Chapter 4 Where the Sea Meets the Land: The Mediterranean

> In the ancient geographical tradition, the sea shapes the land, not the other way about.
> (Horden and Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*, 11)

1. Introduction

In the summer of 2007, Nicolas Sarkozy, recently elected the President of France, declared: "Io credo nella forza dei simboli più che in qualunque altra cosa. Dopo l'Unione europea, sarà la volta dell'Unione mediterranea" (Jean Daniel, *La Repubblica*, July 24 2007, "Il mio viaggio con il presidente", translated by Elisabetta Horvat). In October of the same year, *The International Herald Tribune* reported that the French president had reiterated his wishful thinking, this time comparing the situation in the Mediterranean to that of post-WWII Europe. Of course, Sarkozy had few solutions to the "Mediterranean Question" beyond his personal belief in the "forza dei simboli."

Pacification of this perennially agitated area has been part of European political agendas for decades, yet violence does not vanish, it only waxes and wanes. In the countries lining its waters, economic disparity seems to both nourish hope in and induce anger towards Europe, although at times it is disguised as one motivated by religious difference. For their part, continental politicians can no longer ignore the mayhem that seems indigenous to Mediterranean countries such as Lebanon, Israel, Turkey, North Africa, and finally the ex-Yugoslavia, and certainly Sarkozy's suggestion of a Mediterranean Union is emblematic of the urgency with which the question of how to bring peace to this region bordering Europe presents itself. Defining the Mediterranean has thus precipitated pressing debates over identity and difference that are at once cultural and political.[1]

Sarkozy apparently dreams of a "Mediterranean Union" that would have a symbolic force analogous to that of the European Union, but such a suggestion poses a governmental solution to a cultural dilemma much more profound than that presented by the wreckage of Europe following WWII, for the waters of the Mediterranean Sea remain the sole element connecting countries in the region, and a unified concept of the Mediterranean has yet to be formulated. European politics and culture are partially responsible for this fiasco. As Iain Chambers has written:

> The fundamental failure of political and historical intelligence that characterizes the contemporary horizon is not merely the result of an institutional ignorance of other worlds and cultures; it lies, above all, in

[1] The argument of this chapter is significantly influenced by the collective work *L'alternativa mediterranea*, edited by Franco Cassano and Danilo Zolo and published in Italy in 2007. In particular, my observations concerning the Mediterranean question are greatly indebted to Zolo's essay "La questione mediterranea," (13-77) which constitutes the historical and political frame, as introduction, of the work just mentioned.

> the failure to appropriate one's own history, culture, and "self" in a critical manner. (Chambers 2005, 312)

In other words, just as political Europe—or, the European Union—is failing to define its own identity according to its past, its governmental strategy, which has focused on the so called Euro-Mediterranean area mostly from the economic viewpoint, has undermined attempts to theorize "the Mediterranean" in cultural terms. To turn back to Sarkozy, his faith in the symbolic properties of the Mediterranean suggests that its wine-dark waters (as Homer labeled them) have the potential to explain the millennia of diverse civilizations they have supported in a coherent form. In fact, however, the Mediterranean remains elusive both as a political concept and as a cultural construct. In this chapter I analyze some of the reasons why consistent Mediterranean thinking continues to be such a chimera, or, as Serge Latouche said, a "sweet utopia."[2]

The discussion concerning the Mediterranean — the sea, the region, the single countries surrounding it, its cultures, and religions — dates back to the last decades of the nineteenth century, when European countries were waging their colonial wars. Decades later, in the first part of the twentieth century, we can see this clearly in the writings of the French intellectuals Albert Camus and Gabriel Audisio, who set themselves in opposition to the French imperialism and rejected the "orientalismo esotico degli europei [che] ignora la civiltà islamica, nega i suoi valori e la pone ai margini della modernità" (Zolo, *L'alternativa mediterranea,*14). In order to counter European colonial ideologies, Camus pointed out that the Mediterranean tradition overcame the Greek-Latin paradigm, which was and is the historical and cultural starting point of any myth of European superiority. Audisio, instead, praised the hybridity of the "razza mediterranea" (14) and expressed confidence "nella rinascita della cultura araba" (14) against the predominance of Roman tradition. In the wake of this new awareness, the foremost historian of the Mediterranean Fernand Braudel,

> tende a rivalutare la cultura araba [… ed] il Mediterraneo diviene una sorta di 'personaggio storico' che si impone come un protagonista nel mondo delle discipline storiche, antropologiche e politiche […]. E la 'questione mediterranea' assume uno statuto scientifico indiscusso e irreversibile. (15)

As a scientific subject, Mediterranean discourse has developed a few axioms, which are, according to Zolo: 1) the Mediterranean, as a geographic and cultural entity, may be considered a legitimate a "global" case study; 2) the orography of the inner sea makes it a peculiar ecologic space, diversified yet connected; 3) due to the cultural and commercial interchange that occurred throughout history, wars

[2] In his article "La voce e le vie di un mare dilaniato" in *L'alternativa mediterranea* (113-124), Latouche wrote that: "Ahimè! Parlare di una via mediterranea oggi è tutt'al più una dolce utopia, nutrita dalla nostalgia di un passato immaginario, per non dire un'atroce ironia. Le voci mediterranee non sono mai state così poco ascoltate e così discordanti. Quando convergono, è per finire in un vicolo cieco." (114)

included, the Mediterranean region has developed “una solida *koiné* culturale e civile” (17), as art and a high concentration of artists living along its seashore demonstrate; 4) Mediterranean greatness did not end after the Age of Discovery (post-1492), as Mediterranean civilizations have resisted, and still resist, “l’‘atlantismo’ americano” (17). These axioms help in understanding the form and content of the “Mediterranean question” as it is currently posed. Whenever Western culture has become predominant, the debate concerning the Mediterranean, which “è sempre stato un ‘pluriverso’ irriducibile di popoli, di lingue, di espressioni artistiche e di religioni” (18), tends to re-emerge. Precisely because we agree with Zolo’s viewpoint about the existence of an irreducible Mediterranean multiversity, we contend that the Mediterranean’s cultural and political fragmentation *is* its trademark, and that a unified “Mediterranean thinking” does not exist, to this day.[3]

2. The ‘Euro-Mediterranean:’ Reality or Utopia?

The State shapes men to its own ends.
(P. Valéry, *History and Politics,* 146)

A foremost connoisseur of Mediterranean culture, Predrag Matvejević writes:

> Percepire il Mediterraneo partendo solamente dal suo passato rimane un’abitudine tenace, tanto sul litorale quanto sull’entroterra. [...] l’immagine del Mediterraneo e il Mediterraneo reale non si identificano affatto. Per procedere a un esame critico di questi fatti, bisogna alleggerirsi di un’ingombrante zavorra, proveniente dal passato o dal presente, dal mito o dalla realtà (1998, 24-25).

This “alleggerimento” is easier said than done. Matvejević is referring to the decades-long crisis that afflicts the region universally known as the “cradle of civilization,” which now appears to be in tragic shambles. Political and religious conflicts, socio-economical disparity, cultural diversity: all are factors which have brought forth tension and have troubled the area since the end of WWII. The politics of the governmentalized states has been thus far incapable of establishing an enduring harmony and peace (indeed one may wonder if this is actually a goal that every Mediterranean nation shares or, rather, a further source of contrast). Nor has there developed an inter-state system of checks and balances that can defuse possible causes of attrition. While concepts such as fragmentation and impotence appear accurately to represent the status quo in the region in many respects, Mediterranean discourse itself mimics the existing lack of cohesion. On

[3] Latouche says it best, once again: “Ricordare la conferenza di Barcellona del 1995 sul Partenariato euromediterraneo, fonte di speranza per tutti i nostalgici del pensiero meridiano, fa sorridere le persone “serie”” (114). The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership held in1995 in Barcelona is the typical example of the failure of governmentality to deal with the issues that the Mediterranean region poses. Conceived as a project to lie down the foundations of an unprecedented partnership with the countries on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, it is now unanimously seen as a total disappointment.

the one hand, we Westerners live in an age and culture where it seems impossible to "think totally" about any subject without either failing in the task and/or raising alarming cries about the "coming of the Cossacks" (ironically enough, such a warning statement is often uttered by those who fear – or prophesize – an unavoidably *global* "clash of civilizations"). On the other hand, the difficulty of conceiving a unifying "theory of and on the Mediterranean" is undeniable. The argument that I will make in this chapter is that "the Mediterranean" has attracted that vague image of cohering community as it is described by Benedict Anderson in his groundbreaking work titled *Imagined Communities*. Yet, the imagined and therefore coherent Mediterranean appears to be more a byproduct of current dominant discourse – which in Western culture constantly developed following a binary pattern, and hence needs to establish conceptual opposition – than the outcome of an unsympathetically critical analysis. As we will see, even those who claim that the Mediterranean discourse has to become predominant in the area and resist/oppose exogamic cultural influence utilize intellectual categories which *belong* to current Western dominant discourse rather than not.[4] Thus far, an alternative discourse has not surfaced. In spite of its achieved status of scientific subject matter, as Zolo claimed, I contend that Mediterranean "pluriverso" has not – and cannot – be reduced within the rigid scheme that 'scientific' disciplines such as politics, economy, and philosophy have adopted in order to describe and order the world. As Matvejević maintains, "Il Mediterraneo si presenta come uno stato di cose, non riesce a diventare un progetto. [...] è composto da molti sottoinsiemi che sfidano o rifiutano le idee unificatrici" (in *L'alternativa mediterranea,* 436). The Mediterranean refuses great, globalizing narrations. Quoting Matvejević once again, "In tutto il Mediterraneo la storia regionale spesso si sostituisce alla storia comune o universale" (1998, 69). Indeed, a Mediterranean thinking that focuses only on spatial – rather than historical and cultural – recollection and knowledge runs a great risk of treating the human element that inhabits it as an extension of the composite space, instead of one of the main source of its meaning. A discourse that may "speak" Mediterranean culture is simply not there.

