Tiziana Terranova and Iain Chambers

# Technology, Postcoloniality, and the Mediterranean

Tiziana Terranova

In their book *The Mediterranean Question*, Iain Chambers and Marta Cariello consider the Mediterranean from the point of view assumed by Gramsci in *The Southern Question*: that geography is the product of power.[1] Since the beginning of the modern age, all the different "Souths" (and "Easts") of the world have been assigned to a position of structural inferiority and subalternity – including the different shores and areas of the Mediterranean. Chambers and Cariello argue that the Mediterranean, from the late nineteenth century to the present, can be considered a "colonial lake," given that its current iconography privileges its northern shore, which is widely identified with the "Mediterranean" tout court. It is thus portrayed as an idyllic vacation destination where tourists can contemplate the origins of Western civilization as reified in its archaeological ruins, swim in the turquoise sea, and enjoy the benefits of the Mediterranean diet. To break with the connotations of this term "Mediterranean" that favors its European elements, I choose to call this tri-continental sea that separates and connects Europe, Africa, and Asia the "Middle Sea": a term that is recurrent in the many names that different languages have assigned to it.

As Chambers and Cariello also point out, the iconography of the Mediterranean as a tourist destination has lately been dramatically pierced by repeated scenes of arrival of "illegal" migrants from other shores in the Middle Sea, and by the shadow of thousands of bodies lying at the bottom of the waters.[2] Together with the bombing, killing, and maiming of Palestinians by Israeli forces, the torture of civilians in Egypt, the detention centers in Libya, and the refugee camps in Greece, these scenes witness another role assigned to the Middle Sea: that of a laboratory for the development and testing of new technologies for the government of mobility, the securing of borders, and the military policing of black and brown lives.[3]

The Middle Sea, then, is thoroughly patterned by the iterations of what Luciana Parisi and Ezekiel Dixon-Román call the epistemological logic of recursive colonialism and by the global matrix of division and conquest.[4] Parisi and Dixon-Román argue that the conception of modern colonialism as the originary scene for the formation of racial capitalism can be productively understood by mobilizing the cybernetic concept of recursivity: a term that indicates the ways in which the outputs of a system are repeatedly fed back as inputs through a process of looping, thus shaping the interiority of a system.[5]

As part of the epistemological order of racial capitalism, the Middle Sea has also been
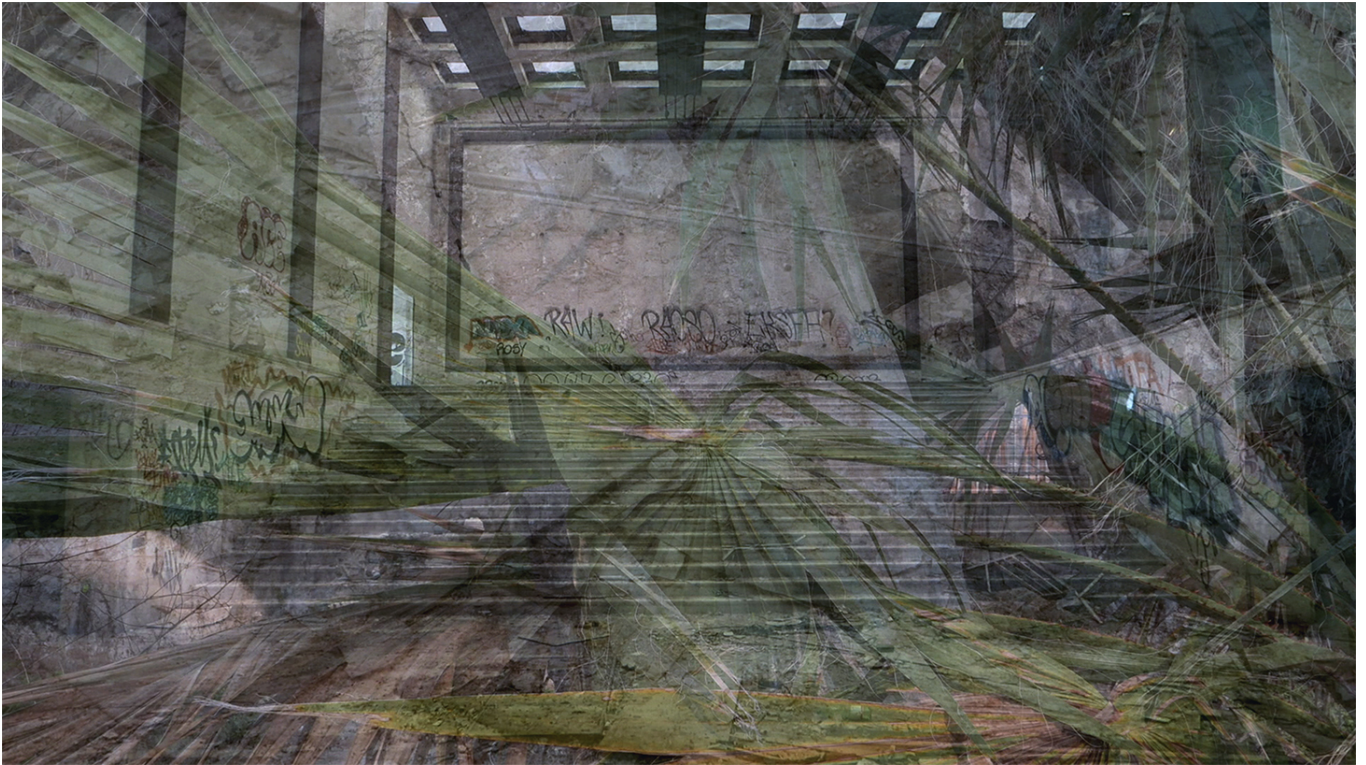
Film still from Alessandra Cianelli and Opher Thomson's *All'aldilàdiqua* (2020). Courtesy of the artists.

