually, the pervasive encounters between the massive fluxes of transnational migrants and the material and intangible obstacles imposed as proliferating *dispositifs* of border governmentality in the globalized world. As distributions and delimitations of land that emerged and functioned historically in close connection to the notions of property and sovereignty, with the goal of demarcating cultural, religious, and political domains, borders have traditionally provided a sense of order, limit, and restriction. Denoting power, as well as the capacity of enforcing exclusion, borders became, in both their materiality and their symbolisms, iconic elements associated with the ideas of frontier and confinement, reclusion and imprisonment. Historically, borders have also inspired disobedience, contestation, and transgression. Much more unstable than they appear to be, borders have always triggered disputes in which excluded subjects challenged the legitimacy and instrumentality of borders, arguing in favor of human beings’ right of movement, particularly when their survival is at stake.

As it is well known, in contemporary times, particularly since the end of the Cold War and in correspondence with the transformations of late capitalism, the reinforcement of borders has intensified. If the period that followed World War II was considered “the era of the refugee,” the first decades of the twenty-first century are certainly disputing the title. The strengthening of national borders, as well as the effects of dehumanizing migratory laws, border regulations, and harassment of so-called irregular migrants, has become, since the 1990s, an increasingly Kafkaesque reality. On both land and sea, border fortifications, wire fences, electronic barriers, and intangible lines create painful and arbitrary distributions of life and death, affecting millions of individuals who, in a vast majority, come from cultures that were colonized by the nations that now close their doors to them. It is, then, necessary to recognize that this is a manufactured catastrophe that, in addition to its historic roots, has reached appalling heights as a direct outcome of globalization. The implementation of neoliberal politics and the consolidation of new forms of hegemony and marginalization have dramatically deepened social and economic inequality, political exclusion, and cultural invisibilization of “the wretched of the Earth.” As reported by the United Nations, more than 244 million

migrants traverse the world today, desperately looking for a livable place that would give life a chance to exist, in a time/space of dignity, peace, and freedom.

In the light of the reference to Franz Fanon's pivotal work, it is worth emphasizing that we are facing here a racialized crisis that does not hide its real and deplorable face. The bodies of migrants that lose their lives in the crossing of the Mediterranean, around Australian coasts, in their transit from Africa, Syria, or Central America, in European soil or in the deserts or warlike zones that separate Mexico from the United States, or in islands and offshore refugee and deportation camps around the world, are not white. They represent the margins of the developed world, the residues of colonialism, the reserve army of cheap workers that feed the capitalist machinery, when they are "lucky enough" to be absorbed, even temporarily, by the work market in developed countries, until they become again inconvenient and redundant. We are confronting the effects of biopolitics, the consequences of biocapitalism, and its necropolitical outcomes, which have in the dynamics of migratory movements one of their most evident, massive, and devastating testimonies. All around the world, the use of militarized borders, electronic technology, fortifications, authoritarian rhetoric, communicational campaigns, criminalization of civil disobedience, devaluation of the *other*, naturalization of inequality, and racialization and dehumanization of irregular migrants constitute a myriad of tactics destined to contain bodies and discourage people from abandoning inhospitable lands and unbearable living conditions, in search for opportunities of survival in foreign territories. The right to remain at home, in the motherland or in the sites of choice, must be often sacrificed in order to survive local conditions of scarcity, violence, or ecological imbalances. At the same time, the "disposable" subjects who traverse the world looking to inhabit the interstices of the capitalist system constitute an invaluable repository for the sustainability of clandestine parallel economies in developed or semideveloped countries. They are ideal for working in *maquiladoras*, for subcontracting, and for employment in a variety of occupations where no minimal salaries and no social benefits can be claimed, such as seasonal rural labor and domestic work. For this reason, the constant "production of illegality" is big business around the world.

