

On Hercules' Threshold: Epistemic Pluralities and Oceanic Realignments in the Euro-Atlantic Space

Nicoletta Pireddu

The well-known mythological episode of Hercules' tenth labor—the stealing of the cattle of the monster Geryon, for which the Greek hero had to travel to the end of the world—not only marks the farthestmost limits of Hercules' westward journey, but also introduces a geographical and conceptual chasm between what would later be connoted respectively as the Old and the New World. The Pillars that, in what is now the Strait of Gibraltar, allegedly take shape when Hercules smashes through the Atlas mountain, open up a gateway from the Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic Ocean, which, however, the Western discourse has mainly treated as a barrier separating its civilization from the unfathomable realm of the Unknown. It was the site where Plato placed the lost realm of Atlantis, and it became the dangerous nothingness of that untraversable “beyond” against which the Renaissance would then caution navigators with the warning “Nec plus ultra.” Furthermore, already

N. Pireddu (✉)
Georgetown University, Washington, DC, USA

Diodorus Siculus justifies this imperative “to go no further” with an even more serious threat: in his account, Hercules does not break a mountain apart but rather *narrows* the already existing passage to protect the Mediterranean Sea from the monsters coming from the Atlantic Ocean.

Ironically, the only monster that history in fact materialized in that contested space was that of European imperialism, which, significantly, moved in the opposite direction, hand in hand with the hegemony of a Eurocentric discourse that has legitimized the Old Continent’s power upon its Atlantic colonial subjects. However, I would like to reopen a conceptual gateway in the Euro-American Atlantic space, recasting the foundational image of Hercules’ Pillars in terms of threshold. This figurative fluid passage invites us to overcome the asymmetry in what Marie-Louise Pratt presents as the contact zone between colonizing and colonized culture, but also connotes my attempt to unburden Europe of the weight that its imperial past still exerts on its own self-theorization. Without erasing historical memory, I wish to raise the possibility of thinking beyond ideological co-optations of this narrative, which is often unable or unwilling to transcend the equally stereotypical polarization between an alleged Eurocentric, universalist thought and a non-European, localist approach.

If transatlantic studies have successfully moved their investigation beyond not only the nation but also the continent, it is possible and necessary to trace new routes across the ocean not *against*, but, rather, *with the aid of* the thought of the Old Continent, breaking away from the predominant treatment of the two bodies of theory in isolation, and exploring, instead, new possibilities of cross-fertilization without tendentious distinctions along cardinal points.

CARDINAL (RE)DIRECTIONS IN THEORY’S COMPASS

The standard image of Europe produced by critical and social theory is that of the prototypical imperialistic power, later adopted with a vengeance by the United States. Nevertheless, as demonstrated by transatlantic, oceanic, and hemispheric studies, as well as by theories of the Global South, the Atlantic space has been recently recodified as the locus of cultural interactions away from the Eurocentric colonial model and from its North American epigonic exploits.

Paul Gilroy, for instance, interprets the Atlantic as a self-contained geopolitical entity resulting from the aesthetic and intellectual production of the black diaspora as a hybrid combination of African, American,

Caribbean, and British contributors. Through this transnational “counterculture,”¹ he purports to undermine not only Eurocentrism but also any form of cultural and ethnic nationalism. A similar conceptualization of a shared geopolitical and cultural site where questions of identity, ideology, power, and representation converge underlies Diana Taylor’s hemispheric studies. No longer unproblematically equated to the United States, America is here reinterpreted as a plural, performative dimension enabling interrelatedness among its components, “not only as a series of independent states or as a geographic fact but also as the enacted and contested arena of criss-crossings and encounters.”² If traditionally America has worked “as a delimiting, bounded entity,”³ representing the center of a political and enunciative authority that “extends unilaterally outward”⁴ and reenacts the politics of exclusion, Taylor’s hemispheric approach proposes to treat it as a network of shared, interconnected practices beyond U.S. boundaries, deriving from prolonged migratory and diasporic movements towards and across the entire continent.

For his part, with the notion of “transatlantic imaginary,”⁵ Paul Giles shows the repercussions of this transcultural perspective upon literary representation by dislocating Anglophone fiction from its national contexts on both shores, and highlighting instead the reciprocal cultural refraction that fosters its “transnational comparative consciousness.”⁶ However, Giles’s textual and cultural cross-fertilization operates latitudinally, between Europe and the North Atlantic, the two strongholds of that totalitarian idea of totality that for Walter Dignolo has allowed modernity to create and preserve itself through exclusion of an outside. In order to undermine the “logic of coloniality”⁷ (*Globalization* 331)—which for Dignolo derives from the economic, political, and epistemological power of Western modernity—it is necessary to pursue a liberating project of “decoloniality”⁸ able to create a pluralistic and intercultural dialogue between the hegemonic centers and the marginalized, peripheral regions of the world by now defined as “the global South.”

On the one hand, lumped together since the post-Cold War as underdeveloped nations that the U.S. and its foreign allies helped keep off the Communist threat, the Southern areas that have emerged as increasingly visible geopolitical and economic partners of the West and North are mainly considered clones of the Euro-American mastery-seeking mindset, as Justin Dargin observes,⁹ and the regions that are not yet viable interlocutors of the hegemonic hemisphere are also expected to overcome their marginality by following a pathway with “a Western tinge.”¹⁰ On

the other hand, beyond qualifying well-delimited groups of countries and peoples, “Southern” has also come to connote a way of thinking about relations of power between the center and the periphery of the world in the domain of theory, foregrounding how, traditionally, concepts, methods, and categories have been mostly produced in colonizing, metropolitan contexts, while applications of theory and objects of knowledge are localized in the (colonized or postcolonial) rest of the world. Therefore “Global South” studies also aim to voice the thought of peripheral societies and to create connections upon non-hegemonic premises.

These Southern perspectives are supposed to bring, in Mignolo’s words, “other cosmologies into the dominance and hegemony of Western cosmological variations.”¹¹ Yet, the risk remains of oversimplifying, if not idealizing, the otherness of Southern discourses by assuming that they are progressive, inclusive, and democratic just because they were not generated by Western—particularly European—power. The specular shortcoming of this approach is the equally monolithic interpretation of Europe and North America as exclusive representatives of colonial ideology, with no attempt to delve into the complexity, heterogeneity, and variability of power struggles. For my part, I wish to explore not only ways of undermining the persisting dichotomy between the alleged universalism of the Eurocentric position and the localism ascribed to the discourse of the world’s periphery, but also the equally ideological tendency to neglect Europe’s own contribution to a non-authoritative transcultural discourse beyond geographical demarcations.

Persuaded of the need to transcend the colonial-postcolonial binary opposition and to refuse a priori definitions of “the Global South” by rethinking theoretical paths and discursive practices, Jean and John Comaroff adopt a critical stance that pertains to both South and North, being both “honed not from single placements but from multiple displacements, (...) both away and towards.”¹² Defending themselves from the accusation of Western epistemological imperialism, they justify their approach by underscoring the “highly flexible, inordinately intricate web of synapses”¹³ that supports our global order, “a web that both reinforces and eradicates, both sharpens and ambiguates, the lines between hemispheres.”¹⁴ Yet, whatever the contingent connotation of “Global South,” for Comaroff it always designates “an ‘ex-centric’ location, an outside to Euro-America”¹⁵ from which the totality of the world can be estranged.

