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9 The postcolonial condition, the decolonial option, and the post-socialist intervention

Madina Tlostanova

The starting point of my reflections on postcolonialism and its old and new discontents is the idea that postcoloniality should be regarded as a *condition*, a certain human existential situation which we have often no power of choosing. While decoloniality is an *option*, consciously chosen as a political, ethical, and epistemic positionality and an entry point into agency. The postcolonial condition is more of an objective given, a geopolitical and geo-historical situation of many people coming from former colonies. The decolonial stance is one step further, as it involves a conscious choice of how to interpret reality and how to act upon it. It starts from a specific postcolonial situation, which can fall into the traditional sphere of interests limited to the British and French colonies, focus on a more typically decolonial Central and South American configuration, or even go beyond both locales and venture into the unconventional imperial-colonial histories of Central and Eastern Europe, the Ottoman Sultanate, or Russia. A mere description of a postcolonial predicament or an analysis of its present outcomes in a concrete locale, then, must lead to the next step of developing an active and conscious ethical, political, and epistemic position whose goal is to decolonize thinking, being, perception, gender, and memory. So it is not enough to call a scholar postcolonial. It is crucial to take into account from the start not only our given objective positions but also who and what we chose to be in our profession and in our life. This understanding of the postcolonial and decolonial realms is rather unorthodox as, instead of stating for the umpteenth time the rather obvious differences in their origination and their links to various types of colonialism in India and Africa and in the Americas, I try to divorce them from their respective genealogies of knowledge and see how relevant these theories are when tested in quite different geopolitical regions such as Eurasia or Central and South-Eastern Europe.

The distinction between the *condition* and the *option* sheds some light on the main postcolonial flaw in the eyes of decolonial thinkers. It cannot be fixed with a mere addition of the new voices and geopolitical experiences (such as the post-Soviet, the post-Ottoman, or the post-Austrian-Hungarian) to the postcolonial choir. The postcolonial and the decolonial discourses refer not only to different locales but also to different modes of thinking and

being in the world, although they frequently overlap with each other: The decolonial thinkers are quite often postcolonial people and the postcolonial scholars in their majority share the decolonial agenda. Still, there are spaces and conceptual tools within each of these discourses that remain opaque for the other, and areas which demonstrate their limitations when applied to a different local history such as the post-socialist postcolonial regions and experiences.

What is needed is a radical rethinking and clarification of theoretical and methodological grounds on which the imperial and colonial classifications are made, to problematize the predominantly descriptive and formal approach of the postcolonial studies, in the sense of assessing phenomena of completely different orders based on their formal affinity, such as being empires or colonies, yet often remaining blind to correlational structural and power asymmetries. Along with the Western liberal principle of inclusion (of the old and new others), which has repeatedly demonstrated its paternalistic inadequacy, or maybe instead of it, a different principle should be formulated. It should be based on a revision of the very architecture of power, knowledge, being, gender, and perception. It is necessary not to build into the existing system by merely expanding it with new elements, as postcolonial studies has mostly been doing, but rather to problematize this system as such and offer other options as the decolonial thought has attempted to do in the last two decades.

Global coloniality and the postcolonial condition

The decolonial thought offers a number of categories and ideas which could take the imperial-colonial complex in its diachronous and synchronous dimensions out of its postcolonial impasse. This refers particularly to the concept of the *global coloniality* (Tlostanova and Mignolo 2009), which is not the same as colonialism or postcolonialism. Colonialism is a historical phenomenon, while coloniality (Quijano 2000, Maldonado-Torres 2007) is its outcome in which we all reside. Decolonial option does not accentuate the historical description of (neo)colonialist strategies but rather the long-lasting ontological, epistemic, and axiological traces left after any colonialism seems to be a matter of the past. The global coloniality (of power, of being, of perception, of gender, of knowledge, of memory) is always manifested in particular local forms and conditions, remaining, at the same time, a connecting thread for the understanding of dissociated manifestations of modernity.

Coloniality is an overall design or optics determining relations between the world, the things, and the humans. Its control is realized through a naturalized objectifying principle of perception and interpretation of the world, of other human and nonhuman beings, of manmade objects, and of knowledge. The main tools of modernity/coloniality in both Western liberal and Socialist versions are vectorial time and progressivist teleology; the absurdly

rationalized management of knowledge and subjectivity; the sanctification of technological development; the cult of the future and the dismissal of the negatively marked tradition, particularly if this is a spatially alien past, with regular lapses into exoticism and antiquarianism.

The concept of coloniality allows drawing the Ottoman Sultanate and the Russian Czarist and Soviet empires into the modern/colonial matrix, while at the same time provincializing and humbling the Anglophone post-colonial studies through downsizing them to their specific geopolitical and corpopolitical experience. Significantly, the decolonial thought is not doing this in order to occupy itself a central place as a champion of the new universalist Truth but only to draw the attention to the optional nature of any theoretical discourse.