One of the aspects of migratory studies that the reader notices from the beginning is the emergence of a new vocabulary which, in an attempt to capture the multifarious nature of the issues related to de/re/territorialization, border crossings, deportation, and forced displacements, incorporate transdisciplinary critical and theoretical categories, methodologies, and concepts that belong to the fields of ethnographical, sociological, and psychological analysis. This terminology contributes in different manners to orientate the analysis of new realities that surpass previous scenarios and require original approaches.

Philosophy is recognized as one of the most important fields for the understanding of migratory issues, since it constitutes a domain that allows for in-depth reflections and debates on topics such as solidarity, tolerance, identity, and alterity, closely related to the processes of migration and eventual integration into new social environments. Ethical issues are inseparable from intercultural relations,

and inextricably linked to questions of citizenship, sovereignty, human rights, territoriality, and humanitarianism. Linguistics adds the indispensable study of the role language plays in cultural encounters, as an element that is essential to the construction of collective identities. Needless to say, political theory and economics provide the necessary foundation for the understanding of aspects related to the distribution of wealth, the organization of financial exchanges at a global level, the role of the State, the manipulation of job markets through the strategies of privatization, flexibility, and outsourcing, and problems related to the disciplining and control of populations around the world.

The progressive weakening of nation-States, the strengthening of entrepreneurial transnationalized business, the proliferation of supranational institutions, and the prominence of technological communications have profoundly changed the terms of the political game, which in modern times was defined around the notions of nationalism/internationalism, the centrality of the State, the functioning of political parties and unions, and the significance of national identities and territoriality. If both the *Rights of Man* and the *Rights of Citizens* could be engulfed in the same expression as a reference to the distinct ideological configuration of the civil entity – the citizen – defined as the *subject* of modern politics, today that *motto* alludes to two distinguishable, if not antagonistic figures, that are difficult to reconcile when it comes to the discussion of migratory issues, border enforcement, and human beings' right of movement and relocation.

The issue of creativity related to migration and borders acquires particular relevance in these scenarios. Visual arts, performance, film, photography, music, and literature contribute to integrating the language of affect, transcendence, and singularity in situations that must neither become naturalized nor turned into mere statistics, however necessary and useful these quantifications might be. Symbolizations are essential not only to show how collective imaginaries elaborate the issues of human displacement, violation of rights, State repression, nomadism, and inequality, but also for understanding how agency is constructed, thus turning victimization into social consciousness and political action.

The chapters that compose this book originated in an international conference held at Washington University in St. Louis in October 2019, where the authors participated in intense debates on a large variety of topics related to migration and borders around the world. The comparative dimension of intellectual exchanges was key not only for the enrichment of regional analysis, but also for the understanding of the ways in which power operates globally, under the regimes imposed by late capitalism and biopolitical domination. It soon became evident that current debates illuminate not only our troubled and changing present, but also shed light retroactively on migratory practices that took place during colonial times, thus devastating indigenous cultures and making possible centuries of slavery and servitude.

While some well-known terms need to be reconsidered and integrated under new light into the study of migration and borders (such as those of community, human rights, nationalism, and cosmopolitanism), other categories open new

avenues for the understanding of massive mobilizations and their social and political effects (e.g., transnationalism, global citizenship, transmigration, biocapitalism, displacement, extraterritoriality, and infrapolitics). A change of vocabulary, when substantiated by innovative analysis, indicates the modification of perspectives and positionalities, as well as of disciplinary practices and intellectual goals. In the same manner, crucial Marxist analysis of capitalist society, including the understanding of labor movements, the regimes of accumulation, the configuration of job markets, the dynamics of migrations and popular resistance, need to be complemented and updated today, taking into consideration the transformations of capitalism and the angles provided by the study of affect, subjectivity, biopolitics, race, gender, and community.