Comaroff's vantage point on the global condition, more than those discussed so far, moves beyond rigid geopolitical divides and shows that the line between North and South is endemically unstable, "porous, broken, often illegible."¹⁶ Yet, its ultimate aim is to underscore the southward evolution of the North—especially in the direction of Africa—as a consequence of an increasing demographic variety, accompanied by insecurity, forced mobility, and disposability, all factors that are transforming European nation-states into "policultural postcolonies."¹⁷ In other words, the "New Normal" of the North is replaying the recent past of the South."¹⁸ For my part, rather than tackling those global antinomies through an eccentric theory, I wish to examine the eccentricities inside those traditionally hegemonic spaces, showing how they bring to light geopolitical and epistemic intricacies that blur the lines between hemispheres and their respective discourses, and can hence also suggest a different theoretical realignment between the two Atlantic shores.

If, as Diana Taylor claims, "an active hemispheric engagement and dialogue"¹⁹ treats spaces and practices as "translocal, multilingual, and interdisciplinary,"²⁰ I wish to look beyond the European intellectual tradition that has supported Eurocentrism, but also beyond a current discourse that continues to crystallize Europe within this category, muffling other voices that could, in Taylor's words, initiate "new possibilities by rehearsing a different politics of engagement."²¹ The Mediterranean, for instance, is an internal eccentricity of the Old Continent that has fostered a debate on and by Europe able to question this ideological rigidity by challenging the Global South/Global North conceptual frontier, and also by redefining Europe's transatlantic relations beyond the center-periphery opposition.

WHOSE IS THE *MARE NOSTRUM*? EUROPE, THE MEDITERRANEAN, AND THE FLUID BOUNDARIES OF EPISTEMIC OWNERSHIP

Acknowledgement of the radical diversity not simply of the American continent as a whole but even, more specifically, of the United States is the critical starting point that allows hemispheric studies to undermine national and identitarian homogeneity.²² The same approach, however, does not seem acceptable in the critical discourse on Europe and Europeanness. Europe's attempts to engage with its own hegemonic legacy are often received with suspicion. It is as though Europe were forced

to recognize its inability to transcend the asymmetrical transcontinental vision in Hegel's *The Philosophy of History*. On the one hand, while for Hegel the two parts of the American continent are only materially connected by an isthmus, the three continents of the Old World "have an essential relation to each other, and constitute a totality"²³ thanks to the deep inlet represented by the Mediterranean, with its vital, unifying force. On the other hand, Hegel coopts the Mediterranean for a self-aggrandizement that authorizes Europe's dominion over its bordering cultural others. "The sea gives us the idea of the indefinite, the unlimited, and infinite; and in *feeling his own infinite* in that Infinite, man is stimulated and emboldened to stretch beyond the limited."²⁴

If for Hegel the transformation of the entire Mediterranean into a province of Europe is an enticing opportunity, in the contemporary theoretical panorama it looks as though only non-Europeans and anti-Europeanists are entitled, and have the conceptual tools, to invalidate Hegel's position and provincialize Europe itself, often with a cynical sense of delight for the periodic setbacks of the European project (as the "Leave" supporters in the 2016 Brexit referendum have egregiously shown). Yet in fact a provincialization of Europe has been occurring from within the European space, from standpoints that are line with what transatlantic studies have accomplished for the oceanic space between the Old and the New continent.

For instance, in his theoretical attempt to conceive the Mediterranean as a new civilizing plenitude rather than a vacuum operating as a frontier between antagonistic continental civilizations, Edgar Morin ascribes precisely to the transplant of the Western European idea of nation into the ethnically plural Mediterranean regions the responsibility for the weakening of cosmopolitanism and the exacerbation of ethnic and religious intolerance. For Morin, the worsening of antagonisms has turned the Mediterranean into the theatre of the harshest oppositions on the planet: West and East, North and South, Islam and Christianity, laicism and religion, fundamentalism and modernism, wealth and poverty.

Morin hence attempts to identify minimal features common to the Mediterranean as a whole and able to capture at once the unity, diversity, complementarity, and oppositions that characterize the basin, so as to be able to overcome what for him is the current crisis of humanism. While recognizing that it was humanism itself that legitimized European individuals' right to conquer, Morin highlights simultaneously its ethical side, which, by promoting the right to freedom, also upheld the

duty of solidarity. He hence endorses the potentiality of “a religion of fraternity”²⁵ of which the Mediterranean can become the site if, from the arena of a Huntingtonian clash of civilizations, it turns into a shared space of dialogue to which Europe can (and should) contribute with its ability to problematize concepts, weigh opposites, dignify its interlocutors’ truths, and exert an open, critical and self-critical rational judgment. We thus see that Morin does not condemn the foundation of the European intellectual legacy in bulk, but, rather, tries to highlight the constructive role it can still play if redirected towards non-hegemonic goals.

Morin envisages not simply reciprocal tolerance or understanding throughout the Mediterranean but, rather, “the feeling of a communal identity”²⁶ beyond differences. His conceptualization of the Mediterranean hence becomes simultaneously a proposal to Mediterraneanize thinking itself, by adopting the potentiality of authentic opening and exchange ascribed to the Mediterranean as the model of a non-linear approach to reality at large, able to preserve unity and multiplicity and to care for individual beings and their subjective human experiences. Significantly, there are strong affinities between Morin’s argumentation on the Mediterranean and his reconceptualization of Europe itself. Against reductive, disjunctive thinking, which generates authoritative judgments and exclusions, the Mediterranean component of the European consciousness can and has to become the catalyst for the dialogical approach that in *Penser l’Europe* Morin had presented as the prerequisite for European pluralism. Rejecting the premise of any originary unity, Europe itself for him is the producer and product of a vortex of interactions and interferences between multiple dialogues. The European spirit consists not simply of plurality and change but, more subtly, of a dialogue between everchanging pluralities.²⁷

Morin’s anti-Eurocentric voice joins that of Italian sociologist Franco Cassano who, with his notion of *il pensiero meridiano* [Southern thought], takes the South as the locus of otherness and difference, a peripheral perspective from which to challenge the arrogance of a universalism that erases margins and dissonances. At once a theoretical category and a geographical site, the South for Cassano undermines “the false neutrality (...) of dominant representations,”²⁸ including politically correct ones, and simultaneously defends “multiplicity and diversity”²⁹ as founding principles of a new cultural politics. The prerequisite for this change of perspective is the treatment of the South “as

an autonomous point of view, rather than the not-yet North,"³⁰ that is, a subject of thought finally enfranchised from objectification as well as from the obligation to keep pace with the modernized Nord only to become its belated and always inadequate copy. For its borderline status of a watershed between North and South, a traditionally hegemonic Europe and its subaltern counterparts, the Mediterranean represents that privileged ground in Cassano's inquiry, insofar as it is precisely in the Mediterranean that, Cassano argues, Southern thought was born. In the dialogical approach adopted by ancient Greek culture and its recognition of irreconcilable conflicting discourses, Cassano locates the roots of "the resistance embodied by [the] multiple voices"³¹ that converge into Southern thought, kept alive by the Mediterranean.