Revisiting the logic of coloniality and the limits of postcoloniality

Ten years ago, together with Walter Dignolo we co-authored a book chapter on the logic of coloniality and the limits of postcoloniality (Dignolo and Tlostanova 2007), where we tried to explain that the postcolonial discontent stems from its too close (and not seen as a problem) link with modernity as a set of particular epistemic assumptions. In decolonial view, this leads to the ultimate failure of postcolonial critique attempting to use the methodological tools of the master in order to dismantle his house, to paraphrase Audre Lorde (Lorde 1984, 112). Since it is indeed impossible, the postcolonial theory stops at the level of changing the content but not the terms of the discussion.

The delocalized universalism of postcolonial theory in launching terms that stem from particular local histories but are then subsequently presented as applicable to any context is discordant with decolonial pluriversality (Dignolo 2013)—a coexistence and correlation of many interacting and intersecting non-abstract universals grounded in the geopolitics and corpopolitics of knowledge, being, gender, and perception, reinstating the experiential nature of knowledge and the origin of any theory in the human life-world. Pluriversal critique targets not the concrete constellations of race, gender, and class but rather the aberration of the universal as such. And this goal is usually beyond the interests of postcolonial scholars.

What is at stake here is the degree of postcolonial and decolonial involvement in de-automatizing of and delinking from the Western epistemic premises, naturalized cognitive operations, methodological clichés and disciplinary divisions, and consequently, attempts to build a different conceptual apparatus to launch or set free an alternative world perception. The postcolonial critique of the (neo)colonialist Western tactics in the past and in the present is usually framed in the very terms of the Western post-structuralist, neo-Marxist, post-Lacanian or affect theories, or at least with some curtesy to the West as an uncontested producer of

disembodied universal knowledge. This leads to a reproduction of monotopical hermeneutics (Mignolo 1995, 13), with its privilege of controlling knowledge and meaning from the position of sameness and through inventing its otherness. Hence the postcolonial discourse still interprets the (post)colonial other for the same, in a language that the same is able to understand and share.

In decolonial terms, this syndrome is called the “hubris of the zero point,” which, according to S. Castro-Gómez, is a specific Eurocentric positionality of the sensing and thinking subject, occupying a delocalized and disembodied vantage point which eliminates any other possible ways to produce, transmit, and represent knowledge, allowing for a world view to be built on a rigid essentialist progressivist model:

The co-existence of diverse ways of producing and transmitting knowledge is eliminated because now all forms of human knowledge are ordered on an epistemological scale from the traditional to the modern, from barbarism to civilization, from the community to the individual, from the orient to occident. [...] By way of this strategy, scientific thought positions itself as the only valid form of producing knowledge, and Europe acquires an epistemological hegemony over all other cultures of the world.

(Castro-Gómez 2007, 433)

As a result, the Western monopoly on knowledge production and distribution and the disciplinary matrix of the modern/colonial knowledge remain intact even if postcolonial theorists offer considerable reinterpretations of the initial Western critical concepts and theories. An interesting example is the postcolonial theory of affect as envisioned by Sara Ahmed, who offers a radical and powerful critique of Eurocentrism, racism, heterosexism, sexism, yet always formulates it within the accepted terms of the affect theory with its essentially Western instruments and assumptions (Ahmed 2014). This postcolonial strategy facilitates a dialogue with the mainstream Western theories by remaining within the same hermeneutical horizon and hence brings an easier and more successful institutionalization, yet at times may inadvertently reproduce coloniality of knowledge.

Decolonial option performs a different epistemic operation. It does not start with Lacan or Butler, slightly modifying their theories to make them fit the analysis of the post/neocolonial reality, but rather focuses from the start on the genealogy of decolonial thinkers and their epistemic tools (Marcos 2006, Kusch 2010, Adorno 2000). Then, instead of postcolonial version of affect emerges a decolonial geopolitics and corpopolitics of knowledge, being, and perception (Tlostanova and Mignolo 2012) and a decolonial aesthesis (Mignolo 2011, Tlostanova 2017) that focus on who produces knowledge, from where, and why, and never starts with applying the established theories to some new postcolonial material.

The postcolonial disciplinarity and the decolonial antidote

Even in their most critical versions, postcolonial studies remain within the established disciplinary mode in which a study presupposes a firm subject/object division. Their successful and quick institutionalization has required a sacrifice of choosing the side of the studying subject, not the studied object. The institutional disciplinary frame coded by the word “studies” does not presuppose by definition, putting theory and life-world on the same axis and practicing decolonization in our everyday writing, thinking, and activism. This does not mean that postcolonial theorists neglect the corpopolitics and the geopolitics of knowledge and perception, or that they do not take radically decolonizing positions as activists-cum-theorists. It just means that their discipline does not require or presuppose this kind of move on their part and it becomes a matter of a personal decolonial choice.