In addition to this introduction, this volume has been divided into six parts. Part I, “Migration, (trans) borders, and the freedom of movement,” includes Chapters 1 and 2 that propose a clear framework for further discussions. Sandro Mezzadra in Chapter 1, a leading scholar in the area of migration, focuses on the freedom of movement versus the proliferation of borders, as an essential point of contention in current scenarios, where the right of individuals to mobilize and relocate themselves is obstructed in the name of the rights of the citizens to enjoy the benefits of development and modernization, and to exclude those who do not legally belong to the nation-State, even if they are immersed in life and death struggles for survival. The collision between the *modern* structures of political-administrative organization of *the social* and the new realities and challenges of a world transformed and polarized by globalization and late capitalism becomes a central point of contention. In these scenarios, migration reveals its real dimension as a *social movement* that brings into light the necropolitical nature and the antagonistic quality of governmentality. According to Mezzadra, “migration provides us with an effective lens to investigate the weakness and instability of the current global political conjuncture, and it can also contribute, in a powerful way, to the establishment of political coalitions capable of subverting it.” Migration constitutes, in fact, a battlefield where the “victims” show their capacity to develop political consciousness, agency, and praxis.

José Manuel Valenzuela Arce, a key researcher in the field of Mexico-US border studies, in Chapter 2 provides a critical and theoretical approach to the analysis of Central American migration, focused on the strategies utilized by people in their hazardous migratory trajectories, the risks they encounter, and the solidarity and sense of community that sustains them. Valenzuela inscribes transnational, translocal, and cross-border mobilizations in the context of globalization, particularly with respect to processes of capital accumulation and variation of labor markets. He analyzes different aspects of migratory movements: the practice of caravans, the threat of *narcotraffickers* and *mareros* that interfere with migratory mobilizations, the policies implemented by US government in order to control these fluxes and maintain territorial surveillance, the *dispositifs* of social classification, and the proliferation of spaces of abandonment and precarization. In order to overcome dualistic perspectives, Valenzuela proposes a conceptual array of

notions that allow for the focalization of interrelations, convergences, and hybridizations in border areas.

Part II, “Labor, politics, and the question of limits,” offers four distinct approaches to the issue of migration. In Chapter 3, Abril Trigo introduces a theoretical discussion of the effects of biocapitalism in the globalized world, proposing that migratory movements clearly illustrate the subsumption of body, affect, mentality, productive and free time, desire (all of these understood as components of the human *totality*) by the capitalist machine, which exploits subjects through alienation, cheap labor, and other forms of servitude, in order to ensure the continuous reproduction of capital. Expanding the notion of biopolitics, *biocapitalism* constitutes, according to Vanni Codeluppi, an advanced form of capitalist economy, “a form that is characterized by its growing intertwining with the lives of human beings.”

In Chapter 4, Angela Naimou works on the issues of refuge and deportation, focusing on the case of Iraqi nationals residing in the United States. Naimou defines deportation in terms of radical modifications of temporal and spatial coordinates: “Deportation can mean transformative loss, transformed future, a disruption in continued migration, interminable time held in detention, or it can mean impending death.” Historically associated with colonial domination, slavery, and other practices in which force is exerted on the body and mind in order to achieve the submission and exploitation of the *other*, deportation is a punishment that destroys territorial identification, community, and collective identity, alters feelings of belonging and memory, impedes self-recognition and identification of place and time, and interrupts the continuity of life and its projection into the future. Naimou associates the border regime with imperial debris that needs to be removed, so narratives of lost and borrowed time can be told and repurposed.

The inescapable case of Mexico is a typical case for the study of migratory policies and border struggles related to the job market. In Chapter 5, Deborah Cohen focuses on the “Bracero Program,” which was implemented between 1942 and 1964, a period in which more than 4.5 million Mexican laborers were legally hired in the United States. In addition, a very significant number of illegal workers also crossed the border during those years in their attempts to find work in American fields. Through the study of photographs taken by American photojournalist Leonard Nadel (1919–1990) in California, Texas, and Mexico, between the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the following decade, and by “the Mayo Brothers” (five Spanish immigrants that also documented the Bracero Program), Cohen analyzes the ways in which the body of the workers was objectified and treated as a commodity, thus illustrating the strategies of biocapitalism and the processes of appropriation not only of men’s working force but of their subjectivities (emotions, desires, and identities). The author elaborates on the testimonial value of this corpus, which exposes the abusive working conditions imposed on the Mexican laborers through perspectives that recuperate elements of gender, class, and race that were essential part of this historical experience.