Europe, for Cassano, can and must rediscover the "innate polytheism"³² of its internal and external South, taking the Mediterranean crossing of different civilizations as the condition for renewed, non-hierarchical "constructive energies."³³ For Cassano, the ongoing Europe-building process can be effective "only if it is based on the face-to-face meeting between the Mediterranean and the Northern soul,"³⁴ which implies a more complex understanding of the frontier, as neither a dividing line to be abolished in the name of fallacious universalistic dreams of a borderless world nor a confine that simplistically unifies by excluding difference. Rather, Cassano envisages the possibility of a "consensual weakening"³⁵ of borders that reconceptualizes them as "*crossroad[s] of freedoms and protections*,"³⁶ namely, shared margins, limits, and edges, permeable liminal meeting points that foster contiguity and contact.

For Cassano, therefore, as much as for Morin, "Thinking the Mediterranean"³⁷ means to treat the *Mare Nostrum* as "a sea that unites and divides, that lies *between* lands without belonging exclusively to any of them, that is allergic to all fundamentalisms."³⁸ The notion of a "*communal sea*"³⁹ generates "an obligation to mediate."⁴⁰ It invites each culture to confront its own history of abusive power, be it perpetuated or endured, drawing from the legacy of memory the inspiration to create a common homeland where borders protect from any "*activist version of ethnocentrism*."⁴¹ Beyond religious fanaticism, Cassano labels ethnocentrism any group's arbitrary self-placement at the center of the world "as an exemplary and privileged form of humanity"⁴² that treats the diversity of others not simply as inferior but, more radically, as a threat to one's own identity, hence as an anomaly to be eliminated in the name of universal self-sameness. Therefore, Mediterranean thinking invites us to

interrogate also the continuity between the Old Continent's Eurocentric colonial past and the current Western imposition of economic and cultural competitiveness upon the rest of the world. For Cassano, it is possible to recognize rather than suppress differences only if cultures manage to weaken "all claims of exclusivity, purity, and integrity"⁴³ and create "a balance of power, reciprocity, and respect."⁴⁴

Nevertheless, although both Morin and Cassano conceive of the Mediterranean as a critical space that can hold essentialism at bay, their very notion of South exemplified by the Mediterranean cannot completely avoid the essentialist trap. To associate Southern thought with the locus "where the shore interrupts all land-based fundamentalisms"⁴⁵ renders a particular geographic area the exclusive guarantor of communication, democracy, and tolerance in implicit contrast with a North and a West univocally interpreted as representatives of extremism and as agents of expansion and conquest. Cassano's essentializing move becomes more evident when he recodifies the South as a metaphor and extends its potentiality to a global scale by claiming that it "does not only inhabit the South, but resides in *every* human being"⁴⁶—, or when, highlighting the need for moderation in intercultural relations, he defines the South as *any* "point of equilibrium between two opposite fundamentalisms: the one of land and the one of sea,"⁴⁷ of which the Mediterranean is only a particular example.

To avoid ascribing univocal or global geopolitical meaning to notions like "the Mediterranean" and "the South" (European or non-European alike), it is crucial to acknowledge similar manifestations of pluralism, dialogism, and moderation at other cultural intersections outside the Mediterranean—often precisely on land rather than on the sea, and within the Northern and Western European sphere. Rather than pigeonholing heterogeneity and multiplicity within precise spatial and cultural categories like Cassano's and Morin's South, I propose to re-examine them as particular instances of more general border encounters and exchanges in liminal areas, where tensions and negotiations, power asymmetries and search for tolerance coexist. We can hence transcend a Manichean vision of Europe and the Mediterranean, or Europe's North and South, and, by extension, the European and the Atlantic shores as monolithic, irreconcilable parties. Both sides are in fact plural, unstable, fluid.

For instance, more complex geopolitical and cultural scenarios emerge from what literary and cultural historian Predrag Matvejević presents

as the differentiated vision of the *Mare Nostrum*.⁴⁸ Whereas Cassano, Morin, and Mignolo encompass all the Souths of the globe in their argumentations, Matvejević highlights the Mediterranean basin's troubling connections to its Northern and Southern continents, arguing that it is not even possible to consider the Mediterranean a single sea without accounting for the conflicts and lacerations in meeting points like the Balkans, the Maghreb, or the Middle East, so much so that Matvejević even wonders whether a culture of the Mediterranean exists other than in our imaginary and whether it can be defined so easily as European. The European Union, Matvejević claims, was built without taking into account the Mediterranean cradle of Europe, hence deepening the North-South divide. The sea itself increasingly resembles a frontier that creates manifold Mediterranean cultures with similarities and differences that are neither absolute nor constant.

Furthermore, the pluralistic, anti-hegemonic stance associated with the liquid Mediterranean frontier also characterizes the conceptual fluidity of other borderline European geopolitical zones or hybrid categories, which hence also undermine the monopoly of the Global South and of the liquidity paradigm with which transatlantic studies challenge the strong, solid European thought as the epitome of the North and West's ideology. For instance, when Cassano claims that the Mediterranean makes us "experience our contingency"⁴⁹ rather than offering us "the fullness of our origins"⁵⁰ because by underscoring European and Western limits it puts the "line of division and contact between people and civilization, center stage,"⁵¹ he makes an argument that the Italian contemporary intellectual Claudio Magris—who writes from Trieste, a much contested border between Italy, former Yugoslavia and Central Europe—had already advanced about the role of the liminal Mitteleuropean area for a redefinition of the European cultural identity.⁵²

As a multilingual and multicultural mosaic traversed by common elements, Magris's Mitteleuropa represents a humanistic ideal, the sense of belonging to a wider culture beyond national boundaries. Through the Mitteleuropean mingling and overlapping of nations, and its protean identity, Magris prefigures his imagined Europe-to-come as a polycentric and non-hierarchical construct. Mitteleuropean culture deeply feels "the precariousness of individual identity, the fragility of the subject"⁵³ deprived of "a unitary centre synthesizing and ranking contradictions."⁵⁴ But precisely its inability to conceive grand syntheses or universal principles becomes a defense of marginality, periphery, and transience as a form

of “radical critique”⁵⁵ of, and even resistance to, totalizing, authoritarian designs. Magris’s Mitteleuropa epitomizes at once the broken unity of the Western world and the antidote to this fragmentation because its intrinsic pluralism substantiates the possibility of cohesion within multiplicity, which is the premise for a Europe cultivating dialogue and mediation, hence able to reject the oppositional logic of superpowers.