patterned by the work performed by the racial grammar of cultural difference which informs recursive colonialism as explored in this issue, such as that which draws the distinction between the Jewish-Christian democratic liberal West and the authoritarian illiberal, Islamic East.[6] In Denise Ferreira da Silva's conception, the idea of cultural difference entails the "production of human collectives as 'strangers' with fixed and irreconcilable moral attributes."[7] This idea operates as the epistemological foundation for the global division of labor which is today ever more specifically marked by the relation that different regions of the world are assumed to entertain with technology, in a broad sense of the word.

This relation with technology is constructed out of a number of axioms, which divide and separate what Chambers and Cariello refer to as the entwinement and overlappings between the three parts of the Middle Sea (European, African, Asian), foreclosing the possibility of grasping it as "sedimented, intersected, moving and differentiated" entity.[8] Thus the "European" Mediterranean (identified with Greece and its colonies in Southern Italy) becomes the point of origin for Western civilization, serving as the setting for the mythological past of science and technology (as in the myths of Prometheus) and its early history (as in the stories of historical figures such as Archimedes and Pythagoras). Later, during the Middle Ages, it becomes the channel by means of which Arab mathematicians from Baghdad, Cordoba, and Palermo brought Hindu mathematics to Europe, including the figure of Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi (who supposedly gives the algorithm its name). Overall, this is a masculine origin story: there is no space for figures such as Trotula de Ruggiero, a twelfth-century woman doctor and member of the Schola Medica Salernitana in Southern Italy, who wrote the first treatise of obstetrics and gynecology titled *De passionibus mulierum ante in et post partu.*[9]

As Chambers and Cariello describe it, for the dominant epistemology the technological moment of the Middle Sea is in the past: beyond its mythological moment, it belongs to almost a thousand years ago when the Arabic world was the center of civilization, as considered by the West, or when the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century was the largest political power in Europe. As they suggest, placing such a moment in the past is used to declare that one can forget about it, since "progress" has moved on, having incorporated what it needed from that prior moment. In this, the Middle Sea shares the destiny of the Global South: there is no technology there, only that which has been imported from the North or the West, that which

the latter decides is more suitable in the overall scheme of its global division of labor, and which at any rate can only be declined as a minor or subaltern version of the hegemonic one.

Technology, then, belongs to men from the North and the West, from where it returns to the South and East as a form of alien power – even when, as in the case of China and Russia, this alien power is turned back against its source. Technology, especially computation, artificial intelligence, and digital networks, can come to the Middle Sea only through the understanding of its lack (investment in research on technology here is weak) or as a figure of mono-technological power (as part of the imperial domination of the area by the US). In Donatella Della Ratta's account of the effort by US government and platform capitalists to spread digital communication technologies in the Arab World, the late 2000s are a crucial time when a local, grassroots digital culture of hackers and computer amateurs became literally subsumed and overwhelmed by digital global connectivity in the US style.[10]