In a necessary approach to the materiality of borders, In Chapter 6, Tabea Linhard deals with aspects related to the construction of fences and in particular

of wire fencing, an implement that has a long history associated with the defense of private property and the practice of repression and exclusion. Chapter 6 follows some key moments of the history of this rudimentary yet prominent *dispositif* for the enforcement of boundaries around the world. Linhard analyzes a series of images that convey some of the uses and meanings of this element that dehumanizes the human beings it is supposed to contain or exclude, just by imposing the aggressiveness of thorns and wire to the vulnerability of the body. As Linhard indicates, wire fencing encloses animals as well as human beings, memories, and dreams. Associated today with border scenarios and deportation camps, and, even before, with the horrors of the Holocaust, barbed wire will be forever related to the question of human rights and the oppositions between *us* and *them*, inside and outside, life and death.

Part III, “Gender, art, memory, and the migrant,” includes Chapters 7–10. Most of these chapters have in common focused on subjects whose *difference* (in sexuality, age, gender, and race) intensifies their vulnerability during the challenging processes of des/re/territorialization. In Chapter 7, Elena Dalla Torre refers to the fact that, as noted by critics, the “hetero-centricity of human rights standards” and the “hetero-centric frame of humanitarian intervention” have invisibilized, until now, the sexuality of migration. Consequently, when it comes to the depiction of issues related to sexual preferences, prostitution, queer subjectivities, etc., symbolic representations usually rely on stereotypical figurations, conceptual oversimplifications, and sentimentality. Dalla Torre analyzes Henrique Goldman’s *Princesa* (2001), a filmic adaptation of the testimonial story of an Afro-Brazilian transgender sex-worker, a production that came out in Italy during the scandalous presidency of Silvio Berlusconi. Fernanda Farias de Albuquerque, the protagonist of the film, first identified herself as a transvestite, a declaration that triggered social and political persecution. Based on the elements provided by this case, Dalla Torre analyzes the notion of *differential inclusion*, the conditions related to sexuality imposed on asylum-seekers in different countries, and the specific situation of subjects with alternative sexualities, who become the target of particular forms of biopolitical discrimination and invisibilization. This chapter alerts us about zones of discrimination, invisibility, and further dehumanization that exist in the already vulnerable space of migration.

In Chapter 8, Ana del Sarto focuses on women and children who are part of Central American migratory movements, a topic also approached in Chapter 14 by Arturo Arias in this volume. As in the case studied by Della Torre, women and children constitute “the weakest link” in migratory movements. Del Sarto studies the hardships and abuses they endure particularly in their transit through Mexico, and later on, if they manage to succeed in their border crossing, during the periods of precarious integration in the US job market. Through a series of documents, testimonies, statistics, narratives, and films, Del Sarto provides a comprehensive approach to the conditions of living that motivate large sectors of the Central American population to emigrate. Her chapter reviews the strategies that women develop in order to resist and persevere in their attempts to open up new horizons

for them, their families, and the communities that survive thanks to the migrants' remittances.

In the field of literature, in Chapter 10, Ignacio Infante elaborates the topic of exile as resistance, in connection to Uruguayan writer Cristina Peri Rossi's "poetics of memory" as expressed in her poetry book *Estado de Exilio* (2003). Following the notion of extraterritoriality proposed by German critic Siegfried Kracauer, Infante explores questions of space, time, subjectivity, imagination, and remembrance as a lyric constellation that elaborates the feelings of estrangement and nostalgia that characterize the experience of deterritorialization and accompany the processes of relocation and integration in a new reality. The rupture of continuity and familiarity goes hand in hand with the layering of temporalities and spatial dimensions. Experiences, meditations, cognitions, and feelings create a complex psychological and affective "state of exile" that can only be understood against the backdrop of displacement and suspension of freedom imposed by authoritarian regimes.