Magris’s characterization of the Mitteleuropean culture of irony as an instrument of moderation can hence be read as a counterdiscourse to the Eurocentrism of the past but also as a warning against the current risks of European hegemony and discrimination inside and outside its borders. Significantly, moderation is precisely the quality that Cassano associates with the Mediterranean, thanks to which “the old continent redeems itself of its Eurocentrism and discovers that its own finitude is not an obstacle but a resource, a path to the future.”⁵⁶ Just as the coexistence of stability and mutability that defines Magris’s Europeanness can promote pluralism only by recognizing the constructive power of limits against all forms of fundamentalism, the Mediterranean culture of receptivity and measure for Cassano operates “a deconstruction of fundamentalisms.”⁵⁷ Likewise, the coexistence of opposites in Cassano’s Mediterranean equilibrium between land and sea corresponds in Magris to the river Danube’s middle ground between the epic openness of liquidity as “abandonment to the new and the unknown”⁵⁸ and the solidity of tradition, memories, values. A fluid border, the Mitteleuropean river par excellence undermines the aggressive assertion of self-sameness, but at the same time upholds the “need and ability to give oneself limits and form.”⁵⁹ As both Cassano and Magris claim, frontiers can create wounds, yet the solution for them is not a borderless world. Just as Cassano’s Southern thought sees the frontier and the limit as sites where “each of us *ends* and is *defined*,”⁶⁰ Magris’s Danubian civilization evokes simultaneously the necessity and the vanity of the geographical and conceptual frontiers of Europe. They are at once precarious and inevitable, precisely because they shape us, and reveal, in particular, the intrinsic otherness of the self by debunking the myth of the other side: “everybody sometimes resides on this side and sometimes on the other side—(...) each of us is the Other.”⁶¹ Cassano follows suit with his Mediterranean inner sea as “an irreducible pluriverse”⁶² which, being the “antithesis of any purity,”⁶³ reminds us that “Our ‘we’ is full of Others.”⁶⁴

If the examples provided so far have shown that categories produced in and about specific European geo-cultural margins are in

fact transferrable to other liminal locations, Italian postcolonial critic Armando Gnisci involves Europe as a whole in the rediscovery of its constitutive alterity, through which Europe can decolonize itself from its own ideology of self-sameness. Gnisci urges us to transcend the opposition between a hegemonic Eurocentric Europe and a polycentric, subaltern Mediterranean, and to recognize, rather, the “*originary exchange*”⁶⁵ promoting their reciprocal relations, made of clashes and coexistence. By redefining Europe and the Mediterranean alike as two open and interconnected systemic areas, he undoes the distinction between center and periphery. Europe finds and recognizes its center “on the border where it becomes the center of something else, and exchanges its own periphery with its own center.”⁶⁶

For Gnisci, Europe’s dialogical cultural origins are symbolically embedded in the European linguistic consciousness, as the Italian pronoun “*noi*altri” (literally, “we-other”) and its regional and foreign variations (the French “*nous* autres,” the Spanish “*nosotros*”) demonstrate. This originary image of duplicity in the European “we” does not (or should not) apply only to Latin and Mediterranean people, according to Gnisci, but to Europe as a whole. Beyond their fragmentary diversity, European nations are unified by their constant interrogation of their own identities, which foregrounds their communal alterity and plurality.

These synergies between a self-decolonizing, decentralized European discourse and the epistemic reconfigurations on the other side of the Atlantic emerge not only through the rationality of *logos* but also through the creativity of *mythos*. I wish to complement the critical discourse of theory with the imaginative construction of literature, proposing two paradigmatic fictional explorations of Europe’s interactions with its internal and external cultural other—Hédi Bouraoui’s dialogical, pluralistic vision of the Mediterranean and José Saramago’s controversial treatment of Europe and of its transatlantic connections.

REDRAWING THE LITERARY ATLAS: BORDERLINE EURO-ATLANTIC FICTIONS

Franco-Ontarian, Tunisian-born, and deeply knowledgeable of most Mediterranean cultures by direct personal experience, Hédi Bouraoui encompasses at once Euro-Mediterranean and transatlantic relations, and his writings reconceptualize both networks of exchange by undermining

the stereotypical equation of Europe and Eurocentrism but also addressing the cultural strifes persisting in the postcolonial discourse and the ideological tensions between the continents he straddles.

Beyond the hegemony of a single culture, his essay *Transpoétique: éloge du nomadisme* rejects "the *infernal binarity* of two cultures."⁶⁷ The assertion of a plural identity as the foundation of each individual's personal development supports Bouraoui's "transculturalisme" [transculturalism],⁶⁸ which calls for a knowledge of and allegiance to one's original culture while transcending and decanting it into other ones, treating frontiers as arbitrary and artificial demarcations. Bouraoui authenticates this claim by defining himself at once as "White, Black and tanned, passing through the other colors of skin and soul."⁶⁹ Questioning the notion of *métissage*, which for him is the flipside of a normative purity obtained by rejecting some of his components, he highlights the cohabitation of Europe, Africa, and North America within himself, not marred by antagonism and not simply as neighbors, either, but as symbiotic constituents. The formula with which he synthesizes his identitarian theory is "*Je est nôtre*" [*I is ours*]."⁷⁰ More radically than in Gnisci, this intrinsic pluralization of the thinking and feeling subject does not foreground only the alterity inscribed in the self but, more radically, the multiplication of alterities in subjectivity, in textuality, and in the sociocultural context. Bouraoui hence also aims to overcome the gap between the often stereotypical interpretation of the immigrant condemned to marginality and that of the wanderer as the literary figure of carefree mobility. Displacement for him is an inevitable condition. As we are all emigrants on earth, we should hence not focus on the lack of what we have left behind, but rather experience contacts and exchanges as occasions to introject new values and overcome misunderstanding.

If in Bouraoui's humanistic vision culture is "the path to tolerance,"⁷¹ it means more than mere acceptance of otherness. Humanism is Bouraoui's counterdiscourse to the "odorless and colorless abstraction"⁷² of universality and to the fake opening promised by globalization. Rejecting accusations of naivete, Bouraoui believes that "the foundations of tolerance "are not built on utopia but on a confrontation with reality,"⁷³ a reality that requires continuing efforts, in which dialogue is never granted, and that has to be searched, hence a reality where, as Magris would say, utopia and disenchantment coexist. Bouraoui's Mediterranean is the expression of these contradictions—a "living Metaphor"⁷⁴ written simultaneously with "the multiracial ink of

an always possible agreement or with blood tinged with murderous dissonances.”⁷⁵ Therefore, it represents not just a specific geopolitical space but also the structure of the self, at once open and closed, ambiguous, ambivalent, unforeseeable.⁷⁶

Bouraoui substantiates his standpoint with his trilogy of novels *Cap Nord*, *Méditerranée à voile toute* and *Les aléas d’une odyssée*, where his dialogical, pluralistic Mediterranean is embodied by a protagonist on a Ulyssiac quest—Hannibal Ben Omer—evoking at once the Mediterranean odyssey of the wandering Homeric hero striving to return home and the clamorous triumph and defeat of the Punic Carthaginian military commander at a time of remarkable tensions in the Mediterranean between the Roman Empire and North Africa. Yet he purges the multiple geographical, cultural, and historical resonances in his name of their antagonistic elements, attempting to renew relationships and dialogues thanks to a transcultural operation which he accomplishes through spatial movement and its narrative transposition. Hannibal, indeed, like his author, defines himself as “Mediterranean, African, European, Eastern, Western,”⁷⁷ and claims a “mosaic-like identity”⁷⁸ that, in symptomatic contrast with the greyness of the iconic continental European cities, represents the polychromy of a “rainbow democracy.”⁷⁹

The Mediterranean for Hannibal is a crossroads where old and new promises and prejudices converge. Why were Southern populations called barbarians and why are their countries now labeled as developing, while Northern, allegedly civilized nations dictate the norms?—the narrator wonders in *Cap Nord*.⁸⁰ Hannibal does not intend to take revenge for these persisting asymmetries. Rather, he aspires to unity and reconciliation through travel as a form of discovery and self-discovery able to harmonize the cardinal points thanks to the values of Mediterranean humanism. His enterprise requires self-dispossession, which reproduces on an individual basis Gnisci’s invitation to Europe as a whole to decolonize itself from itself. In Bouraoui’s trilogy, Eurocentrism as well as other instances of fanaticism and particularism can be overcome through what Hannibal describes as the passage from an insular mentality to a “communion of community,”⁸¹ which prevents the sterile contemplation of one’s overestimated native homeland.