Thus, this understanding of the Middle Sea's function in Western history and geopolitics poses a peculiar but crucial challenge to recent attempts – such as the one proposed by Yuk Hui – to break with the notion of technology as an anthropological universal. Hui's proposition is to maintain that "there is no one single technology, but rather multiple cosmotechnics," whereby the prefix "cosmo-" suggests the centrality of a moral relation with the Outside or the Exterior as a central component of technical thought.[11] As Parisi and Dixon-Román suggest, cosmotechnics promises to break with the notion of a "multicultural techno-diversity that demands of non-Western techno-cultures to conform to the Promethean metaphysics of progress." It further confers the possibility "to expand the cognitive paradigm of technology" by inducing a process of the "auto-imaging of multiple ontologies, multiple metaphysics."[12]

Hui's testing ground for the idea of multiple cosmotechnics is China (or the "Middle State," as it has referred to itself). However, he also suggests that this is just one example because "this task is not limited to China, since the central idea is that every non-European culture must systematize its own cosmotechnics and the history of such a cosmotechnics."[13] In relation to the Middle State (China), however, the Middle Sea presents a particular challenge, one which can positively propel cosmotechnical thought away from the pitfalls of the notion of cultural difference and its reliance on "the principle of separability," in da Silva's words. It is a matter, that is, of making sure than none of the different parts can aspire to replace the role played by

"white European collectives" as the universal standard of humanity.[14] The challenge that the Middle Sea poses to cosmotechnical thought is twofold: on the one hand, it questions the very notion of a pure European cosmotechnics; on the other hand, it has the potential to articulate a mode of cosmotechnical thought that is intrinsically constituted by relations of exteriority beyond the characterization of the Mediterranean by Édouard Glissant as "an inner sea," a sea that "insists on unity" and "the thought of the One."[15]

In the first place, the Middle Sea, as Chambers and Cariello suggest, questions the idea that everything starts from Europe as the point zero of progress (before it proceeds to "America"). Even Greek mythology, as far as technology is concerned, does not just include Prometheus, but also figures such as the Egyptian god Thoth (appearing with the Greek name Theuth in Plato's *Phaedrus*), who is credited with inventing arithmetic, geometry, writing, and games of chance.[16] The actual, lived history of the Middle Sea shows that "practically nothing starts in Europe: from the ingredients of the so-called 'Mediterranean diet' which mostly arrived from extra-European spaces and times, to its logics and techniques and scientific discoveries," and even its mythologies about the origin of science and technics.[17]

Furthermore, questioning cosmotechnics from the point of view of the Middle Sea also makes it possible to articulate a distinct postcolonial perspective on techno-cultural diversity that breaks with the notion of cultural difference. For da Silva, the latter implies the manifest image of the world as "an ordered whole composed of separate parts relating through the mediation of constant units of measurement and/or a limiting violent force."[18] This is of course not unique to the Middle Sea, but something which has been repeatedly foregrounded by postcolonial scholars about other places, as in Edward Said's notion of "Overlapping Territories, Intertwined Histories," Lisa Lowe's "intimacy of four continents," and da Silva's own World as Plenum.[19] The two insights that understanding the Middle Sea as a postcolonial space allows point out that cosmotechnics – even while requiring archaeological work on the past – always involves an entanglement of lineages with no clear points of origins, neither for European nor non-European cultures.

Cosmo-computation
For Parisi and Dixon-Román, the question of techno-diversity today needs to be thought specifically in relation to computation – that is, by engaging with artificial intelligence, machine learning, robotics, and data science. These are knowledges, techniques, and technologies that have become increasingly central to the management and governing of an ever more complex world facing all kinds of social, economic, and political crises as part of the escalating environmental catastrophe brought about by the Capitalocene. Donna Haraway's idea of "staying with the trouble" also requires understanding how the complex issues facing the planet today require a critical engagement with data and machine learning.[20] If technologies develop, as Hui has also suggested, recursively, that is by incorporating contingency, this does not so much imply a return to a premodern localism, but the possibility of actively mobilizing the contingency of spaces constituted by transversal intersections as a means of fostering entangled techno-diversities. This means materially and epistemologically breaking with the industrial model of large server farms, proprietary algorithms, and data scientists as specialized, "skilled" experts possessing exclusive knowledges which are unavailable to most. Against such models, Salvatore Iaconesi has recently reaffirmed the necessity of decentralizing, distributing, and anchoring commons-based forms of artificial intelligence to specific sites and communities, encouraging people to grow these technologies like plants that feed on multiethnic sociocultural compost.[21] A dispersion of AI in this manner could, for example, be one of the ways to produce a shift from the logic of recursion as that which in the end reproduces the interiority of a system, to forms of "trans-ductive learning," in the words of Parisi and Dixon-Román.[22]