A different but connected area of study deals with issues of territoriality, memory, border crossing, and death, as represented by art. Aesthetic representation incorporates affective perspectives by inscribing them in conceptual contexts that allow for a political understanding of human displacements and their impact on individuals and communities. Nature usually plays an important role in the depiction of transit, migration, and borderscapes, as illustrated by Ila Sheren in her Chapter 9. The border as boundary, frontier, limit, and horizon conveys meanings of fear, courage, and hopefulness that are in dialogue with objective conditions that interfere with migrants' journeys to the North. The materiality of migration, illustrated by the interposition of topographical impediments (mountains, rivers, deserts), the rigors of climate, and the solidity of border fortifications and technological *dispositifs*, contrasts with the rudimentary paraphernalia of the migrant, the scarcity of resources, and the insecurity and uncertainty of their journeys. Sheren appeals to the idea of "border ecology" not only as a reflection on the role and conditions of the environment, but also as the possible connection with other epistemic forms (non-human, non-Western) that counterbalance traditional hierarchies.

A distinct area of this ample exploration of deterritorialization is represented in Part IV, "Colonial crossings/indigenous displacements," where the protagonists of migration belong to social and historical contexts different from ours. This section provides, for this reason, valuable historical and geocultural density and diversification to our multilayered approach to contemporary migration, demonstrating the continuity of transcultural and transcontinental diaspora along the centuries, in a variety of environments.

In Chapter 11, Stephanie Kirk refers to the religious displacements that took place in the sixteenth century following the European Reformation. Considered a moment of "social purification," religious migration had profound impact on both the practice of faith and the configuration of ecclesiastical communities. Kirk follows the mobilization of Catholic refugees from England and Ireland to the Iberian Peninsula, as well as the Protestant migration to England. Europe became,

in general, a space of refuge for those, clerical or not, who were fleeing from religious censorship. Far from acting or feeling as victims of ideological persecution, these migrants displayed religious and political agency, planning, in many cases, to return home as missionaries or educators, being considered, often times, as martyrs who had endangered their lives in exile for the defense of the true religion. The study of specific cases shows the relationship established at the time between migrancy and martyrdom, an articulation that emphasizes the connection between faith and the body: both the individual, physical body suffering the detachment from the motherland, and the social and ideological body of religious communities, whose material and symbolic territoriality was threatened by intolerance and exclusion.

José Antonio Mazzotti and Stefano Varese focus on the topic of indigenous deterritorializations in Chapters 12 and 13, respectively. Chapter 12 deals with the practice of human relocation that has been common among indigenous communities even in pre-Hispanic times, and during the colonial period, for the purposes of food planning and political unity. As the natural occupants of what would become modern “zones of abandonment,” autochthonous peoples suffer today the rigors of precarity, climate change, deforestation, mining, logging, and other devastating actions imposed by the “civilized society.” Starting with references to the works of Guaman Poma, Cieza de León, and other figures of the colonial period, Mazzotti traces a genealogy of indigenous displacements in the Andes, and of other migratory currents that nurture the multicultural society in the region. At the same time, internal migrations, mainly from the mountains to the coasts, have been key, particularly in Peru, for the reconfiguration of social and economic structures. Extractivism and other projects of appropriation and exploitation of jungle lands have had devastating effects not only on the environment but also on the indigenous cultures, whose languages and knowledge are losing the battle against the onsets of capitalism. As for Varese’s critical study, it concentrates on the effects of colonialism on indigenous cultures, particularly in Mexico, and on the strategies of resistance developed by those communities. Through the example of what Varese calls “the Oaxaca paradigm,” the anthropologist analyzes how members of autochthonous communities that embark on transnational migration to the United States in order to survive still manage to participate in agricultural and ceremonial activities by practicing seasonal cycles of return to their land. This allows them to maintain what Varese calls “distant belonging” and to defend the lands that have for them ancestral and political meaning. The recognition of territorial jurisdiction over lands to indigenous communities continues to be a problem in most Latin American countries. Varese asks a key question: “What political institution (national, international, global) is accountable for the safeguard of the indigenous people rights to sovereignty?” Given the profound significance of land for indigenous peoples, displacement and diaspora constitute a deep rupture of their practices, their experiences, and their imaginaries, not to mention a threat to the survival of their culture and their vulnerable lives.