In the cartographic blurring that accompanies his peregrinations, Hannibal does not completely do away with notions of center and periphery but, rather, pluralizes and constantly displaces them. He considers himself “the center of the Mediterranean,”⁸² but a multiple one,

an “archipelago of origins.”⁸³ Cassano connotes the Mediterranean space as a “polyphonic universal”⁸⁴ able to eschew both relativistic cultural closures and forceful impositions of the most powerful truth. In Bouraoui’s trilogy, it is the protagonist’s body itself that “writes a polyphony.”⁸⁵ Hannibal Ben Omer, therefore, is the personification of a geopolitical and cultural Mediterranean space endowed with agency, unwilling to erase historical memory but striving to rethink relationships beyond resentment in order to solve what for him is the crucial problem in a present that has to abandon the ideology of conquest and reconquest—namely, “cohabitation.”⁸⁶

Furthermore, while, like his character, Bouraoui acts and writes “from the heart of a *trait d’union*: South-North,”⁸⁷ he takes the Mare Nostrum not only as the model for a non-Eurocentric Europe but also as a starting point for new intercontinental connections. Just as his adoptive homeland, Canada, is for him a “European laboratory,”⁸⁸ due to its pervasive and successful multiculturalism, his global concept of “nomaditude”⁸⁹ upholds boundless freedom of movement at once physical and mental, treating migration and communication as means of cultivating heterogeneity, the only chance that the subject has to rediscover a sense of collective responsibility.

This call for responsibility resulting from cooperations and synergies rather than from polarizations and exclusions also informs José Saramago’s critical interpretation of the role of Europe in a global panorama, despite the apparent anti-Europeanism of his novel *The Stone Raft*. The drifting Iberian island that, after inexplicably separating from the Old Continent and rotating in all directions, aims towards the Atlantic and ultimately stops there, undoes the categories associated with cardinal points, erasing the difference between sea and ocean that Cassano borrows from Carl Schmitt to indict Europe’s universal power. While the liquidity of the sea dilutes the constraints of ownership, once the sea loses its connections with borderlands and expands into an ocean, it allegedly transforms freedom into a nihilistic “planetary uprooting”⁹⁰ that epitomizes not simply anarchy but also boundless absolutization. Europe represents global maritime fundamentalism, according to Cassano, precisely when it becomes oceanic, namely, borrowing Carl Schmitt’s ideas, when “its gravitational center shifts from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic,”⁹¹ extending the effects of *nomos*—at once “order” and “location”—beyond the boundaries of the European sovereign state. Saramago, however, undermines this static, hegemonic,

and, for him, unnatural relation between order and territory through unexplainable coincidences and unlikely connections between the astonishing geological phenomenon and several apparently negligible actions occurring simultaneously in peripheral and intentionally vague Iberian locations: Joana scratches the ground with an elm branch; Joaquim Sassa generates a huge wave by throwing a stone that goes up in the air and bounces on the water surface before sinking; Pedro Orce feels the ground tremble; Jose Anaíço is followed by a flock of starlings; Maria Guavaira unwinds an apparently inexhaustible wool thread from an old sock, which, through the narrator's irony, evokes and at the same time debunks the Ariadne's thread myth—"with this thread we shall not emerge from the labyrinth, perhaps it will help us to succeed in losing ourselves."⁹²

This sense of loss, coupled with the dubious truth of fabulation coming from a neglected South of which Saramago denounces the endemic irrelevance, clashes with the dry practicality of European political and institutional powers which belie the apparent promise of equality and cooperation sustaining Spain's and Portugal's accession to the European Community at the time of the novel's publication. European nations' attempts to work together to solve the disquieting geological puzzle in fact rekindle particularisms and mutual distrust. Saramago hence presents institutional Europe as an artificial and unstable construction, not even solid from the geophysical perspective: a stone thrown in the water suffices to "cause a continent to crack up."⁹³ Despite the many measures apparently promoting European cohesiveness, the peninsula can in fact wrench itself away from Europe "without any shock or pain,"⁹⁴ and one of the characters in the novel, Roque Lozano, can even doubt the very existence of Europe by asserting that, if at the end of his journey on a donkey towards the Pyrenees' crack he cannot see Europe any longer, it means that "the place never existed."⁹⁵

The emotional pain that this geophysical amputation allegedly inflicts on the Old Continent is promptly dismissed by the subsequent claim about the Europeans' strong ability to adapt with relief "to the lack of any territories to the extreme west,"⁹⁶ since "the quintessence of the European spirit"⁹⁷ greatly benefits from the elimination of those "spurious fragments."⁹⁸ Europe's arrogant self-centeredness to the detriment of its weak periphery in Saramago's novel does not differ much from the American display of power against what is by now the Iberian *island*, free-floating in the Atlantic Ocean, apparently heading

northwest, and hence alarming the United States and Canada. The Spanish and Portuguese people should not think "they can enter the North American countries (...) on the pretext that we are all close neighbors now."⁹⁹ Furthermore, even the Iberian space itself in the novel is lacerated by internal tensions and blatant asymmetries between a domineering Spain and a neglected "minor" Portugal—the *pars destruens* of Bouraoui's inspiring multiplicity. Spain even suggests that the problem of being Iberian can be solved by getting rid of Portugal altogether, hence "reducing the peninsula to a single country."¹⁰⁰ For its part, the spinning and westward shift of the island counteracts this discriminatory discourse by altering cardinal points to overturn power ideologies. From Portugal's southernmost province, the Algarve becomes its northernmost region, with a nod to other well-known stereotypes of Southern marginality, like Italy's Calabria switching place with Milan and now prospering in its new location. Highlighting these strains, Saramago defends the Iberian strong cultural identity against the big scam of the Europeanization process. Disavowing its own South, Europe has relegated the Iberian nations to satellites, diluting their common elements.¹⁰¹ For Saramago, Spain and Portugal should hence rediscover and cultivate the more authentic relationship with the Ibero-American and Ibero-African cultural areas, where his novel situates the peninsula's future once the stone raft settles in the Atlantic, facing its new cultural interlocutor.