The elementary yet fundamental thesis that determines the form and content of the Mediterranean question as I see it today claims that (unified) "Mediterranean thinking" does not exist. Accordingly – and paradoxically – it relates perfectly to the utopian idea of "the Mediterranean" as a possible political and philosophical space that would exist only if supported by the – equally unexistent, thus far – political Europe, as its appendix, in other words. In this regard, Latouche writes: "L'Europa mediterranea è un'utopia nel senso proprio del termine. Essa è introvabile" (*L'alternativa mediterranea,*119), because it has neither a specific, fully shared culture nor a common political institution that

[4] Intellectuals such as Stefania Panebianco and Franco Cassano, although from different perspectives, are both advocating greater attention to Mediterranean culture, economy, and politics. However, as we will see as the chapter evolves, their intention is undercut precisely by their utilization of theoretical structures compromised with the dominant thinking that they claim to resist.

represents it. Mediterranean Europe (or Euro-Mediterranean) has thus far failed the task of unifying the collective imaginary of the land that it allegedly represents both historically and culturally. Shortly after the Barcelona Conference (held in 1995), which had the ambitious task of creating a Mediterranean unity, Matvejević wrote that "L'immagine che offre il Mediterraneo non è affatto rassicurante. [...] L'Unione Europea si compie senza tenerne conto: nasce un'Europa separata dalla «culla d'Europa»" (1998, 25). Almost a decade later, Latouche agrees and adds that the peoples of the Mediterranean have never been more apart from each other than today, and therefore their stances are weak, irrelevant for governmental politics, divergent. When the European Union pays attention to the Mediterranean region, it does so for economic, not cultural, reasons:

> Se l'Unione Europea, fortemente spinta dall'asse Parigi-Roma-Madrid, si interessa ai paesi della riva sud del bacino mediterraneo, è per proporre loro una zona di libero-scambio le cui condizioni consistono nel costringerli ad autoimporsi un vero e proprio 'aggiustamento strutturale', secondo il noto modello del Fondo monetario internazionale. In altri termini, la cultura comune serve a vendere un progetto di deculturazione accelerata! [...] Dieci anni dopo il lancio del processo di Barcellona dire che i risultati sono scarsi è un eufemismo (114-115).

Hence the politics of Europe may be considered a deceptive and ineffective instrument to accomplish the task of strengthening the Mediterranean, if the latter is intended as a cultural and political *signifier*. Nevertheless, as an "intentional object" (an intentional *act* determines an intentional *object*, as the act provides it with a *specific meaning*, in other words, according to Edmund Husserl) the Mediterranean supplies a symbolic, immaterial *signified* for philosophical, linguistic, or cultural concepts. As Latouche himself acknowledges: "Un certo Euro-Mediterraneo delle idee ha di sicuro più pertinenza e più consistenza di quello dei popoli e delle economie" (119). As a result, one may deduce that, according to Latouche, there is more substance in the culture than in the governmental politics of the *imagined* Mediterranean, so to speak. Indeed, the Mediterranean has attracted that persuasive image of kinship as it is described by Benedict Anderson in his groundbreaking work *Imagined Communities*. Yet, an imagined and therefore consistent Mediterranean appears to be more a byproduct of current dominant discourse, which in Western culture has constantly developed following a binary pattern, and hence needs to establish conceptual opposition. In spite of its achieved status of scientific subject matter, I contend that Mediterranean, precisely because it is an "irriducibile pluriverso" has not — and cannot — be reduced within the taxonomy that disciplines such as politics, economy, and philosophy lay out in order to describe and order the world. The Mediterranean is first and foremost a border, and:

> [T]he borders are porous. The outcome of historical and cultural clash and compromise, borders are both transitory and zones of transit. They

> consistently draw our attention to the labour of translation: to both explaining the external and confronting the historical trauma of time refusing to solidify in the existing state of knowledge. In this sense, critical thought as a border discourse is consistently haunted and interpellated by the invisible, by what fails to enter the arena of representation, or simply falls off the rigid radar screens of a stolid consensus. (Chambers 2006, 47)

My opinion is that the "invisible" mentioned by Chambers will remain out of reach for Western thinkers until an alternative way of thinking (what Chambers names "border criticism", 49, perhaps) will be able to shed light on "the hidden dependency of occidental modernity on what remains in the dark, over the border in the territories of alterity." (49) This inherent discrepancy within the Mediterranean offers the opportunity to underline some compelling features that the subject brings forward, in light of the study made by Benedict Anderson already mentioned. *Imagined Communities* is very relevant to my point insofar as it investigates the crucial interaction between community, nationalism, and culture. In his study, Anderson sheds light on the concatenation of cultural and historical events that gave birth to a dramatically innovative intellectual concept – the nation – while keeping a tight grip on long-standing roots.[5] My thesis is that most recent theorization concerning the Mediterranean is indebted to Anderson's conceptual frame. However, a Mediterranean community that may be configured according to the scheme theorized by Anderson's study is not a realistic expectation, as we will see soon.

In his work, Anderson maintains that concepts such as "nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artifacts of a particular kind" (4) as they define and encompass "an imagined political community — and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (6). As the scholar points out, an imagined community emerges in the wake of epochal changes, and, as such, it represents an epochal change in itself. Anderson has identified a broad cultural frame within which three major factors "all of great antiquity, lost their axiomatic grip on men's minds" (36), bringing about the unprecedented "possibility of imagining the nation" (36). These three declining factors are: 1) the idea that a particular language could be part of an ontological truth; 2) the belief that a natural

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[5] As trivial as it may sound, it is important to underline that the inherent, dialectical continuity of the process that Anderson describes is indisputable, despite the clamorous absence of either Hegel or Marx from Anderson's short list of acknowledged masters. This standpoint is motivated by the juxtaposition of opposite words in many chapters and sections of *Imagined Communities*: for example, some of them are titled "Old Languages, New Models," Memory and Forgetting," "Space New and Old," and "Time New and Old." Therefore, one may convincingly argue that *Imagined Communities* is deeply structured by the Hegelian dialectic, namely a rhetorical strategy in which the *Aufhebung* (sublation) bridges the gap between an initial condition and a following situation. Hegel introduced his dialectical method in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, wherein he analyzed the transhistorical and transdisciplinary development of human self-consciousness and understanding. The work is an attempt to describe how the absolute knowledge is the ultimate stage of an increasing process of human perfection throughout history.

correspondence between nature and society was embodied by the sovereign who, inasmuch as he was such an embodiment, had a cosmological function; 3) the conception that history and cosmology were overlapping, coeval processes, so that "the origins of the world and of men [were] essentially identical" (36). The concurrent breakdown of these interconnected beliefs, which took place between the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the modern era, opened a societal fragmentation that needed to be recomposed, created an ideological void that needed to be filled.

In time of crisis, the search for different models and symbols increases; in Anderson's words, what was needed was "a new way of linking fraternity, power and time meaningfully together (36):" in sum, a new *community*. His conclusion is that "print-capitalism […] made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways" (36). Because in need of a new symbolic dwelling, people turned the fragmented and weakened collectivity into an imagined community that elected the nation as its reassuring cradle, and nationalism as its symbolic structure. As we saw in the first chapter, Western society had already faced a similar critical juncture: Cacciari labeled that transitional moment "the flight of the gods," which Homer had sanctioned and represented through his works.[6] My thesis is that a similar conjuncture has just occurred. Political speculation concerning the Mediterranean gained new strength soon after the breakdown of communism in 1989, which ensured primacy for capitalism in the Western two-bloc system, as though the shift of perspective that resulted from the sudden imbalance of political power also generated a need for symbolic reconfiguration. Nonetheless, as a broad region that encompasses manifold consolidated nation-states (a political and cultural institution that has emerged precisely in the centuries analyzed by Anderson), the conception of an imagined Mediterranean would be precisely in conflict with the biography of nations, described by Anderson in the last section of his book. The scholar sets up a biological frame that allows a parallel symbolization concerning human beings and nations. At the same time, he emphasizes that inherent fragmentation and discontinuity of the biographical itinerary of the nations' call for historical narration so that the spatial and temporal gaps may be filled by imagined interconnection and co-belonging:

> As with modern persons, so it is with nations. Awareness of being imbedded in secular, serial time, with all its implications of continuity, yet of 'forgetting' the experience of this continuity – product of the ruptures of the late eighteenth century – engenders the need for a narrative of 'identity' (205).