The notions of “zones of abandonment” (Foucault) and “economies of abandonment” (Aparicio) used by other authors can be applied to Arturo Arias’

reflections (Chapter 14) on the continuous exiles, migrations, and diaspora of indigenous peoples from Guatemala, a country that has been shattered by devastating violence since colonial times. Starting in the sixteenth century, Arias traces “the historical arch that unites the catastrophe endured by Mesoamerica’s Maya population in the 1520s with the present juncture.” In so doing, the critic analyzes the theoretical productivity of the notions of agency and “*life world*” (Mbembe), in order to determine how to incorporate critical models into the analysis of the particular and intricate cultural history of Maya societies. In addition, in order to interpret historical processes of deterritorialization of Guatemalan indigenous population, Arias explores the relevance of the distinction suggested by Nelson Maldonado-Torres between the concepts of “crisis” (a critical situation in which “something of value can still be rescued”), “disaster” (when nothing can be corrected to improve the situation), and “catastrophe” (where uncontrollable damages cannot be reversed, thus demanding measures of radical transformation of reality). In a reflection on the currency of necropolitics and the pervasive use of necropower, Arias indicates that nowadays Mayas “no longer struggle for autonomy ... they fight to prevent their extinction. ... The colony is now everywhere.”

Part V, “Translocalities in Latin America,” offers a range of studies that concentrate on regional migrations. The regions analyzed here have in common their constant mobility, their geocultural cohesiveness, and their difficult sociopolitical processes toward development and modernization. Many of the current impediments for the achievement of democratization and equality originated in colonialism and perpetuated after the processes of independence, ingrained in the fabric of national cultures. Dictatorships and internal struggles, produced in the nations unstable economies and adverse political conditions, deepened precariousness and systemic violence. “Economies of abandonment” is one of the terms used to address the social effects of these complex scenarios, where migration and internal and transnational displacements play a key role.

In Chapter 15, Jorge Daniel Vásquez effectively connects migration and racism, focusing on the essential distinction between *difference* and *inequality*, as well as on the deliberate “production of difference” as a mechanism for ensuring the preservation of social hierarchies and political control. Etienne Balibar uses the concept of “differential racism,” which refers to the naturalization of discrimination as *difference*. If we analyze the role racism plays in the conceptualization and configuration of borders, we must conclude, with Mbembe, as interpreted by Vásquez, that the border

is not a segregated place to inhabit, but a way of proposing [the] end [of entire populations]. If the border no longer designates a place, it does assign an identity, a race, producing a racial difference on which the creation of the communities of separation rests.

The critic studies political processes in Venezuela, Brazil, Bolivia, and Ecuador in which “mechanisms of differentiation and political violence” promote the accentuation of inequality. Social injustice, dehumanization, and devastation of the

environment expose the necropolitical logic of capitalism, as well as its articulation with race and labor, both at central and peripheral levels.

Also in the direction of an economic, political, and ideological critique of capitalism, Juan Ricardo Aparicio analyzes in Chapter 16 the situation of the internally displaced population in Colombia and the humanitarian mechanisms used to assist millions of people who have been expelled by different types of violence from their lands. As Aparicio indicates, the space of humanitarianism is in itself a site of contention that needs to defend its own autonomy from the pressures and interests of the State and other forces that still actively operate at social and political levels in the country. At the same time, the effect of the humanitarian *dispositif* cannot be disassociated from the issues of impunity, social justice, and equality and also from the complicated network of institutional interests, at local, national, and international levels. In spite of its uniqueness, the case of Colombia is still representative of a series of problems and processes that, with variations, are taking place all over the world. This demonstrates that the challenges presented by massive migrations and displacements are just starting to surface in a globalized world.