Parisi and Dixon-Román's notion of cosmo-computation specifically argues for the possibility of reactivating different logical systems and multimodal ways of knowing, those that are expressly devalued by the universal (Western) model of reason. The devaluation of other logical systems accounts for the ways in which a colonial, nineteenth-century authority such as the British consul general of Egypt, Lord Cromer, could state that "logic is something the existence of which the Oriental is disposed altogether to ignore."[23] Thus, this monological techno-culture holds that the Middle Sea and all Global Souths are spaces which are lacking in technology, not suitable for scientific and technological research, and ultimately doomed to simply comply with models imported from the North and West.

The specificity of certain kinds of technical knowledges – such as those relating to agriculture, navigation, medicine, and finance – that make the intercontinental character of the Middle Sea more apparent can be reactivated in practices of multi-logical, speculative

computation. This makes the question of mobility in the Middle Sea something that exceeds even the ways in which the so-called "refugee crisis" is framed as a humanitarian question. Free mobility across the three continents which the Middle Sea connects and separates is a necessary condition for the auto-imagining of new forms of computation. The one-directional, unfree human flow of migration from the South to the North is also a flow of knowledges which are constrained to mold themselves on and put at the service of the mono-technologic of the Global North. Racialized practices for the division of populations do not allow for the kind of transversal knowledge-making which is needed to foster the task of techno-diversity. Caught between US domination in the field of digital media and the EU's overdetermination of economic and research policies, the Middle Sea needs to fight for its own transversal path towards practices and models of speculative computation.

Iain Chambers's Response

What happens at sea, and what gets lost there? Asking such a question suggests that the sea is a site of reckoning with any thought that seeks a homecoming and an Ithaca of reconfirmation. Turning to the sea is to register that it is often too deep for existing (epistemological) anchors, and too vast to be confined to a single horizon. I propose this metaphor to approach Tiziana's arguments in the spirit of a friendly debate, though it is more than a metaphor as the manifold fallout of contemporary migration across the Mediterranean demonstrates.

I have little to add in my agreement with what Tiziana says on the Mediterranean as an interstitial historical and cultural space-time. Where I remain unsure of her course in considering the sea as a zone of enquiry is the conceptual weight of the "recursive." I find the term and its explicit affiliation with self-regulation and systems theory perhaps too inclusive. Though this term is at the center of the discussions assembled in this special issue of *e-flux journal*, I feel that there are glitches and breakdowns. If racialized capitalism is a structure of power, can its violent injustice be represented in a cybernetic system? To engage with computation and data accumulation does not necessarily mean to accept terms imposed by technological overdetermination.

Perhaps there is a further critical fold in the surface of the argument to be explored?

Caught in the knots of time, the only past that is fully absent, that lies in oblivion, is what is ultimately irretrievable to my senses. So, in considering the "recursive," I think there must be

agreement that self-regulating loops, feedback, and seemingly systematic rational foundations sometimes go astray, get lost, unwind, and drift into extinction. To borrow from Rasheedah Phillips, while the Occident, with its algorithms and logical exactitude, has the clocks, the rest of the planet has time.[24] If one pretends to a synthetic accuracy of measurement, the other sustains opacities suspended in the shifting spirals of temporality. Here, we find ourselves at a fork in the path between a becoming-flesh, or sociogenesis, of systematic recursion, and the becoming-flesh of processes and relations that proceed and exceed such a formalized figuration. If one leads towards (without necessarily being absorbed into) the ambivalent security of science and logical extraction, the other indicates a more indeterminate an-archic route and the abandonment of a systemic or ontological principle: "living without why," as Reiner Schürmann put it several decades ago.[25] In both cases, and without the possibility of separation, substitution, or mutual cancellation, technology is never merely technological. If one seeks in the recursive iteration of racism, slavery, and planetary injustice an internal logic and coherence susceptible to systematic analysis, the other, without cancelling that proposal, insists on the supplement of a more uprooted or floating understanding. In the latter case, representation, repression, remembering, resistance, and repetition cannot halt in the phase of recognition, but lead to a contingent flux and an always inconclusive working-on and working-through.