A successful institutionalization also means a necessity to defend one’s disciplinary territory and compete with other disciplines, which can be a stumbling point between the better and longer institutionalized postcolonial studies, and the decolonial option, which makes a point out of its refusal to institutionalize. Similarly to post-structuralism, postcolonial studies still deconstruct modernity from within, whereas the decolonial option is from the start speaking from Dusselian exteriority as an outside created from the inside (Dussel 1993) and often from a position of an absolute other of modernity, or the Fanonian “wretched of the earth” (Fanon 1963).

Decolonial option does not offer a self-sufficient single truth proclamation (being an option among other options), and it does not describe phenomena from a detached and objectified vantage point. By contrast, any “studies” do not have a choice but to be defined by contrast with other disciplines and promote their own universal truth. Institutionalization leads to disciplinary decadence as a proliferation of disciplines and their losing links with reality (deontologization), in Lewis Gordon’s formulation (Gordon 2006), and a compliance with the coloniality of knowledge in trying to secure a more stable position for one’s scholarly group within the existing epistemic matrix of modernity/coloniality.

The post-Soviet experience disrupting and complicating the postcolonial theory

As a trained Americanist, back in the 1990s I worked on a book on the US multiculturalism which introduced me to the postcolonial theory, non-Western feminism, critical race theory, and other discourses that provided a necessary language for the representation of my then indistinct anticolonial sensibilities. My interest was both theoretical and personal, as I am a post-colonial racialized other in the Russian/Soviet/post-Soviet empire. Reading postcolonial books, I recognized many similar complexes and deadlocks but

also creative possibilities with which me and other ethnically non-Russian post-colonial Russian citizens were struggling at the time.

However, our experience has always remained somewhat opaque and untranslatable into the postcolonial language. For instance, the Soviet empire represented itself as already a postcolonial and liberating federation in relation to the non-Russians who were invariably pictured by the Soviet historiography as previously suffering in the “prison for the peoples”—the Czarist empire. One of the favorite rhetorical devices of the Soviet propaganda was to contrast itself with Czarist Russia, carefully hiding the evidence of their close connection and continuity (Sahni 1997). On the surface, the USSR was promoting theatrical multiculturalism and other forms of affirmative action and advocated creolization instead of the racial/ethnic segregation (which was an important argument in its juxtaposition with the demonized West). Needless to say that most of it was a cardboard mockup, hiding racism, Orientalism, progressivism, structural inequality, and other familiar modern/colonial vices, but also its own specific and often contradictory features. Among them, the most prominent one is Russia’s drastically different attitude to different colonies in accordance with the degree of their closeness to Europe, which is connected with the inferiority complex of Russia itself as a second-rate, forever-catching-up empire of modernity.

The latter is important as it allows to formulate a crucial concept of the imperial difference parallel to the colonial differences better investigated in decolonial thought (Boatca 2010, Tlostanova 2014). Starting from the emergence of the world system, a global imperial hierarchy came to being. Within it, several imperial leagues were formed and transformed in the course of time. In the post-Enlightenment modernity, several formerly powerful empires were pushed to the position of the South of Europe and hence to internal imperial difference. The Ottoman sultanate and Russia became the external imperial difference, as they were rooted in different (from the core European) religions, languages, economic models, and ethnic-racial classifications. Both internal and external imperial others were never allowed to become equal to Great Britain, France, or the US today. These markers continue to affect the global geopolitical relations, classifying people very much according to the original modern/colonial human taxonomy.

The second-rate empire of Russia is reduced in its rank from the semi-periphery to an ultimately peripheral status today. It follows the rule of regressive turning of imperial difference into colonial one. A second-rate empire, in the imaginaries of the winning rivals, is regarded as a colony, soon starts to realize this status, and react in aggressive and negativist ways both in relation to its stronger imperial rivals and the weaker colonial others. Imperial difference in itself is an evidence of the agonistic and rigidly hierarchical nature of modernity/coloniality. At its core, there is an implied and delocalized reference point which was originally in the heart of Europe and today is shifted to the US. The rest of the people are taxonomized along

the human scale of modernity in accordance with their proximity to this vantage point. Some are assigned a status of the forever-catching-up agents or even voluntarily define it as their goal. Others are placed into the absolute otherness and withdrawn from history and modernity.