The "narrative of identity" unwinds between the two climactic points of birth and death as it attempts to represent the stability of the subject narrated. In the case of nations, noble, dramatic, exemplary deaths, either individual or collective, help build the sense of commonality that is fundamental in nationalism. Yet, Anderson concludes his work claiming that "to serve the narrative purpose [of the imagined

[6] See chapter 1, the section called "Sea versus Land?"

community], these violent deaths must be remembered/forgotten as 'our own'" (206). This is precisely the reason why his model does not entirely fit the case of the Mediterranean, I contend (and I am aware that Anderson did not describe the existence of a Mediterranean community that fit his model). Indeed, every *pre-national* – pre-modern, that is – Mediterranean narration, from the *Iliad* to the *Aeneid*, from *Orlando Furioso* to *Jerusalem Delivered*, actually highlights the difference rather than the similarity of the Mediterranean subjects at play, so that the "violent deaths" all but deepen the rift among the "biography of nations."[7] These founding works are all played out around the "Us vs. Them" model, the most famous being Greek vs. Barbarian, of course. As a matter of fact, although commonality at some extent is undeniable, religion and modern nation-building process have thwarted and still impede the blending of a Mediterranean community. Moreover, in addition to historical and cultural divergent traditions, current Mediterranean thinking has also been affected by contemporary conceptual theory, such as postmodernism, and specifically by its peculiar trait: fragmented, self-sufficient spatial thinking.

Theoretical models concerning what I called the imagined Mediterranean might run one major risk, which is the risk of being carried away by the cultural heritage of the region. At first glance, the Mediterranean past might reflect a less fragmented universe than currently. Indeed, the insistence on the mythical or historical past as a fundamental pillar of the present is not to be dismissed; tradition is not merely an outdated and useless tool for contemporary theory. On the contrary, history and culture remain the basic components for any critical thinking, as long as the theoretical method is not overridden by more fashionable yet less rigorous styles. There is no guarantee that critical thinking based on contemporary knowledge is correct. As Paul Valéry wrote,

> History seems to take no account of the scale of the phenomena it presents. It fails to mention the relation that must necessarily exist between shape and size, in the events or situations it reports. […] What was possible within the space of an ancient city is no longer so within the dimensions of a great nation; what was true in the Europe of 1870 is no longer so when interests and connections extend over the whole earth (*History and Politics,* 9).

The French scholar (1871-1945) was criticizing the rigidity of the method utilized by early twentieth-century history, an obsolete discipline – according to Valéry – which is merely capable of collecting data without the ability of interpreting them, a discipline that could hardly be distinguished from archeology, as Nietzsche suggested in his *Untimely Meditation* "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life." Valéry's criticism has even more poignancy today. On the one hand, there is a question of objective methodology, which can never be solved, as it belongs to the subject matter and to the inherent finitude of the person who is

[7] The violent deaths of epic heroes such as Hector in *The Iliad,* Turnus in *The Aeneid,* and, more poignantly, of Moors and Muslim knights in both *Orlando Furioso* and *Jerusalem Delivered*, exemplify my point.

writing history.[8] Therefore, the chimera of a science of history that can account for each and every historical elements at once will remain in the realm of myth. On the other hand, not only is it impossible to perform the endeavor of writing an objective universal history; it seems to me also unnecessary. In support of my thesis, I will resort once more to *Imagined Communities.* The "narrative of identity" that Anderson established between modern persons and nations engendered another parallelism in its turn. It is the parallel between *spatial communities,* so that, he wrote, "'new' and 'old' were understood synchronically, coexisting within homogeneous, empty time. Vizcaya is there *alongside* Nueva Vizcaya, New London *alongside* London: an idiom of sibling competition rather than of inheritance" (187). That is why, if Anderson is right, *universal macrohistory* has only relative – if any – importance since the coming of the modern era, for the predominance of this sense of spatial parallelism and temporal synchronicity made *local microhistory* symbolically and imaginatively more relevant and meaningful than universal macrohistory.[9] Anderson maintains that, because of the technological advancement that occurred between the sixteenth and nineteenth century:

> substantial groups of people were in a position to think of themselves as living lives *parallel* to those of other substantial groups of people […] and be fully aware of sharing a language and a religious faith (to varying degrees), customs and traditions, without any great expectation of ever meeting one's partners (188).

Drawing on Anderson, I will therefore provide a preliminary functional definition of microhistory as that branch of history that focuses on patterns and similarities of different *but parallel* (as the concept is intended by Anderson) local contexts in order to deduce a general sociological or anthropological principle. Because of its nature, microhistory introduces a higher coefficient of precision than customary historical recollection, as it narrows down to relatively small subjects.[10] Of course, microhistory has to interconnect, has to configure as a link in a larger

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[8] As Valéry puts it: "Since the subject of history is *the sum of those events or conditions which in the past may have come to the notice of some witness*, the methods of selecting, classifying, and expressing the facts that happen to have been preserved are not imposed on us by the nature of things. They ought to result from explicit analysis and decisions; but in practice they always give way to habits and traditional ways of thinking or speaking, whose accidental or arbitrary character we are unaware of" (*History and Politics*, 5, emphasis in the original).

[9] For a detailed account of the concept of microhistory, see C. Ginzburg, "Microhistory: Two or Three Things That I Know About It," "Critical Inquiry," 1993. I concur with Ginzburg's statement: "Italian research in microhistory has looked at subjects of acknowledged importance as well as themes that had been previously ignored […]. What all these investigations have in common programmatically is the insistence on context, exactly the opposite of the isolated contemplation of the fragmentary" (33). As far as my use of the concept, I have already made a similar argument concerning the question of power in the section "Freedom of the Sea?" in chapter 3. In it, I dealt with the concepts of macrosystems and microsystems, advocated respectively by Schmitt and Foucault.

[10] Ginzburg states that "any social structure is the result of interaction and of numerous individual strategies, a fabric that can only be reconstituted from close observation" (33).

chain of historical events – however impossible to entirely recount[11] – if it hopes to tell a crucial story.[12]

In the case of contemporary Mediterranean discourse, the interconnections between history, space, and "the traditional ways of thinking" (Valéry) has generated a rich yet somewhat disappointing debate. We have already mentioned that institutional and strictly governmental attempts to influence the debate, from 1995 Barcelona Conference on, did not succeed, as Matvejević and Latouche pointed out. In such cases, the predictable failure originated, among other reasons, in the disrespect for the local culture and economic system, as Latouche unmistakably underscores.

To be sure, the acquisition of scientific status by the "Mediterranean question" has not translated into political unification, economic uplift, or cultural harmony. Indeed, the particular nature of the Mediterranean quandary suggests that an exclusively institutional solution is wrong and ill-fated. In order to improve the relationships among the Mediterranean countries, some scholars encourage the emergence of a "new Euro-Mediterranean identity," as claimed by the collection of essays published under that title in 2003 (S. Panebianco ed., 2003). In her "Preface" to the volume, Stefania Panebianco states that the Mediterranean has represented the lasting and unambiguous border between Europe and its southern or eastern neighbors as far as politics and religion were concerned. Economic relationships, on the other hand, have not been impeded. However, she underscores, the Mediterranean region is not benefiting from a mostly economic relationship among those institutions. On the contrary:

> other instruments have to be adopted. Once the Mediterranean has offered a new focus of analysis, namely the Islam-West

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[11] In her *The Human Condition,* Hannah Arendt maintains that the 'actor' of a given event cannot tell the entire story within which he himself is caught *acting*: "Action reveals itself fully only to the story teller, that is, to the backward glance of the historian, who indeed always knows better what it was all about than the participants" (192). As everybody knows, this 'knowledge' remains at any rate partial, because the outcome of an action is not completely predictable: "For the great unknown in history, that has baffled the philosophy of history in the modern age, arises not only when one considers history as a whole and finds its subject, mankind, is an abstraction and never can become an active agent; […] The perplexity is that in any series of events that together form a story with a unique meaning we can at best isolate the agent who set the whole process into motion; and although this agent frequently remains the subject, the "hero" of the story, we never can point unequivocally to him as the author of its eventual outcome. […] The Platonic god is but a symbol for the fact that real stories, in distinction from those we invent, have no author;" (184-185). Under these circumstances, microhistory becomes the storytelling of a 'beginning' whose end is not part of it.

[12] One concept of microhistory is illustrated by Ginzburg thus, as he speaks about G. Stewart's *Pickett's Charge*: "In it, Stewart analyzes minutely for over three hundred pages the decisive battle in the American Civil war. The title refers to an event that lasted only about twenty minutes: the desperate, unsuccessful assault led by a Confederate battalion under Major General Edward Pickett. […] If George Edward Pickett's failed charge had instead succeeded, Stewart suggests, the battle of Gettysburg might have ended differently, and 'the existence of two rival republics would probably have prevented the United States from turning the balance of two World wars and becoming a global power.' Stewart's kind of microhistory could wind up as a reflection on Cleopatra's nose" (11-12), concludes Ginzburg.

> confrontation as a cultural component of the North-South economic cleavage, it is essential to foster a unified culture respectful of differences, assuming that cultural cooperation does create the basis for more stable political and economic relations (xiii).

In her essay, then, Panebianco clarifies that what she calls "a unified culture" – which would be the distinguishing quality of a new Euro-Mediterranean identity – may emerge only as a byproduct of the establishment of a "community region," which would have to be "socially constructed by actors and institutions, and transcend national borders" (182).
Panebianco's statement presents as in a nutshell the main components of today's Mediterranean discourse. Like the vast majority of its participants, she agrees on the shortcomings of an intervention whose emphasis is primarily on economy. In order to shift the attention to more pivotal issues, Panebianco evokes two significant obstacles: "the Islam-West confrontation" and the "North-South economic cleavage." Both are crucial issues of long-standing concern, and because they intersect with civil society and the politics of states, religion, and disparity, they raise manifold concerns that would need to be taken into account. Given the intricacy just described, is it then possible to achieve this new Euro-Mediterranean identity? Moreover, is a unified culture a realistic and necessary precursor to peace and economic uplift in the Mediterranean? Does this not bring us back to Sarkozy's Mediterranean Union and its deliberate ignorance of the culture wars within the European Union? Panebianco's analysis belongs to the current Western discourse, which tends to overlook the material conditions of everyday life and to locate the politically and socially conflicting elements of it in a more neutral spatial context – North and South, Mediterranean and Europe, East and West. Hence, her proposal appears to be part of the problem. Matvejević perfectly summarizes it: "La cultura non è in grado di fornire un aiuto soddisfacente. A un autentico dialogo si sostituiscono vaghe trattative: Nord-Sud, Est-Ovest. La bussola sembra si sia rotta" (1998, 29).