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Iain Chambers

To pull the Mediterranean away from a single and overwhelming narrative, it is necessary to receive and appropriate it in a manner that registers my cultural and historical limits. In other words, it becomes a space of unlearning that simultaneously proposes a place of relearning. Already announced by Luciana Parisi in the opening discussion of this series, this process of relearning the existing limits of cultural and historical analysis necessarily means encountering unauthorized and alien epistemologies. It moves inquiry to matters beyond the presently ordained value of matter.

If we are to think with Mediterranean archives and the challenge their recursivity poses to the conceptualization of the present and possible futures, we cannot avoid registering the formation of the basin as a "colonial lake." This conception foregrounds that since 1900, and until quite recently, the Mediterranean was directly ruled from London, Paris, and Rome. To consider what escapes this coloniality, and to

The seas near Samos, Greece. Photo: Iain Chambers.

insist on the incalculable slipping through the nets of a still hegemonic positivism – secured by a faith in the European human and social sciences – is to encounter that we, Occidentals, do not know what we thought we knew.

This is to tear up the map of existing intelligibility, or at least the map of "our" intelligibility. If we were to just follow the history of a simple sign that signifies nothing, zero, we would quickly lose familiar coordinates. For the centrality of zero to commercial bookkeeping, capitalist trade, and present-day digital computation, not to speak of philosophical speculation on signifying nothing, takes us on a journey from its development by Indian mathematicians to its subsequent transmission, along with Hindi numbers, to an incredulous Europe by infidel Arab culture in the late medieval period through Al-Andalus.[26] And that journey is only one of the many possible transits across the unrecognized territories and spaces that compose the familiar. After all, the most spoken language in the Mediterranean, in all of its variants and dialects, is Arabic, and I neither speak nor read it. To register such a historical and cultural formation is to acknowledge my linguistic and cultural limits and to pull back from the immediate impulse to confine the world in my explanations. For such borders are not merely linguistic; they also mark the limits of a certain manner of reasoning. Rationalism and mathematical expression may be shared and held in common, but they are not the only manner of reasoning. The latter, as the complex and incomplete process of consciously and unconsciously accounting for the world, is imbricated in historical configurations of culture and power. Over the last fifteen hundred years, European culture in the Mediterranean has been – compared to Byzantine, Arabic, and Turkish formations – a minority, even a peripheral, affair. Only since 1800 has it become hegemonic and gone on to word and world the Mediterranean via the planetary and colonial extensions of its languages and reasoning.

The power of Occidental modernity has been translated into disciplinary logics that divide and dissect the globe. In this scenario, to insist on what such representations repress, through reintroducing the centrality of Arab culture and Islam to the making of the Mediterranean and modernity, is therefore far more than an act of archaeological recovery. For it suggests a substantial undoing of the existing house of knowledge, a decolonization of its language and a radical revision of its grammar. As Olivia Umurerwa Rutazibwa, working in the political science of International Relations (IR), rightly points out, we at this point touch the underlying racial constitution of the

unacknowledged powers secured in the seeming neutrality of the discourse.[27] What would an anti-colonial IR, as opposed to the IR that continues to reconfirm the status quo, look like? The study of planetary power dynamics cannot avoid the racializing forces on which such divisions are based: Black Lives Matter … everywhere. Naming "white violence" and associated myths of universal validity, we encounter the colonizing power of the existing human and social sciences. Held up against the light of the existing state of the world, one sees the watermark of racism and colonial violence as a perpetual component of modernity.

Such a state of affairs necessitates confronting stabilized hierarchies with uprooted geographies, together with what the Chicana writer Cherrie Moraga calls "theory in the flesh."[28] At this point, understandings of knowledge formations and archives break away from the abstract teleology of linear progress. These inherited constructions are now referenced in processes that expose the racial hierarchization of knowledge in the colonial constitution of the categories and explanations of the planet that secure a white, patriarchal order. Traveling sideways into the spirals of time, we can trace asymmetrical powers that connect the colonial past to the colonial present. It is here that one encounters the disquieting slide from the slave ship to the present ship of the modern nation-state.