However, when on March 23, 1999, Saramago visited the European Parliament he addressed his audience with "a powerful message of hope for humanity."¹⁰² What does the optimistic, constructive side of his viewpoint consist of? If in *The Stone Raft* it is precisely the detachment from Europe that fosters cohesion among the novel's protagonists, the premises of the characters' interpersonal relationships not only reflect the standpoints of Saramago's *Iberismo* but may also constitute the foundation of a different Europeanism. The secession from a Europe tantamount to massive bureaucracy and discrimination between strong and weak promotes a new civic and cultural sensitivity upon which Europeanness can be reconceptualized,¹⁰³ in line with Saramago's 1998 interview, "A Country Adrift." After denouncing Europe's "congenital deformation known as Eurocentrism,"¹⁰⁴ Saramago underlines "that other aberration whereby Europe is Eurocentric in relation to herself."¹⁰⁵ Europe perpetuates the rich countries' narcissistic presupposition of their economic *hence* cultural superiority that justifies the treatment of other European countries as subaltern worthy of no more

than anthropological or archaeological attention. Yet, while discarding the Europe-building ideal on the blunt assumption that “there will be no Europe unless we abolish (...) the preconceptions of the domination or subordination of cultures,”¹⁰⁶ Saramago declares that he and his raft would come back to Europe if Europe acknowledged “the errors, injustices and outrages she has committed.”¹⁰⁷ The Europe to which Saramago would swear allegiance is one able to recognize that “no country, no matter how rich and powerful it may be, should be allowed to speak louder than the rest (because) cultures are not superior or inferior, richer or poorer; (...) they are simply different” (1370). Transcending the Iberian question, Saramago here delineates a wider network of relations where the space separating two cultures “is the same space that links them, just as the sea here on earth separates and links continents,”¹⁰⁸ a claim that can be deterritorialized and applied as effectively to the European space as to the wider transatlantic context.

The fracture that breaks apart the Iberian Peninsula and Europe can regenerate the latter and export its model beyond its boundaries if it enacts Saramago’s definition of each individual culture as “a communicating unit,”¹⁰⁹ which, in line with Bouraoui’s thought, promotes exchange respecting that non-hierarchical heterogeneity evoked by the European motto “unity in diversity.” We see this at work in the relationships among the novels’ protagonists, who, by successfully negotiating between Portuguese and Spanish cultural idiosyncrasies, offer a critical perspective from which Europeanness can be rethought from below, free from the economic and cultural hegemony of the selfish nationalism that keeps alive “two Europes, one central, the other peripheral.”¹¹⁰ The narrator’s and characters’ wondering whether “coincidences are not the very logic of this world”¹¹¹ is a provocative counternarrative to the divisions that at the macroscopic level seem to decree the irreconcilability of Europe and the Iberian Peninsula. Ignoring historical grudges and present tensions between their respective nations, the protagonists who share the journey throughout their drifting land become close friends, spontaneously developing a sense of community like the starlings flying together “as if the entire flock were a single bird.”¹¹² Despite linguistic and cultural differences, verbal exchange and social cooperation promote constructive compromises and mutual understanding. Pedro Orce fights to support the local inhabitants of Albufeira “as if this were his native land,”¹¹³ against the government troops’ insensitivity to the needs of Algarve locals, and the narrator challenges national distinctions

by declaring that “Galicians and Portuguese (...) belong to the same race.”¹¹⁴ It is precisely the ability to identify with the other that enables this successful cohabitation helping the protagonists plan together as a surrogate family, an *oikos* that is also an international, supranational micro-*polis*. If “harmony has been restored to the expedition”¹¹⁵ it is because the characters draw up an itinerary for the final leg of their journey by deliberating together, adopting those criteria of democratic participation that are expected of any well-functioning institution. They are hence the blueprint of a Europe yet to come, because, literally and physically, Europe has not been visible so far in the novel, as Roque Lozano symbolically reminds us—“I never saw Europe when I was living in Zufre, and (...) I’ve now left Zufre and I still haven’t seen Europe.”¹¹⁶

Saramago’s characters practice what for Zygmunt Bauman are “ways to negotiate the meaning of the common good and the principles of life in common,”¹¹⁷ showing that civility, “like language, cannot be ‘private’,”¹¹⁸ but, rather, should be first of all “a feature of the social setting.”¹¹⁹ *The Stone Raft* hence foregrounds the potential not only for a new, alternative Europe but also for reconceptualized Euro-Atlantic relationships that can develop precisely from what Bauman endorses as the “ability to live with differences, (...) the art of negotiating common interests and shared destiny,”¹²⁰ interacting “with strangers without holding their strangeness against them.”¹²¹ The unity that Bauman has in mind and that underlies Saramago’s European and transatlantic ideal is an outcome rather than a predetermined condition, a togetherness that, as Bauman writes, is “achieved daily anew, by confrontation, debate, negotiation, and compromise between values, preferences, and chosen ways of life and self-identifications of many and different, but always self-determining, members of the *polis*.”¹²² Through apparently negligible actions like arranging their seats in the wagon, Saramago’s characters show the making of this emerging unity, engaged as agents in a communal achievement resulting from reconciliation rather than from denial or suppression of differences.

The maternity symbolism in the epilogue of the novel—with the Portuguese Maria and Joana likely impregnated by the Spanish Pedro Orce—can reinforce this sense of community and inaugurate a “broader renewal”¹²³ of the whole peninsula where all fertile women end up expecting. Despite the narrator’s sarcastic portrait of Europe as a “loving mother (...) saddened by the misfortune of her westernmost land,”¹²⁴ the closing maternal motif makes a powerful statement about the

possibility of community-building across national, cultural, and geopolitical boundaries attuned to the conclusion of “A Country Adrift,” where the metaphor of Europe as “the most fertile mother of cultures”¹²⁵ supports the most decisive turn of Saramago’s argumentation: “if it is expected of me that I should love Europe as if she were my own mother, the least I can ask is that she should love, and indeed respect, all her children as equal.”¹²⁶ The unbiased treatment of the entire European offspring that Saramago demands of Europe as a fair parent occurs indeed in the more circumscribed Ibero-transatlantic community of *The Stone Raft*, fecundated by the seeds of a new collective life in the midst of the ocean, distant from the Eastern and the Western shores, detached from both continents but more than ever connected to both, and disclosing their shared potential, namely, integration instead of assimilation, authentic *métissage* rather than a superficial multiculturalism—which in Europe, for Saramago, has merely offered a spectacle of disintegration to spectators with arms crossed—or the terrible and omnipotent influence of the United States.¹²⁷

MOORINGS

The connection between power, territory and boundaries, according to Bauman, has sustained modern history, which is, not accidentally, the history of Western conquests. Strength came from “a territory shaped in the image of the map—closely guarded and tightly controlled,”¹²⁸ in contrast with “a territory open to intrusion,”¹²⁹ where boundaries can be redrawn and maps recharted. However, as we have seen, a certain discourse by Europe and on Europe has produced a non-hegemonic self-theorization that underscores the liquidity of geographical and conceptual frontiers between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, Europe and the Americas, and hence promotes decolonizing relationships with the cultural space of Europe’s former colonies and other non-European interlocutors. Undoubtedly, the most facile option is to discard this production as utopian in the sense of unfeasible. And it is undeniable that, in our only seemingly globalized present, the prospect of symbolic and material walls invoked by populist and radicalized rhetorics is increasingly threatening cross-cultural exchanges on both sides of the ocean. In fact, however, it is more inspiring and productive to consider utopia the imaginary power of the possible, and to acknowledge that literature can

amend past and current history, precisely because it constructs the world not as it *is* but as it *can* be made.

Yet this two-directional transoceanic traffic can flow through Hercules' threshold rather than clash against the pillars of ideology only if we move beyond the binary opposition in which the two Atlantic shores are often still caught, and if we can exercise the freedom to decontextualize and adapt notions generated by heavily loaded geographic spaces without being accused of cultural embezzlement or imperialism. Only by overcoming a certain amnesia about what the European cultural tradition can convey beyond its rhetoric of power, and only by abolishing the ideological distance between the two coasts can the Atlantic become truly "wider" as this volume proposes.