Regardless of the fascination of one's hypothesis and his rigorous analytical method of inquiry, one's goal may be achieved only if his theory is coherent, and if the starting point does not undercut the point of arrival. For example, Panebianco's correct acknowledgement of the limited reach of an economy-laden Euro-Mediterranean polity does not suffice to erase the concern evoked by the quite surprising statement about the Mediterranean functioning as "cleavage" between Europe and North Africa and the Middle East: in terms of strict geography there is obviously no doubt about it, but the implied idea of geography is very conventional, hence oblivious of the *cultural* differences existing around the sea, differences which are the result of a long, historical process of separation through conflicts. The suspicion is, in fact, that the very idea of the implementation of a "Euro-Mediterranean" identity is influenced since the beginning by a Western-centric vision of the question. As a result, the Euro-Mediterranean paradigm cannot but feature some exogamic elements: the

hyphenization of Europe and Mediterranean, and what goes with it, is a striking innovation in many respects and, as such, it implies a logic of inclusion or, even worse, of exclusion: what to do with the Mediterranean region historically non-European, such as the Middle East, or with debatable European state, such as Turkey, whose request of affiliation is under scrutiny by the European Union?

It appears that this complicated and possibly incoherent endeavor all but deflects attention from such crucial – because endogamic – factors as the past history and culture of both geographical areas, while it promotes a number of political and cultural measures mistakenly alleged realistic. Besides political and economical reasons advocating the Western lifestyle, this political project finds support in a philosophical trend that has emerged in the last three decades, a discourse whose focus is on space and spatial representations, which is also the harbinger of the return of the Mediterranean question, as I argue in the next section.

3. The Advent of Space

The preponderance of spatial overtones in recent intellectual discourse is a question of fashion, so to speak, according to Foucault. In a lecture given in March 1967, well before the advent of current internet-dominated technological age, Foucault maintained that history was the absolute fixation of the nineteenth century as it provided the symbolic repertoire that could represent circularity, crisis, resurgence, entropy, which were the ultimate findings of the modern sciences. In Foucault's words: "The nineteenth century found its essential mythological resources in the second principle of thermodynamics" (1986, 22). By contrast, he went on, the twentieth century would switch to a different subject, not a discipline in itself, but a transcendental condition, perhaps as a tribute to Immanuel Kant, space: "The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed" (22).

Needless to say, his forecast turned out to be accurate now that the "phenomenological infatuation" with time has vanished as "spatial thinking" has invaded theoretical discourse.[13] Of course, "fashionable intellectual thinking" does not come out of nowhere, rather it thrives on and it is fueled by the historical and political context, as we saw in the previous chapters. Indeed, the last decades of the twentieth-century intellectual discourse, with their emphasis on space, witnessed the emergence of what Foucault labeled "the epoch of simultaneity and of the near and far:" in other words, the epoch of the pulverization of working time and the dematerialization of the mode of production. Two main cultural movements – although very different from one another both in means and ends –

[13] The twentieth century abounds in studies concerning time. Right before the turn of the century, Henri Bergson wrote his *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (1889), inspiring Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), who wrote the *Logische Untersuchungen, Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzentale Phänomenologie: Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie* in the span of thirty-six years (1900-1936). Husserl's most renown student, Martin Heidegger, published his *Sein und Zeit* in 1927, which was to influence the subsequent continental philosophy and authors for the rest of the century.

appear to have captured in depth the simultaneous, fragmentary, immaterial, and purportedly all-encompassing character of this end of century *ZeitGeist*: postmodernism and globalization.[14] While globalization defines the mostly West-based planetary political economy implemented by the richest world countries, postmodernism has developed into the leading theoretical instrument of the West, at least for the last two decades of twentieth century. Primarily, globalization and postmodernism are theorizations whose principles and practices take place in or concern space, as they consider it their universal dimension by definition. That is why one can find signs of both theories in mainstream spatial thinking. Yet, there are exceptions to this rule, such as the study on space that took on the Foucauldian *heterotopian* challenge from the Marxist perspective: *The Production of Space*, by Henri Lefebvre.

One of the most distinctive aspects of the dominant mode of production is the manipulation of space both in theory and in practice, which tangibly demonstrates its presence and influence in people's everyday life. In his book, Lefebvre maintains that "every society – and hence every mode of production with its subvariants […] – produces a space, its own space" (31). His definition of space is, obviously, very sophisticated. Drawing on the axiom that "(social) space is a (social) product" (30), Lefebvre claims that all the "relations of productions and reproductions" occur as a consequence of the existence of an economic system wherein the rule of law that determines the intercourse between capital and workers is implemented and enforced at the social level. Accordingly, such an inclusive container and, at the same time, web of social knots, bears practical consequences for the life of the human beings involved, as they have to interact with the "own(-ed) space" that the institutions are building and shaping around them. Conceptually, Lefebvre maintains that the spatial dilemma can be interpreted, and its content be charted, by means of the following triadic schema: a) *spatial practice*, "which embraces production and reproduction" (33); b) *representations of space*, "which are tied to the relations of production and to the 'order' which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to 'frontal' relations" (33); c) *representational spaces*, "embodying complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art" (33). In other words, as Lefebvre suggests, this process of building social space does not merely follow a linear

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[14] In 1979, French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard published *La Condition Postmoderne : Rapport sur le Savoir*. Since then, 'postmodern' has developed into a juggernaut that covered virtually each and every Western intellectual discipline and theoretical branch. As a result, almost every major intellectual has dealt with postmodern analyses that affected their own discipline. An accurate account of the phenomenon is in V. E. Taylor and C.E. Winquist (eds.) *Postmodernism. Critical Concepts*, in 4 volumes (1998). Globalization, on the other hand, was at first used by economists in the 1980s as a term that indicates the planetary condition of current economic structure. However, globalization also raised concern and criticism that assumed strong social and political connotation. In particular, after a large group of protesters gathered together in Seattle, in 1993, the "no global" movement voiced its opposition to the political economy enforced by "Group of Eight" (usually labeled G8), the eight most *politically* powerful World countries: USA, Canada, Germany, France, Italy, United Kingdom, Japan, and Russia (the absence of India and China is not, of course, a sign of their economic weakness).

trajectory, it does not simply derive from the economic system. Rather, it determines, physically, culturally, and symbolically, the landscape and, partially, it is determined by it in return:

> We may be sure that representations of space have a practical impact, that they intervene in and modify spatial *textures* which are informed by effective knowledge and ideology. Representations of space must therefore have a substantial role and a specific influence in the production of space. Their intervention occurs by way of construction – in other words, by way of architecture […]. By contrast, the only products of representational spaces are symbolic works. These are often unique: sometimes they set in train 'aesthetic' trends and, after a time, having provoked a series of manifestations and incursions into the imaginary, run out of steam (42).

According to Lefebvre's theorization, the threefold nature of the space (practiced, represented – mostly by means of architecture – and representational, a byproduct of symbolic works) unambiguously manifests its interlacement with politics and culture.[15] Particularly, spatial practice (where production and reproduction of social relations occur), and representations of space – "in thrall to both knowledge and power" (50) – turn into the battlefield within which the dominant mode of production may fully display its material and theoretical influence.[16] In fact, as the most tangible among the social products, spatial practice and representations of space display and implement the trademark of power insofar as they shape both people's social lives and people's way of thinking. Therefore, the outcome of this double intervention is the creation of a space that displays contradictory features and presents various form of endemic violence. This space, that Lefebvre calls abstract space, is "the space of the bourgeoisie and of capitalism" (57), and it is reminiscent of the political and social situation

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[15] Lefebvre makes it very clear that he dismisses "binary theories" that are typical in Western culture (body/soul, subject/object, potentiality/actuality, etc.) and instead looks at the dialectical tradition in which the theoretical movement develops through three steps. He claims: "Relations with two elements boil down to oppositions, contrasts or antagonisms. They are defined by significant effects: echoes, repercussions, mirror effects. Philosophy has found it very difficult to get beyond such dualisms as subject and object, Descartes's *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, and the Ego and non-Ego of the Kantians, post-Kantians and neo-Kantians. 'Binary' theories of this sort no longer have anything whatsoever in common with the Manichaean conception of a bitter struggle between two cosmic principles; their dualism is entirely mental […]. Such a system can have neither materiality nor loose ends: it is a 'perfect' system whose rationality is supposed, when subjected to mental scrutiny, to be self-evident" (39). In other words, it is a sort of intellectual formation that fails to create any philosophical value insofar as it cannot grasp the complexity of current society.