Returning to the Mediterranean, to altogether more fluid and extensive archives suspended in its waters and sustained in aquatic memories that connect the Black Atlantic to the contemporary Black Mediterranean, we find ourselves at sea, beneath wider and wilder skies. Registering the marine world as central to the making of modernity – from slave ships and sea-borne empires to container logistics and the industrialized extraction of its resources (from fish to fossil fuels) – we encounter the constant of colonialism in the haunting racism that produces the violent grammar of inhospitality, today etched on the body of the contemporary migrant. Opposed to linear chronologies and accredited histories, such rhythms and flows release the recursive dynamics of other, inconclusive narratives, entangled in indeterminacy and contingency. This is to interrupt and rework Occidental historiography, sociology, and philosophy, and to puncture their faith in rendering the world transparent to their will. It leads to what Naveeda Khan and Hasan Azad have called an anthropology of uncertainty; or as Denise Ferreira da Silva suggested in the initial conversation of this series, a knowing without modern categories.[29]

Promoting the instability of critical

language is to take responsibility for what Achille Mbembe calls the becoming-black of the world: where the production of subjection provokes alternative knowledge, practices, and politics in an emergent planetary formation without resolution or reparation.[30] It takes us to a place that Maurice Merleau-Ponty some sixty years ago referred to as lying between the algorithm and the mystery of language. It marks a friction that continues to reference our increasingly computational present:

> The algorithm, the project of a universal language, is a revolt against language in its existing state and a refusal to depend upon the confusion of everyday language. The algorithm is an attempt to construct language according to the standard of truth, to redefine it to match the divine mind, and to return to the very origins of speech, or rather to tear speech out of history.[31]

Against the colonizing spirit of the algorithm seeking "to tear speech out of history," the mess of languages speaking from below, from the despised depths of the Occidental archive, hold out another promise, sustain another space. Bodies, cultures, and histories are here altogether less recognized but also less fixed. On the move, in process, unauthorized signs and sounds return us to our senses, reach into memories to sustain other desires and other futures. The sham of rational neutrality is subverted. For these refused bodies and voices sustain, while simultaneously sabotaging, the bridge between the algorithm and the mystery of language. In the cut, in the beat, in the interval, an abstract universalism is breached, and another more complicated and inconclusive world can be heard, felt, and lived.

What if digital computation, as it continues to operate within a largely exclusive Occidental debate on what counts for knowledge and what constitutes the "human," is, like modernity itself, intrinsic to colonialism? The seeming omnipotence of digital technology to render the world transparent to calculation constantly pulls us back into the paradigm of the declared objectivity and neutrality of the natural and social sciences (although we know that the situation, even within Occidental space-time, is recognized by many to be more complex). So, how do we mess up this colonial model of a unilateral accumulation of knowledge, linear in time and universal in space? How do we register and respond to difference without separability, to what falls between yet connects one and zero? In the world of digital dominance, even contesting the algorithm might still remain a

critical modality which, if we are to follow Moten and Harney, reproduces and restates its authority.[32] Here we have to struggle for a philosophy of another kind that responds not to instrumentality but to necessity (Denise Ferreira da Silva).[33]

Today the increasing use of drones in the Mediterranean as part of the technology of governance marks the latest abandonment of social responsibility to the bio-surveillance of unwanted bodies and discarded lives. Smart borders take migrants far below the category of "bare life," to use Agamben's phrase, violently pushing anonymous flesh down the racial ladder into the necropolitical mathematics of a deadly abstract calculus of plus or minus: life or death. The presumed "neutrality" of technology and the "objectivity" of data supplements and extends the racial profiling written into the historical premises that betray their deep incubation in the refusal to register the languages and limits of the white myths of Occidental humanism.

From the Black Atlantic to the Black Mediterranean: seas of dispossession and unbelonging have constantly demonstrated the political, juridical, and onto-epistemological limits of modernity.[34] They promote a constant critique of the epistemic foundations of Western democracy. Those on the water, the wretched of the sea, the damned of the Mediterranean, who cannot source their identity in the territory of the nation-state, are without rights. They have no social, or human, validity. They are without a place in the world. Yet they simultaneously sustain black holes of concentrated historical and cultural energy that exist, persist, and resist. They provoke the end of a certain philosophical constellation and the inauguration of another. They dub modernity, cut-up its languages, and remix the coordinates. This leaves a gap, an opening, an incurable wound.