NOTES

1. Paul Gilroy, *Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard), 1.
2. Diana Taylor, "Remapping Genres through Performance. From 'American' to 'Hemispheric' Studies," *PMLA* 122 (5) (2007), 1426.
3. *Ibid.*, 1424.
4. *Ibid.*, 1422.
5. Paul Giles, *Virtual Americas. Transnational Fictions and the Transatlantic Imaginary* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 1.
6. *Ibid.*, 30.
7. Walter D. Mignolo and Arturo Escobar, eds., *Globalization and the Decolonial Option* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 331.
8. *Ibid.*, 19.
9. Justin Dargin ed., *The Rise of the Global South* (Philadelphia: World Scientific, 2013), xxvi.
10. *Ibid.*, xxvi.
11. Mignolo and Escobar, *Globalization*, 310.
12. Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, "Theory from the South: A Rejoinder," *Cultural Anthropology Online*, Feb. 25, 2012, Accessed July 1, 2016.
13. *Ibid.*, 47.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*, 46.
17. *Ibid.*, 121.
18. *Ibid.*, 123.
19. Taylor, "Remapping," 1427.

20. Ibid., 1425.
21. Ibid., 1427.
22. Kandice Chuh, "Of Hemispheres and Other Spheres," In *Hemispheric American Studies*, ed. Caroline Levander and Robert Levine (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 296.
23. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (Kitchener, Ontario: Batoche Books, 2001), 104.
24. Ibid., 108.
25. Edgar Morin, "Penser la Méditerranée et méditerranéiser la pensée," *Confluences Méditerranée* 28 (Hiver 1998–1999), 39. Unless otherwise stated, all English translations are mine.
26. Ibid., 44.
27. Edgar Morin, *Penser l'Europe* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), 147–150.
28. Franco Cassano, *Southern Thought and Other Essays on the Mediterranean*, ed. and trans. Norma Bouchard and Valerio Ferme (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), xxxv.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., 3.
32. Ibid., 115.
33. Ibid., xlviii.
34. Ibid., 140–141.
35. Ibid., 44.
36. Ibid., 50–51.
37. Ibid., 142.
38. Ibid., 142.
39. Ibid., 142.
40. Ibid., 142.
41. Cassano, *Southern*, 143.
42. Ibid., 143.
43. Ibid., 147.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid., 3.
46. Ibid., 114. My emphasis.
47. Ibid., 1.
48. Predrag Matvejević, *La Méditerranée et l'Europe* (Paris: Fayard, 2000), 35.
49. Cassano, *Southern*, xlv.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. A border town on the northernmost coast of the Adriatic sea, and a bridge between Europe and the Orient, Trieste is by all means geographically and historically connected to the Mediterranean. Yet, the distinctive feature of

- its complex cultural identity, which also predominates in Magris's investigation, are its Central European roots. A projection of the Austro-Hungarian empire towards the Upper Adriatic basin, hence of Northern Europe towards the South more than the other way around, Trieste has been for a long time the expression and the interlocutor of the Habsburg world, in which it occupied a strategic position also due to the development of infrastructures aiming at strengthening the connections with the hinterland. See Sara Basso, "Trieste: un porto, una città tra Impero Austro-Ungarico e Mediterraneo," *Storia urbana* 120 (2008), 165.
53. Claudio Magris, "Mitteleuropa. Reality and Myth of a Word," *Edinburgh Review* 87 (Winter 1991–1992), 150.
 54. Ibid.
 55. Ibid.
 56. Cassano, *Southern*, xlvii.
 57. Cassano, *Southern*, xlvii.
 58. Magris, *Danube*, trans. Patrick Creagh (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1989), 155. See Cassano, *Southern*, I; 17; 32–34.
 59. Magris, *Danube*, 98.
 60. Cassano, *Southern*, 42.
 61. Magris, *Utopia e disincanto* (Milan: Garzanti, 2001), 52.
 62. Cassano, *Southern*, xli.
 63. Ibid.
 64. Ibid. For further details on Magris's fluid Mitteleuropean borders and their connections with Cassano's Mediterranean identity, see Nicoletta Pireddu, *The Works of Claudio Magris. Temporary Homes, Mobile Identities, European Borders* (London and New York: Palgrave, 2015), 52–75.
 65. Armando Gnisci, *Noialtri europei* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1994), 69. Translation mine.
 66. Ibid. Translation mine.
 67. Hédi Bouraoui, *Transpoétique: éloge du nomadisme* (Montréal: Mémoire d'encier, 2005), 12. All English translations from Bouraoui's works are my own.
 68. Bouraoui introduced the term "transculturalisme" in the 1970s, hence before the equivalent concept by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz was adopted in the contemporary theoretical discourse. For Bouraoui, Ortiz's use of the term mainly pertains to the relationship between the colonized and the colonizing culture. In fact, Ortiz's theory has broader implications, even though they do not necessarily pertain to Bouraoui's literary and poetic perspective. Yet, beyond differences, this coincidence reinforces the point I am trying to make about the migration and cross-fertilization of concepts across geographical and cultural spaces, and the productivity of these synergies.

69. Bouraoui, *Transpoétique*, 62.
70. Ibid., 42.
71. Ibid., 60.
72. Ibid., 99.
73. Ibid., 67.
74. Ibid., 77.
75. Ibid.
76. With this shift from the referential to the figurative sphere, Bouraoui's argumentation reopens the issue of the essentialization of Mediterranean-ness. Yet Bouraoui does not aim at philosophical generalizations. His notion of "living metaphor" substantiates his treatment of literature as a form of praxis, through which he can enact the singularity of each individual. I wish to thank Hédi Bouraoui for our conversation on Mediterranean, European and Atlantic borders at the 2012 American Comparative Literature Association in Toronto.
77. Bouraoui, *Méditerranée*, 23.
78. Ibid., 53.
79. Ibid.
80. Hédi Bouraoui, *Cap Nord* (Ottawa: Vermillon, 2008), 127.
81. Hédi Bouraoui, *Les aléas d'une odyssée* (Ottawa: Vermillon, 2012), 237.
82. Bouraoui, *Méditerranée*, 184.
83. Ibid.
84. Cassano, *Southern*, 149.
85. Bouraoui, *Les aléas*, 227.
86. Bouraoui, *Méditerranée*, 36.
87. Bouraoui, *Transpoétique*, 77.
88. Ibid., 101–106.
89. Ibid., 7.
90. Cassano, *Southern*, 17.
91. Ibid., 110.
92. José Saramago, *The Stone Raft*, trans. Giovanni Pontiero (New York: Harvest, 1996), 10.
93. Ibid., 42.
94. Ibid., 39.
95. Ibid., 58.
96. Ibid., 138.
97. Ibid., 139.
98. Ibid.
99. Ibid., 248.
100. Ibid., 249.
101. See Carlos Reis, *Diálogos com José Saramago* (Lisbon: Caminho, 1998), 146; José Saramago, "La Isla Ibérica," *Quimera* 59 (1986), 57.