[16] In a similar fashion, the core of Agamben's political studies engages in precisely the dreadful side of the relation between power and space. In works such as *The Coming Community, Means Without Ends, Homo Sacer,* and *State of Exception,* he analyzed both the immaterial and the material texture of 'the camp' (the Lefebvrean space, that is) within which violence and law exert their conjoined sway on human beings.

described by Benjamin's "Critique of Violence," which I have illustrated in chapter three. In particular, Lefebvre's statement that "It hardly seems necessary to add that within this space [of the bourgeoisie and of capitalism] violence does not always remain latent or hidden. One of its contradictions is that between the appearance of security and the constant threat, and indeed the occasional eruption, of violence" (57) may be read as a different way to describe the alternate epiphany of what Benjamin called lawmaking and law-preserving violence. In addition, contrarily to what conventional wisdom would suggest, abstract space not only concerns the immateriality of intellectual production, as we just saw; because of its manipulative and "commodifying" nature (as it turns place into "market" and, accordingly, individuals into "users"), it also reproduces conflict, hierarchization, and alienation. It is within the abstract space that (representations of) *propaganda* to build consensus and (spatial practice of) *violence* to tame resistance – which are among the most effective and commonly employed governmental devices – take place. Abstract space, in other words, reproduces *disciplinary power*, by means of either sheer force or subtle rhetoric.[17]

As Lefebvre theorized (and Foucault later confirmed), although the mode of production is such only if it is largely diffused and therefore dominant over large areas, its space is compartmentalized in microsystems and its control is delegated to smaller entities: the nations. Indeed, Lefebvre's abstract space exists only because space can be compartmentalized and strictly controlled by dint of the nations:

> When considered in relationship to space, the nation may be seen to have two moments or conditions. First, nationhood implies the existence of a *market* gradually built up over a historical period of a varying length. Such a market is a complex ensemble of commercial relations and communication networks. […] Secondly, nationhood implies *violence* – the violence of a military state, be it feudal, bourgeois, imperialist, or some other variety. It implies, in other words, a political power controlling and exploiting the resources of the market or the growth of the productive forces in order to maintain and further its rule (112).[18]

In other words, whether represented, representational, or practiced, space bears the mark of power, which may emerge under the double guise of either commodifying and persuasive rhetoric, or repressing and dissuasive violence. However, it is now the intellectual side of abstract space that I want to focus on, the one in which overt propaganda, and, more surreptitiously, ideology deploy

[17] Human history is full of examples of this sort of state intervention so that it is almost unnecessary to single some specific case out. Yet, it is important to underline that the production and manipulation of space does not belong exclusively to totalitarian states. Similarly, Foucault's works are almost entirely devoted to analyze form and content of disciplinary, institutional power.
[18] As reminded above, the starting point of an analysis on the nature and function of state violence remains Benjamin's study "Critique of Violence."

their resources in order to support the system. For I believe that a similar ideological frame has arisen in the Mediterranean question.

As Lefebvre underlines, the dominant discourse on space deploys an ideological cover-up so that reality does not appear as ideologically interpreted, rather it comes across as objective, or "beyond ideology." As a result:

> Abstract space is thus repressive in essence and *par excellence* – but thanks to its versatility it is repressive in a peculiarly artful way: its intrinsic repressiveness may be manifested alternately through reduction, through (functional) localization, through the imposition of hierarchy and segregation, – or through art (318).

I believe that the discourse concerning the Mediterranean, which I scrutinized at the beginning of the chapter, has been influenced by what Lefebvre called "functional localization" and "imposition of hierarchy" (in the latter case the Eurocentric vision of the issue represents obviously the top of the hierarchy). As regard to the spatial thinking of recent time, the symbolic representation of the "intrinsic repressiveness" has given way to a different approach (although the ideological result is the same), undoubtedly determined by the latest development of the mode of production, whose operational sites are less and less visible and tangible, inasmuch as they are displaced and *outsourced* in the globalized economic system. Accordingly, their products are dematerialized and fragmented so that they are reduced to their most elemental unity and out of sight. Finally, these operational sites are disconnected from the rest of the productive body, which ultimately they will agree to re-connect, even though in a merely immaterial fashion.

Besides the imposition of hierarchy and functional localization, Lefebvre was also mentioning that art, too, is an instrument by means of which abstract space reproduces intrinsic repressiveness. In his leading work *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991), Jameson scrutinizes manifold forms of cultural production as they have developed precisely in the decades after Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*: the postmodern and globalized years, that is. Unsurprisingly, then, spatial representations, in their diverse cultural forms such as architecture, film, narrative, or theory, occupy a remarkable portion of Jameson's work. Indeed, his starting point on the relevance of space in recent culture does not differ from Foucault's.[19] Yet, while Jameson defines himself "as a relatively enthusiastic consumer of postmodernism" (298), his political analysis remains faithful to historical materialism and Marxist theory, and he maintains that the space of the postmodern society "involves the suppression of distance (in the sense of Benjamin's aura) and the relentless saturation of any remaining voids and empty places" (412). Therefore, he considers:

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[19] In one of the very few occurrences of intellectual agreement that Jameson quite straightforwardly concedes to Foucault's theory, the former states that "it is at least empirically arguable that our daily life, our psychic experience, our cultural languages, are today dominated by categories of space rather than by categories of time, as in the preceding period of high modernism" (16).

> such spatial peculiarities of postmodernism as symptoms and expressions of a new and historically original dilemma, one that involves our insertion as individual subjects into a multidimensional set of radically discontinuous realities, whose frames range from the still surviving spaces of bourgeois private life all the way to the unimaginable decentering of global capital itself. […] what is involved here is in reality practical politics: […] such urgent political dilemmas are all immediately functions of the enormously complex new international space in question (413).

In other words, Jameson is confirming Lefebvre's opinion that late twentieth-century dominant ideology reproduces displaced and immaterial social space because the postmodern age is an historical moment in which 'global capital' has become discontinuous, dispersed. The society wherein the cultural logic of late capitalism and its mode of production take place is a multiplicity of complex global networks that has yet to be given a satisfactory representation; the individual who inhabits this chaotic and hard to come by space cannot but mirror those decentering, schizophrenic realities. In terms of politics, the binary subject/society – whose lived experience and practice are products of the postmodern culture – is a result of the globalized mode of production in which, as Jameson says, "the waning of our sense of history, and more particularly our resistance to globalizing or totalizing concepts like that of the mode of production itself, are a function of precisely that universalization of capitalism" (405). It makes sense to suggest, then, that the postmodern infatuation with space has had the unfortunate yet broad counter-effects of both debasing the role of historical knowledge – which historians apparently accept almost silently[20] – and of promoting a predominantly aesthetic spatial thinking that appears as entirely lacking an antagonistic political spirit whatsoever. However, it does not lack ideological value, as pointed out above. Indeed, the natural abstractedness and indifference of space (i.e. its factual existence before speculative philosophy turned it into an object and a product of human activity) has been politically influenced since the establishment of the four cardinal points of North, South, East, and West as ways to *orient* and assess knowledge and culture. As Christopher Connery underlines in his "*There was No More Sea*: the supersession of the ocean, from the bible to cyberspace:"

> In the wake of the spatial turn in the humanities and the humanistic social sciences, we can no longer write unselfconsciously about 'the West', for we know the ideological work that the term has

[20] In his "The Distant Past: On the Political Use of History," Giovanni Levi writes that "history has abandoned the role of the science of specific differences in order to become the builder of improbable forms of approval. Thus, while all the ever stronger powers elude democratic control – while each of us sees that it is ever more difficult to oppose, by means of the fragile weapon of the vote, the economic and political decisions of a world which stresses interdependence and global characteristics – what is constantly being proposed to us is the end of ideologies and the triumph of the individual, the end of history under liberal capitalism and the affirmation of fragmented memory" (67).

> done. And so too Europe, Asia, Latin America, continents, and the nation: all of these once solid geographical entities have lost their self-evident and self-contained status, as their constructedness, ideological character, and historicity have been revealed (494).

More precisely, I would contend that *despite* the almost uncountable declensions that space has undergone lately (global, representational, constructed, perceived, imagined, etc., to name only a few), spatial thinking does not stand as evidence of the end of ideology, or history, pace those nostalgic of Hegel's ultimate spiritual age such as Francis Fukuyama.[21] Instead, in its fascination with landscape and totality, spatial thinking bears witness to the predominance of global, immaterial, "spectacular knowledge" (as Debord might put it) over the local, immediate practice of economy and politics. It is also a witness in favor of the "post-material," hard to come by "wireless" mode of cyber-production. The incapacity of historical and political knowledge to deal with the size of the macro-world economy, dominated by sophisticated micro-technology, might arguably justify Fukuyama's conviction that humankind has reached its apex; and that intellectual discourse appears to have generated a terminology that describes an irrepresentable and unthinkable daily event–as outlined by Valéry: "The image of the world that takes shape and operates in political minds of various types and degrees is far from a satisfactory and methodical representations of the present" (*History and Politics*, 11). In other words, global and late postmodern thinking has lost in space – sometimes unwillingly, sometimes on purpose – its grip of the reality. In his "Ideologies of Land and Sea," Connery argues that:

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[21] In his *The End of History and the Last Man*, Fukuyama writes that "what I suggested had come to an end was not the occurrence of events, […] but History: that is, history understood as a single, coherent, evolutionary process, when taking into account the experience of all peoples in all times" (Xii). History is finished, according to Fukuyama, because the (Hegelian) human desire for recognition ('gravely' missing under communist regimes) has been satisfied by liberal democracy. The satisfaction of this desire has, as a result, quenched the thirst of prestige "which initially drives two primordial combatants to seek to make the other 'recognize' their humanness' by staking their lives in a mortal battle" (xvi). Human recognition has generated an anthropological mutation, and the modernity is now populated by Nietzschean slaves who are informed by "a kind of slavish morality […]. The last man had no desire to be recognized as greater than others, and without such desire no excellence or achievement was possible. Content with his happiness and unable to feel any sense of shame for being unable to rise above those wants, the last man ceased to be human" (xxii). On the one hand, one may argue that the scholar is right, since the struggle for recognition, today, seems to be confined within the Hollywoodean ephemeral dimension. On the other, first presented in 1992, Fukuyama's stance may be interpreted as a further manifestation of the intellectual thinking in support of the current status quo, as well ideological as purportedly oblivious of the multitude of social and political conflicts still existing in any part of the globe. How more insightful were Valéry remarks: "Every habitable part of the earth, in our time, has been discovered, surveyed, and divided up among nations. […] *The age of the finite world has begun*. […] Henceforth we must see all political phenomena in the light of this new situation in the world; every one of them occurs either in obedience or in resistance to the effects of this definitive limitation and ever closer mutual dependence of human actions" (*History and Politics*, 14-15).