In Chapter 17, Oswaldo Zavala situates his analysis of Mexican migration in the wider scenario of neoliberal State violence. He pays particular attention to the biopolitical strategies oriented toward the appropriation of natural resources in communal lands. Zavala argues that both the “war on drugs” and the practice of militarization have been used by the Mexican government as mechanisms that prompt internal and international displacements, thus facilitating different forms of extractivism (oil, natural gas, mining). Turned into a battleground razed by the forces of organized crime and militarization, the national territory now confronts the effects of forced displacements, a phenomenon officially attributed to narco-violence, which has received minimal official and academic attention. Zavala analyzes the connection between “land dispossession and forced displacement as neoliberal policy,” a convergence legitimized in the name of national security. Making the land an unlivable place triggers migration, a practice that ends up clearing out the lands, which then become available for State appropriation.

In Chapter 18, Bahia Munem concentrates on another aspect of *differential inclusion*: that of old age and health in the case of irregular migrants applying for admission. She focuses on the criteria used for classification of candidates’ worthiness for admission in the United States and also in Brazil, when their cases are submitted for assessment. She uses the case study of ill and/or aging Iraqi and Palestinian refugees to analyze official discriminatory policies as well as migrants’ strategies of protest and resistance. Making reference to existing international agreements, and to the parameters used for the distinction between “desirable and undesirable bodies,” Munem reflects on the value assigned to lives that, due to some kind of physical disadvantage, cannot reciprocate with their productivity the benefits granted by receiving countries. Skills, education, youth, and good health are considered acceptable qualifications. The opposite condemns individuals to marginalization and rejection. As Munem demonstrates, even humanitarian efforts are permeated, to some extent, by criteria of selective assistance.

In Part VI, “Global Migration/Mediterranean Crossings,” four studies analyze from innovative critical and theoretical perspectives. In Chapter 19, Agustín Laó-Montes focuses on Caribbean social formations, particularly the cases of Cuba and Puerto Rico, taking into consideration diasporic movements and their significance in a specific geocultural reality captured by terms such as *archipelago*, *creolization*, *crossroads*, *marronage*, *transculturation*, and *translocation*. Following both Edward Said and María Lugones, the critic engages with the perspective of *travel theories*, which allows him to analyze migratory dynamics such as those of deterritorialization, relocation, and “long distance nationalism” (as per Benedict Anderson), as well as issues of “subaltern cosmopolitanism,” decoloniality, and trans-Americanism having functioned as “imperial frontier, planetary borderland [and] worldly crossroads,” the Caribbean represents “the first site of colonial modernity, as such constitutive of western capitalist modernity, primary referent for primitive accumulation, chattel slavery, conquest and colonization.”

In Chapter 20, Manuela Boatacǎ makes a very necessary correction in the direction of European Studies, an area of inquiry that has traditionally neglected certain continental regions (East and South Europe), as well as European colonized territories in other parts of the world. Boatacǎ’s proposal is to leave behind the idea of “Europe” as a fixed and simplified geocultural referent, and to interpret it, rather, as a *creolized* space, a perspective that better captures Europe’s real significance in the globalized world. For Boatacǎ, in order to comprehend European transregional relations (both within the continent and between Europe and its colonies), it is essential to reconceptualize Europe’s cultural and political borders, which should encompass the colonial possessions in South America and the Caribbean. The critic offers a compelling alternative reading of European history in which the processes of colonialism, enslavement, and transcontinental migration that are traditionally disregarded in the study of the region are incorporated. A new concept of “Europeanness,” and of the connections between the idea of Europe and the European Union, emerges from this standpoint, which includes overseas territories, such as Azores, Madeira, the Canary Islands, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Réunion, and French Guiana, usually omitted by European Studies. The ideas developed by Boatacǎ about the existence of “unequal Europes” and around the notion of a creolized *Caribbean Europe* constitute a serious proposal for historiographical and political redefinitions and for the foundation of a decolonial perspective that reexamines the place of Europe in the global world.