Here we might begin to think of so-called "illegal immigration," its unauthorized practices and knowledges, constructed on the move, in migration, as a form of political hacking that exposes all the limits of liberal democracy and its concepts of citizenship. This proposes an alternative algorithm, channeled and codified by other bodies that matter, not simply our own. Here, technology is not merely instrumental and technical, but rather a cultural and historical necessity – not an object but a process. This takes us out into far deeper waters, offshore, deliberately drifting away from the colonializing imperative of the Occidental episteme towards other horizons. Outside the immediate corridors of Occidental learning, that technology turns out to be more than technological. This is a lesson drawn from the musical cultures of the black diaspora. The microphone, the electric guitar, the

turntable, the mixer, and the recording studio have been transformed from the means to capture, represent, and reproduce a sound, a song, a rhythm, and reason, to becoming musical and cultural languages in their own right. The more controlled logic of representation is replaced by the open and precarious practice of registration.

While listening to and interrogating the order of artificial intelligence and speculative computation, the argument of this text comes out of a certain location while simultaneously looking to another order of time and space. If the latter seeks to disturb the Occidental measure of the world, it can never fully suppress the planetary pretensions of the West, which pressures the digital to coincide with its concerns. Suspended in between, we concentrate on querying the idea of language as a transparent means of communication; there to register colonial pretensions while promoting the idea of language as the site of the sabotage and betrayal of that desire. This means that language is no longer a "slave" to our intentions. Consequently, it is to engage with thinking after Occidental philosophy: in its wake and breaking away "on the way to language" that goes far beyond what Heidegger would have been willing to contemplate. This leaves us with the politics and poetics of the inconclusive that frustrates the closure of rationality (not reasoning). The algorithm splutters in the dark while cut-up, bricolage, collage, and montage work the critical gaps so as constantly to reassess the interval, the dissonance, the noise, and silence. The archives unwind to expose other computations of time and further folds in space: the promise of foreign cartographies, of a Mediterranean, of a modernity, yet to come.

Tiziana Terranova's Response

Iain Chambers is absolutely right when he writes that digital computation reproduces modern colonial forms of knowledge. At the same time, it is important to problematize the question of technology in the Middle Sea, rather than foreclose it altogether. I do not speak or read mathematics, so I too need to register here the limits of my knowledge, but it seems to me that there is more to mathematics than its definition as a pure form of rationalism. One could cite for example Brian Rotman's critique of the Bourbaki group's attempt to purify mathematics as a formal language; or Xin Wei Sha's argument that it is possible to use mathematics as a "poetic articulation," as recently deployed by black feminists like Katherine McKittrick and Denise Ferreira Da Silva.[35] Following Gregory Chaitin, Luciana Parisi has also argued that not only is the formal language of algorithms ridden with incompleteness, but "the evolution of data into larger quantities" is actually making contemporary algorithms vectors for the emergence of a new kind of "non-logic" or *experimental axiomatics*.[36]

It is important to reject the exclusive association of computing with the exact sciences and reclaim its relation to the arts. As Warren Sack has recently argued, "Contemporary artificial languages have shaped and been shaped by the arts," and writing software should be considered just another practice of writing, akin to that carried out by "novelists, playwrights, screenwriters, speechwriters, essayists, and academics in the arts and in the humanities."[37]

Finally, the kind of unlearning and relearning that Chambers proposes is also essential to the process of problematizing the question of technology in the Middle Sea. This means to dispute the mythical origin of techne in the West; to reiterate that Western technologies, such as social media platforms, do not inherently bring progressive Jewish-Christian democratic values to Islamic undemocratic cultures; and to oppose the global division of labor which assigns the position of a site for the development of technologies of security and policing to the Middle Sea, whether in Israel or along the routes of migration from Africa and the Middle East towards Europe. These are some of the necessary premises for the articulation of new intercontinental alliances and institutions that could make the Middle Sea a space of technological thought and practice in the fields of artificial intelligence and speculative computation that departs from the dominant models currently imposed in the region by EU policies and US digital platforms.

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Iain Chambers lives in Naples where he researches on the Mediterranean. His most recent book in English is *Postcolonial Interruptions, Unauthorized Modernities* (Rowman & Littlefield International, 2017).

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See Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," in *Dissemination,* ed. Barbara Johnson (University of Chicago Press, 1981).

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Edward Said, "Overlapping Territories, Intertwined Histories," in *Culture and Imperialism* (Vintage Books, 1994); Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacy of Four Continents* (Duke University Press, 2015); and da Silva, "On Difference Without Separability," where she writes: "What if, instead of The Ordered World, we could image The World as a Plenum, an infinite composition in which each existant's singularity is contingent upon its becoming one possible expression of all the other existants, with which it is entangled beyond space and time" (58).

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