> something of the globe remains in the global, that the spatial categories through which the globe has been thought continue to shape the still inchoate imaginary of the global. […] Global thinking often conceals its particular, national origins—the United States as Universal Nation is probably the best example of that — just as national liberationist discourses—one version of the ‘‘local’’—commonly have an implicit supranational character (174-175).

Although I am not fully convinced by the possible "implicit supranational character" of *current* national liberationist discourses, the particular origin and interest of global thinking is hardly deniable. As we saw in the third chapter, Schmitt's theory concerning *Nomos* perfectly qualifies as such, for example. Connery defines Schmitt's theorization as "perhaps the last serious attempt to think through the materiality and spatiality of the earth as a whole in philosophical terms" (176), an "Aristotelian," "Hegelian" endeavor that falls short of stating the achieved perfection of human history mostly because of the defeat of the Germans in WWII. In order to grasp the interestedness behind spatial thinking, Connery maintains that a genealogical inventory of the categories through which the earth is imagined (such as regions, nations, continents, etc…) is indispensable, so that a critical thinking of the global will be grounded upon non-contingent historical analysis.

That is why the American scholar relates Schmitt's theory to the dominant ideology of capitalism:

> Land and sea come to be all that matters [for Schmitt], though, only through a centuries-long process of burrowing, grading, measuring, plotting, allotting, and mapping – the project of Euramerican conquest-capitalism – and this process also resides in our thinking of the elements (176).

This is not an earth-shattering revelation; it is, however, the sanction that the modern, capitalist version of *nomos* has not changed its lawmaking and violent nature, which it had always featured. One may argue that, in addition, the connection between contemporary spatial thinking and ideology has strengthened the pervasiveness of the capital while covering-up or disguising its control. The immaterial global networks, which constitute a relevant part of the hyper-technological current mode of production, are narrated through the metaphorics of planetary connectivity and simultaneity, as though physical space were tantamount to a void, or to a saturated whole, as Jameson defined it. Spatial narrativization bridges the long-standing messianic longing for eliminating the sea with the modern, political yearning of solving – most of the times, "solving" may assume the literal guise of liquefying, or melting – social conflicts. In such a void space, materiality appears to be dissolved (in particular, the materiality of the ocean is obliterated), and social conflicts with it. Spatial thinking, in other words, signals the return of the repressed land-laden beliefs (as in Hesiod's *Works and*

Days and St. John's *Book of Revelation*) that the sea is the cradle of evil. As Connery puts it in his "*There was No More Sea*:"

> [D]ematerialization [of the ocean] is linked to the long project of capital's concealment of its spatial and social character. […] What I want to suggest […], though, is that the conceptual difficulty with the ocean, the ease with which it is subsumed by the engine of the dematerialization, reflects a much longer and more enduring history of ocean-annihilating vision (497-498).

Connery's "ocean-annihilating vision" refers to St. John's *Revelation* as it is analyzed in Auden's *Enchafèd Flood* – which I treated myself in the first chapter – and connects the contemporary de-materializing spatial thinking (ideologically capitalist, as Connery himself demonstrated) with the philosophy of *Revelation*. As I showed, while Hesiod was advocating the preservation of the economic and cultural system in place, and opposing seafaring for being against tradition and too risky an endeavor, St. John's stance was obviously less concerned with conservation since he was prophesizing the end of the world as it was, and the coming of a sea-less messianic realm. The Evangelist was, hence, speaking a highly symbolic language (which is, by definition, unconcerned with *materiality* of nature) as he was chastising the *worldliness* of humankind. In line with the argument of my entire dissertation, Connery states that "throughout the Biblical texts, especially, the sea is too material, too spatial, too present, to be merely metaphorical" (499). In other words, the sea represents a crucial part of the semiotic context within which or against which both individuals and collectivities function, interact, develop their inner feelings, build their outer relationships, predilections and idiosyncrasies included. In particular, Connery maintains that the *Book of Revelation* is but one among many biblical works which abhor the sea, as he states that:

> Yahweh, the god of the Jews and the Christians, fought the sea. […] This anti-sea is figured in Genesis, […] in Exodus, […] in the books of the prophets; […] in Jonah; […] Many scholars read the aquatic or ichthyan motifs in the Jesus story […] as reflecting this primal relationship between God and the sea, a struggle that the apocalypse of St. John of *Revelations* brings to a close. The Bible shaped the apprehension of the spiritual and physical worlds throughout Christendom, and it is this god-conquered sea on which western peoples have lived for as long as there has been a region to call 'the West'. The western relationship to this particular sea has shaped western discourse's orientation to earthly space, the nature of its terrestriality, and a wide range of element-conquering discourse. The cyberpunk and finance capital evocations of the annihilated ocean would be impossible without the prior vision of a New Jerusalem, a world remade in absence of its geophysicality (499-500).

Connery's suggestion that the Bible transmitted to the West its conflicting nature between two major principles can hardly be denied, in view of the fact that the Western culture has always featured dualities and oppositions. Nonetheless, while these general remarks are compelling and may be shared, one should not forget that each and every messianic prophecy has to deal with the question of the *entire* spatiality, besides the parallel question of temporality. It seems obvious to contend that space as a whole – as well, and as much, as time – will be irrelevant when the "New Jerusalem" will come. Such being the case, the "cyberpunk and finance capital evocations of the annihilated ocean" will reveal themselves to be unrealistic and, literally, out of time and space. Similarly improbable appears the super-technological stance that considers "The cyber-body, de-materialized, networked, and connected, [a]s the latest version of earth knowing that supersedes the sea" (508). In his article, Connery illustrates the last episodes of the perennial strife that the land (in its immaterial and cyber guise of today) wages against the all too material sea (as Connery himself defined it), a conflicting situation that is first announced and portrayed in the bible, as pointed out above. As often said, "de-materialized" is also "the latest version" of the current mode of production; however, as Jameson reminded us while underscoring the postmodern waning of the sense of history "fantasized by Weber or Foucault or the *1984* people" (1991, 406):

> a mode of production [...] includes a variety of counterforces and new tendencies within itself, of 'residual' as well as 'emergent' forces, which it must attempt to manage or control (Gramsci's conception of hegemony). Were those heterogeneous forces not endowed with an effectivity of their own, the hegemonic project would be unnecessary. Thus, differences are presupposed by the model (406).

One may suggest that one of these counterforces and forms of resistance is the materiality of the space named "Mediterranean," which does not go away even after repeated attempts of cultural, and symbolic annihilation, both in the present and in the past, as illustrated by Connery. Indeed, it appears as though the "material Mediterranean," which has been and still is the focus of manifold discussions concerning the civilizations born on its shore, has preceded and created – or preserved, at the very least – the condition for the emergence of the imagined Mediterranean within scientific discourse. According to French historian of science Marie-Noëlle Bourguet, the Mediterranean bears a semantic "double registre" that allows it to both "designer un espace singulier" and, at the same time, "être une catégorie du discourse savant" ("De la Méditerranée," 8). Yet, this semantic double register calls for close scrutiny, she adds, for it partakes in a more complex, bicentennial intellectual process that occurred "entre la fin du XVIIe siècle et le milieu du XIXe siècle" (9), wherein European discourse has adopted "un modèle universaliste de la science" (9). A side effect of that broader methodological revolution, the "scientific invention of the Mediterranean" – as Bourguet and others named it – was nonetheless possible because of the

existence of archeological and historical commonalities, which stand as footholds that:

> permettent, d'abord, d'ancrer l'histoire des hommes dans le temps long de l'histoire de la Terre […]. Par ce passé retrouvé, la communauté supposée des espaces d'hier, matériellement inscrite dans les traces du présent, vient fonder le projet d'une destinée méditerranéenne partagée. En contribuant à créer l'idée d'une communauté de civilization entre les deux rives de la Méditerranée, l'archéologie […] apporte à l'invention de la Méditerranée la caution de l'histoire (24-25).
>
> [allow, from the beginning, to anchor human history in the long time of the Earth's history […]. Through this regained past, the imagined community of yesterday's spaces, materially inscribed in the traces of the present, comes to found the project of a shared Mediterranean fate. In contributing to creating the concept of a community of civilization between the two Mediterranean shores, archeology […] adds the prudence of history to the invention of the Mediterranean.]

While intertwining history and geography, hence, archeology of the Mediterranean is also laying bare the composite intellectual frame within which both ideology and the material resistance to it take place. Whenever "the Mediterranean" is the focal point of discussion this dialectical field of tension unfailingly re-emerges, as a result of the consolidated semantic double register mentioned above.