Still in the field of European Studies, but concentrating on the Mediterranean region and on the role that race has historically played in migratory movements, Michelle Murray in Chapter 21 develops an illuminating approach to maritime migration through the study of visual artifacts that allow her to discuss ideas of racial otherness and coloniality across the centuries. The critic provides a suggestive analysis of the iconic figure of slave trader Antonio López y López, which connects with the imaginaries and practices of colonial domination and racialized nationalism. The second element she examines is “The raft of Lampedusa,” a sculpture that represents African migrants on a very precarious boat, lost in the

sea. A testimony of human devastation, abandonment, humanitarian crisis, and ecological destruction, this sculpture is part of the underwater museum located off the coast of the Canary Islands. “The Raft of Lampedusa” constitutes a compelling memorialization of the lives sacrificed in the black bodies of water that surround the European continent.

In closing, Greek scholar Mina Karavanta’s contribution to *Liquid Borders* explicitly deals with the issue of ethics, a topic that traverses all the studies gathered in this volume. As Karavanta indicates in Chapter 22, the metaphors that have emerged worldwide as symbolic representations of migratory movements depict human mobilizations as natural disasters, flooding, or plagues, images that communicate a sense of inevitability, disgust, and dehumanization that permeate collective imaginaries and political discourses. In lieu of rationalization, responsibility, and ethical reflection, migration often inspires rejection, denial, and defensiveness. In other cases, efforts to document and analyze the dramatic situation of migrants, refugees, and displaced communities offer a counternarrative that not only demonstrates the political significance of migratory struggles as movements of resistance and as distinct displays of social consciousness and political agency, but that also gives evidence of the strategies of biocapitalism as a *dispositif* of global domination. Karavanta elaborates on the resignification of the European Union in postcolonial times, and on the persistence of its *ethos* of centrality, racialization, and exclusion of *others* as integral elements of neoliberal politics. Based on the documentary play titled “Case Farmakonisi or the Right of Water” (2015), centered on testimonies collected by Anestis Azas, Karavanta’s study focuses on a sadly representative event that took place in the South Aegean Island of Farmakonisi in 2014, when a boat carrying refugees capsized, while being redirected by the Greek Coast Guard to Turkish waters at a very high speed. The notion of life suggested in these situations returns to the concept of *differential inclusion*, since the *absolute stranger* challenges our beliefs in democracy and political representation. Karavanta notices that the migrant is too often reduced to an idealized, abstract, and decontextualized image, a “vague essence” (Nail) deprived of all materiality and singularity, whose voice is subsumed in the discourse of others. This critical piece leaves us with the responsibility of articulating and negotiating these options that are defining the world in which we live.

Liquid Borders offers, then, a vast and rich array of critical and theoretical approaches to a number of issues related to migration, borderization, voluntary and forced displacements, exile, refuge, and related forms of human mobilization. The study of processes of de/re/ territorialization constitutes an invaluable point of entry for the understanding of crucial problems that originated in colonialism and were intensified by capitalist accumulation, neoliberalism, and globalization. Contrary to dismissive opinions, migration constitutes today a social movement whose mere existence destabilizes the notions and principles that were considered the pillars of modernity, such as the ideas of nation, national identity, civil society, sovereignty, nationalism, citizenship, and the like. For these reasons, massive human mobilization constitutes, without a doubt, one of the most dramatic,

influential, and challenging occurrences of our time, an *event* that encompasses the domains of economic policies, political convictions, and moral consciousness. The studies gathered in this volume open routes of awareness in the most important areas of this field, a *mine field*, that we must traverse decidedly and persistently.



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