102. Chris Rollason, "Meeting with José Saramago at the European Parliament: Brussels, 23 March 1999," Accessed July 1, 2016.
103. A similar reconsideration of the underlying principles of the European ideal has recently emerged after the result of Great Britain's referendum to leave the EU. Numerous politicians and intellectuals in the other member states have urged nations and governments to rethink Europe starting from its humanistic legacy, in order to recover a sense of belonging beyond mere economic targets and bureaucracy. This renewed search for a Europe with a soul makes Saramago's thoughts even more relevant, demonstrating that they are not necessarily anti-European tout court, but, rather, much more faithful to the communitarian values that informed the Europe-building project in the vision of its founding fathers.
104. Saramago, "A Country Adrift," *Times Literary Supplement* 4471 (9 December 1988), 1370.
105. Ibid. Saramago's denunciation of the internal Eurocentrism of European institutions is equally outspoken in a later interview, where he degrades the Common Market to a greedy and domineering "holding company with large and small shareholders. Power is in the hands of the rich, the small countries have no choice other than to abide by and fulfil the policies which are, in fact, decided by the large countries, even if there is the appearance of democracy. (...) To give but one example, seventy per cent of the forestation area of my country will be used to plant eucalyptus, not because the Portuguese people want it, but because it has been decreed by the E.E.C." (Giovanni Pontiero, "Interview with José Saramago," *PN Review* 72, Volume 16, Number 4, March—April 1990. Accessed July 27, 2017. http://www.pnreview.co.uk/cgi-bin/subscribe?item_id=4458). This perspective informs his sense of nationness and his approach to supranationality: "If I were North-American, Russian or British, or German or French, perhaps I'd feel proud of my country's power and wealth, even if I reaped no benefits or compensations from that wealth and power. As a Portuguese, I feel it would now be idle to take pride in the power and influence which Portugal once enjoyed. Our present is what confronts us: supranationality, limitation of sovereignty, diverse acculturation. I should like at least to preserve my difference, because, frankly, if the World and Europe are not interested in knowing who I am (I, Portuguese, We, Portuguese), I'm not particularly interested in being a citizen of the World or even a European" (Ibid.).
106. Saramago, "Country," 1370.
107. Ibid.
108. Ibid.

109. Ibid.
110. Ibid.
111. Saramago, *Stone*, 108.
112. Ibid., 62.
113. Ibid., 86.
114. Ibid., 193.
115. Ibid., 277.
116. Ibid., 272.
117. Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000), 37.
118. Ibid., 95.
119. Ibid.
120. Ibid., 106.
121. Ibid., 104.
122. Ibid., 178.
123. Saramago, *Stone*, 282.
124. Saramago, *Stone*, 24.
125. Saramago, "Country," 1370.
126. Ibid.
127. J.J. Armas Marcelo, "Las utopías de Saramago," *ABC*, June 26, 2010, Accessed July 1, 2016. <http://www.abc.es/20100625/atercera/utopias-saramago-20100625.html>.
128. Bauman, *Modernity*, 113.
129. Ibid.

WORKS CITED

- Armas Marcelo, J.J. "Las utopías de Saramago." *ABC*, June 26, 2010. Accessed July 1, 2016. <http://www.abc.es/20100625/atercera/utopias-saramago-20100625.html>.
- Basso, Sara. "Trieste: un porto, una città tra Impero Austro-Ungarico e Mediterraneo," *Storia urbana* 120 (2008): 165–184.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity, 2000.
- Bouraoui, Hédi. *Cap Nord*. Ottawa: Vermillon, 2008.
- . *Les aléas d'une odyssée*. Ottawa: Vermillon, 2012.
- . *Méditerranée à voile toute*. Ottawa: Vermillon, 2010.
- . *Transpoétique: éloge du nomadisme*. Montréal: Mémoire d'encier, 2005.
- Cassano, Franco. *Southern Thought and Other Essays on the Mediterranean*. Edited and Translated by Norma Bouchard and Valerio Ferme. New York: Fordham University Press, 2012.
- Chuh, Kandice. "Of Hemispheres and Other Spheres." In *Hemispheric American Studies*, edited by Caroline Levander and Robert Levine, 294–312. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008.

- Comaroff, Jean and John Comaroff. "Theory from the South: A Rejoinder." *Cultural Anthropology Online*, February 25, 2012. Accessed July 1, 2016. <http://www.culanth.org/fieldsights/273-theory-from-the-south-a-rejoinder>.
- . "Theory from the South: Or, how Euro-America is Evolving Toward Africa." *Anthropological Forum* 22 (2), July 2012: 113–131.
- . *Theory from the South: Or, how Euro-America is Evolving Toward Africa*. Boulder and London: Paradigm, 2012.
- Dargin, Justin ed. *The Rise of the Global South*. Philadelphia: World Scientific, 2013.
- Giles, Paul. *Virtual Americas. Transnational Fictions and the Transatlantic Imaginary*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002.
- Gilroy, Paul. *Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Gnisci, Armando. *Noialtri europei*. Roma: Bulzoni, 1994.
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *The Philosophy of History*. Translated by J. Sibree. Kitchener, Ontario: Batoche Books, 2001.
- Magris, Claudio. *Danube*. Translated by Patrick Creagh. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1989.
- . "Mitteleuropa. Reality and Myth of a Word." *Edinburgh Review* 87 (Winter 1991–1992): 141–153.
- . *Utopia e disincanto*. Milan: Garzanti, 2001.
- Matvejević, Predrag. *La Méditerranée et l'Europe*. Paris: Fayard, 2000.
- Mignolo, Walter and Arturo Escobar eds. *Globalization and the Decolonial Option*. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Morin, Edgar. *Penser l'Europe*. Paris: Gallimard, 1990.
- . "Penser la Méditerranée et méditerranéiser la pensée." *Confluences Méditerranée* 28 (Hiver 1998–1999): 33–47.
- Pireddu, Nicoletta. *The Works of Claudio Magris. Temporary Homes, Mobile Identities, European Borders*. London and New York: Palgrave, 2015.
- Pontiero, Giovanni. "Interview with José Saramago," *PN Review* 72, 16 (4) March–April 1990. Accessed July 27, 2017. http://www.pnreview.co.uk/cgi-bin/scribe?item_id=4458.
- Reis, Carlos. *Diálogos com José Saramago*. Lisbon: Caminho, 1998.
- Rollason, Chris. "Meeting with José Saramago at the European Parliament: Brussels, 23 March 1999." Accessed July 1, 2016. http://www.TheModernWord.com/borges/rollason_saramago_report.html.
- Saramago, José. "A Country Adrift." *Times Literary Supplement*, 4471 (9 December 1988): 1370.
- . "La Isla Ibérica." *Quimera* 59 (1986): 50–57.
- . *The Stone Raft*. Translated by Giovanni Pontiero. New York: Harvest, 1996.
- Taylor, Diana. "Remapping Genres through Performance. From 'American' to 'Hemispheric' Studies." *PMLA* 122 (5) 2007: 1416–1430.

Imperialism and the Wider Atlantic
Essays on the Aesthetics, Literature, and Politics of
Transatlantic Cultures

Gentic, T.; LaRubia-Prado, F. (Eds.)

2017, IX, 335 p. 14 illus., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-58207-8