4. Where the Sea Meets the Land: Critical Thinking of the Border

In the beginning,
Homer created
the Mediterranean.
Yves Peyré

In its infancy at the time in which influential *The Production of Space* was published (1974), the spatial turn "has been increasingly evident in a variety of disciplines, political positions, and analytical frameworks during the last twenty years," as Connery has written in his "The Oceanic Feeling and the Regional Imaginary" in 1996 (284). Thus, it has become the dominant philosophy as it best suited the current mode of production. Therefore, it is only natural that a remarkable part of contemporary intellectual discourse focuses on this kind of theorization, and it is also in the wake of the spatial turn that the "Mediterranean question" has returned to concern intellectuals. Connery's article, which focuses on ocean, region, and the "Pacific Rim" as spatial symbols, features an analytical

frame that suits the Mediterranean area as well.[22] In his essay, the scholar maintains that "The Pacific Rim's putative dynamic yet equalizing flows, wherein everyone on the Rim benefits, is in one respect the imagining of postnational equilibrium" (285). A regional, postnational equilibrium in an area whose borders are imaginary, nonetheless the Pacific Rim represents, according to Connery, a burgeoning spatial zone whose economy re-enacts a familiar capitalist logic:

> Yet a fundamental character of the Pacific Rim as spatial image — its exclusivity — reveals the disequilibrium and differentiation that Marxist and non-Marxist geographers recognize as fundamental to the spatiality of capitalism. […] For the Pacific Rim to exist, there must be differentiated regions that are off the rim, in stagnation or decline. (285)

One may contend that a similar argument can easily be made for a large part of both northeastern and southern areas around the Mediterranean; for example, such is the case of the northern countries on the African continent, even though Africa's "stagnation or decline" is certainly not due to a lack of resources, but rather a diminutive political dependence. The same case may hold true for the Middle East, where decades-long conflicts have enormously impoverished the region. Drawing on Connery's opinion that: "The concept of region, arising as it does within a binary logic of difference, is a semiotic utopia, a 'spatial fix' for those faced with analyzing the always differentiating but always concealing logic of capital" (286-287), I maintain that the existence of the economic binary underdeveloped/developed countries — both in Europe and in the Mediterranean area — elicits, directly or indirectly, a call for regional thinking.[23] It is precisely within this semiotic context that the "semiotic utopia" represented by ineffable Mediterranean thinking has arisen and developed.

In the very same year in which Connery's essay was published, Italian philosopher and sociologist Franco Cassano published a book titled *Il pensiero meridiano* (1996, henceforth *PM*), which has sparked enthusiasm and criticism in equal measure since its appearance.[24] A collection of essays (some of them

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[22] One should not downplay the coincidence that both Connery's article and Franco Cassano's *Il pensiero meridiano*, which I will scrutinize soon and that is focused on the Mediterranean, appeared in the same year, 1996.

[23] One of the most common definition of the ever-enlarging European Union is "Double-speed Europe," a formula that wants to underscore the uneven economic development among the state members.

[24] A succinct but very precise criticism of Cassano's theoretical apparatus is in B. Palumbo, "Campo intellettuale, potere e identità tra contesti locali, "pensiero meridiano" e "identità meridionale"," an essay that lays bare the "difficoltà di dialogo tra un certo bagaglio teoretico "classico" e le attuali etnografie critiche, mostrando, inoltre, il carattere ristretto, talvolta etnocentrico, dell'idea di "politica" ad essi soggiacente" (126-127). In his essay, Palumbo emphasizes how Cassano's concepts of 'uomo mediterraneo' and 'cultura mediterranea' are

already published), the work attempts to underline the difference between current dominant Western thinking and the traditional culture of Mediterranean area. In emphasizing allegedly Mediterranean attitudes such as "lentezza" and "misura," Cassano attempts to unfasten the carriage of the Mediterranean culture from the train of European and Western thinking. The thinking centered around the Mediterranean needs to focus on its own history and tradition, which is "southerner" and pre-capitalist, he says, and it has to escape the tyranny of "Unique Thinking" that melts all the differences into one single, "progressive" system of thought. Through the metaphors of land and sea, Cassano describes the critical encounter between different philosophies (embodied by Martin Heidegger and Friedrich Nietzsche, predominantly), as he maintains that neither should prevail to the detriment of the other, because they are *on the same side* of the same coin. Cassano states that:

> Non c'è contraddizione tra il salpare senza ritorno di Nietzsche e l'affermarsi del primato della tecnica [teorizzato da Heidegger]. [...] Lo sradicamento viene festeggiato come una virtù, come disponibilità dell'uomo alla competitività universale. [...] L'allontanarsi dalle coste fa uscire fuor di Misura. (40, 41)

Cassano uses spatial, nautical metaphors and allegories to signify the shortcomings of the current human condition, which is characterized, according to him, by the loss of rootedness ("sradicamento"), the prevalence of philosophical unilateralism (labeled as "infinito della tecnica,", 8), and the unrestrained longing of boundlessness. The excessive pervasiveness of the "monoteismo della tecnica" (8) symbolizes the mechanical essence of modernity and the primacy of competitiveness, hinged upon "velocità," as opposed to the slowness of the human rhythm of life as it was experienced in the pre-capitalist Mediterranean society. When the repetitive cycle of knowledge that took place within the Mediterranean was broken by Dante's Ulysses, whose quest for virtue and

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considered "quantomeno nel discorso antropologico, [...] costruzioni ideologiche, essenziali e stereotipate, prodotte tra metà Ottocento e metà Novecento all'interno di operazioni di classificazione e di dominio messe in atto da quegli stessi ordini economici e politici che il "Pensiero meridiano" dichiara, con forte e condivisibile passione civile, di voler mettere in discussione" (125-126). Cassano's book serves my point because, on the one hand, it is further evidence that a "Mediterranean thinking" does not exist. Yet, on the other hand, it is an honest attempt to rethink a problematic political situation by means of a metaphorical language involving sea, land, collectivity, and individual. As far as I am concerned, the intellectual value of this work lies precisely in its engagement with those subjects. Although I consider the book a flawed endeavor by and large, I share Palumbo's assessment that Cassano's work has "il merito di aver contribuito a rilanciare, e a porre su basi diverse, più aggiornate e meno anguste, i dibattiti politici sul Sud d'Italia" (124). The following pages are a tribute to this merit, and a practical explanation of its usefulness.

wisdom (*Inferno*, Canto XXVI) drove him beyond Hercules' pillars, the way to progress had found its most powerful icon, while the land and sea that the hero had left behind was to symbolically turn into the space of belatedness. Cassano maintains that Dante's Ulysses represents the victory of nihilism because he plunges himself in his individual quest and has no plan to return home, a decision marked with disdain of his realm, his family, and his travel mates. By contrast, Homer's Ulysses, with his "capacità di ospitare […l']erranza e insieme il desiderio di tornare" (*PM*, 46), with his ability to travel the sea for years, embodies Cassano's combination of endurance ("durata") and rootedness. The warrior, seafarer, and king Ulysses conjugates both land-laden and sea-laden talent (namely, techniques) with human feelings, and his life is a constant skillful and emotional showcase.[25] However, neither representations of the same hero (Homer's and Dante's) can stand alone, according to Cassano, because neither represents the *Homo Mediterraneus*, this complicated individuality who looks back at tradition while interacting with novelty. Different but complementary, they reciprocally imply one another. In Cassano's view, it is imperative to return to one's homeland, in order to narrate one's story, as Homer's Ulysses craves; however, "il desiderio ogni giorno di riprendere il mare" (46) that makes Dante's Ulysses a thoroughly Mediterranean character is as important. This desire marks the limit of technological influence on contemporary society, writes Cassano, as it enlivens the:

> sfida antica e grande per l'uomo mediterraneo, quella di costruire collegamenti e contatti, di costruire ponti, di rendere *pontos* quel mare alto e difficile. Questo sapere non nasce dallo sviluppo tecnologico, ma dall'intersezione della terra e del mare. (47)

The inherent value of the Mediterranean, according to Cassano, is precisely its being "frontiera," at the same time as it is an irrepressible barrier and a unifying bond, and a frontier that is untouched by historical human development and technological advancement. A symbolic and material border, the Mediterranean sea invites crossing. Its openness stands as a call to interrogate oneself, one's imagined community and its intellectual system of thinking, as an interrogation that purports to put one's finitude at stake. It represents an individual challenge that Cassano formulates thus: "Oggi Mediterraneo vuol dire mettere al centro il confine, la linea di divisione e di contatto tra gli uomini e le civiltà. […] Sul Mediterraneo non si va a cercare la pienezza di un'origine, ma a sperimentare la propria contingenza" (Xxiv).

In contrast to Cassano's opinion that the Mediterranean *today* embodies the experimental field where one puts ones contingency at stake, this appears to be a long-standing challenge. Most likely, it is a challenge as old as Mediterranean poetry, in as much as it is a contest that was first narrated by Hesiod's *Works and Days* (as I have stated in chapter 1). In his poem, the poet

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[25] Adriana Cavarero has devoted part of her *Tu che mi guardi, tu che mi racconti*, to the description of *who* Ulysses is, drawing on Arendt's theory of identity.

criticized his brother Perses's greedy and malevolent behavior and schooled him in regard to humankind and its cosmological position. Perses was scolded mainly for two reasons: first, because he bribed the judges (*basilees*) who were deciding over their holding (*oikos,* 20-39); second, and more importantly for my argument, because of his decision to undertake seafaring trade in order to improve his impoverished economic condition. Nonetheless, Hesiod managed to rein in his anger as he provided Perses with counseling and examples to be followed: "Perses, be mindful of all works in their season, especially as regards seamanship. Praise a little ship, but put your cargo in a big one" (641-643).

At first seemingly an act of utmost generosity towards the evil brother, Hesiod's counsels appear suspect, insofar as the poet himself undercuts his own competence as he claims: "I will indeed point out to you the rules of the much-roaring sea, although I am in no way skilled in either seamanship or ships. For, as for ships, I have never yet sailed on the wide open sea" (647-650). Where does Hesiod's self-confidence come from, then? The poet knows "the rules" (and justice) in theory, so to speak, because someone has handed them over to him. On the other hand, Perses acts autonomously, ill-advisedly, and disrespectfully—disregarding tradition and the gods, that is. There seems to be more than meets the eye, then. My hypothesis is that *Works and Days* is a poem concerning one of the first occurrences of the dual principle that has marked Western culture from its beginning to date, mainly embodied by opposing couples such as subject/object, body/soul, good/evil, male/female, order/disorder, etc. Drawing on Hesiod's derisive lines, I argue that Perses's first mistake (bribing the judges) was deemed a mistake concerning the individual, while the second mistake (going against cosmic stability) concerned the universe, and therefore resulted in a much bigger fault. In particular, Hesiod considered Perses's determination to trade over sea foolish and unholy, nothing less than an attempt to subvert the order established by Zeus. As a consequence, we may say that not only did Perses despise the god-planned order of the things; in his irreverent stance, which was merely motivated by ravenousness and volatility of temper — according to his brother — Perses turned into an unexpected harbinger of materialism to come. In other words, though this certainly was *also* a demonstration of personal resentment expressed by one family member to another, more poignantly, it was the epiphany of a deeper natural disharmony and therefore the sanctioning of a burgeoning essential divide, symbolized by twofold Strife (11-12) at the beginning both of the poem and of the universe. To be sure, the two Strives define two separate realms, not two individuals or, even less, two similar civilizations. Good and evil is the first among the oppositions that come to our mind ("There was not only one race of Strifes [sic], but over the earth there are two. The one a man when he perceived her would praise; but the other is blameworthy. They have very different spirits", 11-14). Moreover, Hesiod suggests that the two Strives stand for an *economic* opposition, one between work and "watch wranglings and play the listener in the *agora*" (29-30). Justice is on the side of the good men who work the land, and "they enjoy at festivities the fruits of the works they have tended. […] and therefore they do not go onto ships, but the grain-giving plowland bears [enough]

produce [every year]" (231-237). Hence, we may agree with Cassano's idea that the Mediterranean divides "men and civilizations" only if we categorize the latter according to their dissimilar economic structures. One can convincingly maintain that Perses represents the "other" for Hesiod, he who does not like to work the land ("be mindful to work the land, as I exhort you", 622-623), as he longs "for stormy seamanship" (618). Under these principles, harvesting land is more ethical and respectful than trading and seafaring. However, perhaps in an underdeveloped fashion, "Perses, glorious offspring" (298) resembles Homer's as well as Dante's Ulysses, as this warning uttered by Hesiod makes explicit: "If someone seizes great prosperity even by force with hands, or carries it off with his tongue […] then easily the gods make him obscure, and they diminish that man's *oikos*" (321-325). In addition, similarly to Dante's Ulysses, Perses refuses to rest on land, where a life of sowing and plowing awaits he who follows the order of Zeus. Perses too appears willing to "sperimentare la propria contingenza" (as Cassano puts it) by sailing the sea, a sea that poses for the ship and its helmsman as much trouble as an ocean, given the state of the art of navigation. Therefore, it may be said that Perses represents the archetype of the adventurous "oceangoer," and embodies his very essence, he who is driven towards the unknown and the possible.

Perses turns out to be the implied addressee of every warning or statement concerning incautious seafaring as well as the logical, ultimate target of any narrativization concerning land and sea. In the section "Heidegger, Nietzsche e il mare" of *Il pensiero meridiano*, Cassano analyzes the relationships between the two German philosophers in light of the binary sea/land. As we saw earlier, he places them on the same faulty side as he points out that each of them can only be a thinker of one element (Heidegger/land, Nietzsche/sea, respectively). Indeed, Heidegger's *cura* against Nietzsche's borderless sea that destroys every rootedness is a "feticismo della propria radice" (40). Therefore, says Cassano, the border, the *confine* where sea and land meet — and consequently shape each other, as Horden and Purcell maintain in their *The Corrupting Sea* (2000) — is the place to investigate, because only there, where sea and land meet, can human challenge take place, both meaningfully and materially: "Chi non vuole essere né naufrago, né contadino o poeta deve lavorare più modestamente su un moto doppio, su una contraddizione, sulla liceità conflittuale del partire e del tornare" (*PM,* 41). However, Cassano's dialectical double movement appears insufficient to reconcile his own idea of Mediterranean as "pluriverso irriducibile" (xxiv). As a result, the intellectual fracture remains.

5. Borderline, End, and Beginning

Duality lies at the origin of Western discourse, and the speculation concerning the Mediterranean that I have analyzed thus far does not escape this condition. As a matter of fact, the binary is *the* figure of speech and thinking through which Western knowledge has developed, from Hesiod on. However, Mediterranean thinker Matvejević contends that Mediterranean sea and land do not belong to each other nor shape each other any longer: this would result in the interruption of the dialectical movement that brings about knowledge and advancement.

Matvejević's feeling of a broken communication is not uncommon.[26] One of the last works by Italo Calvino, *Palomar*, describes the attempt of contemporary man to grasp the nature of the world, in both its minute and gigantic parts, by means of scientific knowledge.[27] The very first short story is entitled "Lettura di un'onda", and it is part of a section called "Le vacanze di Palomar." It features Mr. Palomar on the beach as he strives to detect the smallest "unit" that makes up the sea: the wave. Precisely, "non sono «le onde» che lui intende guardare, ma un'onda singola e basta: volendo evitare le sensazioni vaghe, egli si prefigge per ogni suo atto un oggetto limitato e preciso" (875). Under his condition of "Uomo nervoso che vive in un mondo frenetico e congestionato" (876), Palomar cannot accomplish his goal, and eventually "s'allontana lungo la spiaggia, coi nervi tesi com'era arrivato e ancor più insicuro di tutto" (879). The failure of Palomar's endeavor is determined by a set of flagrant shortcomings. To begin with, the expectation to be able to see a rift within fluids such as sea waters is obviously an unrealistic goal. Moreover, the observer's state is compromised from the outset by his belonging to nerve-wracking society and time, which may very well be the deep-seated reason why he wants to avoid further distracting "vague sensations" in his attempt to "padroneggiare la complessità del mondo" (875). A postmodern individual in a postmodern setting, Palomar appears to be a deprived, isolated member of a current fragmented community, incapable of connecting with the outer space, out of harmony with his inner self. Precisely as "the Mediterranean man" that Cassano describes, Palomar is "neither shipwrecked nor peasant nor poet." Rather, he attempts to attain knowledge, taking on the "great and ancient challenge" which the sea poses, of bridging the gap between himself, standing on the land, and the water, which keeps coming to him in the guise of waves. As a Mediterranean, non-technical would-be connoisseur, Palomar is looking for a "measure" (the single wave), a smart key which will open to him the gate to wisdom. However, the passing of time does not help the apprentice scientist. The intellectual distance between the inquiring subject and the materiality of his object of analysis has increased since his first approaching the shore, as "L'ostinazione che spinge le onde verso la costa ha partita vinta: di fatto, si sono parecchio ingrossate" (879), and Palomar has lost his mental image of them upon which his "study" was based. The sea remains high and challenging, its border with the land uncrossed, and, as a result, the intersection of land and sea uncharted. Palomar stands alone, as he is wrestling with the very same long-standing question that forced Dante's Ulysses to take the sea, which Connery rephrases thus: "the westerner's confrontation with limits and limitlessness, and with what is fundamentally other than itself" ("*There was No More Sea",* 506). As he leaves the seashore more troubled than when he reached it, Palomar appears to confirm

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[26] In his *Il Mediterraneo e l'Europa* (1998), Matvejević remembers that poet Ivo Andrić once sent him a quotation by Leonardo da Vinci that said: "Da Oriente a Occidente in ogni punto è divisione" (27), upon which he sadly agrees (27-29).
[27] I adopted the version in I. Calvino, *Romanzi e racconti*, vol. 2, 1991.

Cassano's opinion concerning the irreducible multiversity of the sea as well as Matvejević's statement concerning the separateness of sea and land.

In the end, Latouche appears to be right in claiming that the Mediterranean is a utopia. Better still, it appears to be a heterotopia as it was envisioned by Foucault in the sixth and last principle he listed in "Of Other Spaces:"

> The last trait of heterotopias is that they have a function in relation to all the space that remains. This function unfolds between two extreme poles. Either their role is to create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned, as still more illusory […]. Or else, on the contrary, their role is to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill-constructed, and jumbled. This latter type would be the heterotopia, not of illusion, but of compensation, and I wonder if certain colonies have not functioned somewhat in this manner. (Foucault 1986, 27)

A place of compensation, an ersatz colony of mind, the Mediterranean appears to signify with a symbolic vitality no longer evident in current political, social, and cultural life. Indeed, it stands in precise opposition to governmentality and its attempts to recreate the Mediterranean as a colony. However, while the Mediterranean emphasizes the necessity of an always new way of imagining the border, it also reaffirms its long-lasting, inexhaustible story as beginning, the story first told into being by Homer.

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