The postcolonial theory does not offer any major category comparable to imperial difference since it traditionally focused on the British and French empires as the winners of the second modernity, but it is generally stronger in nuances due to the fact that it grew out of literary criticism, historically meticulous analysis of the concrete case studies, deconstructivism, and the post-Lacanian psychoanalysis (Spivak 1999, Bhabha 2004). Therefore, it is often advisable to work with decolonial concepts on a more general level (including the categories of the internal and external imperial differences, the geopolitics and corpopolitics of knowledge and of being, voluntary epistemic and affective self-colonization), and with postcolonial tools (canonical counter-discourse, mimicry)—on applied and descriptive levels. Both can fill each other's gaps and omissions.

Particularly complex, fruitful, and also falling out of the standard postcolonial model is the intersection of the postcolonial and post-Soviet experiences, as the Soviet modernity had its own coloniality as a darker space for the non-Russian territories and people. Many of these groups are post-socialist and postcolonial others at once who will always be excluded from the European/Western/Northern sameness into exteriority, yet due to a colonial-imperial configuration will never be able to belong to any locality—native or acquired. Such groups are often products of a specific Soviet creolization detached from any mono-ethnic cultural belongings, born and brought up in the Russian (imperial) linguistic continuum and within the late Soviet intelligentsia culture oriented towards the West. The imperial sameness inside the USSR and Russia has continued to exoticize and demonize them as a colonial other on many levels. Yet the binary opposition of ethnic culture fallen out of time and the modern and progressive dimension which could be only Russian/Soviet or Western/global does not hold anymore.

The postcolonial, post-Soviet others may easily turn to be not only notorious singers of their native land—according to the old Soviet Orientalist model—but also decolonial critics, cunningly subverting both local antiquarian and global mainstream models, mocking the contemporary versions of docile Ariels as opposed to rebellious Calibans. There are more and more people who refuse to be assimilated Ariels or much less archaic singers of their native land. Both of these extremes dangerously seal one into a narrow ethnic identity, which many post-Soviet, postcolonial people reject due to the multiplicity of their ethnic roots, the Soviet educational Russification, and the impossibility to look for these roots in the family or social environment. The postcolonial, post-Soviet other survives without the Russian/Soviet mediation of modernity, reaches directly for the Western/global sources, or turns to various de-Westernizing (Mignolo 2012) models and, in some cases, to the Global South today—in quest of decolonial discourses

that are missing in the rhetoric of the catching-up ex-empire. Such a complex positionality certainly falls out of the postcolonial dichotomous division into the colonizers and the colonized.

The failed Soviet modernity/coloniality and its aftermath could not be sufficiently interpreted through the traditional postcolonial lens, which is too often marked by the typically modern/colonial delocalized universalism. The complexity of the post-socialist-postcolonial intersection needs its own discourse and its own critical optics overlapping but not coinciding with either postcolonial high theory or more applied postcolonial studies. Importantly, this discourse would have to take into account the wider than colonialism dependence and postdependence relations in modernity, stemming from the critical analysis of modernity as such not as an objective reality but, first of all, as a set of epistemic conditions and patterns created to justify and maintain its order.

Post-socialist feminist trajectories are particularly sensitive to the geopolitics of knowledge in the core of neocolonization of the post-socialist reality and subalternization and “housewifization” of its women, in Liliana Burcar’s terms (Burcar 2012, 108), which is linked to the urge to make women once again, or rather, back into a naturalized super-exploited class. This “back into” is significant, as it allows a glimpse into a difference between postcolonialism and post-socialism. It stems from the failure of the Soviet modernity—a losing cousin of the Western capitalist liberal one. Consequently, the willing and reluctant practitioners of this failed modernity were instructed on how to become fully modern (in the only remaining neoliberal way), and therefore, fully human. In a sense, it was a recolonization of a society that was previously colonized by a different modernity/coloniality yet made to believe that it was a liberating and decolonizing power.

According to Boris Groys, “the post-Communist subject travels his route not from the past to the future, but from the future to the past; from the end of history [...] back to historical time. Post-Communist life is life lived backward, a movement against the flow of time” (Groys 2008, 154–155). When the socialist modernity failed, we were told to go back to the usual established course, speed, and most importantly, direction of history, and to the camouflaged but recognizable mild progressivism as opposed to a radical Soviet one. Such nuances and paradoxes are unimaginable in postcolonial narratives. And no matter how hard the academics have been trying to establish dialogues and alliances between the postcolonial and the post-socialist discourses, so far our success was modest. Reflecting on the reasons for this lacking dialogue may help us better understand the evolution of the postcolonial discourse vis-à-vis other important shifts in the global epistemic architecture.

The schematic juxtaposition of postcolonial and post-socialist trajectories shows that there are many intersections between the two, but they take place at different moments and are triggered by different reasons, leading nevertheless to similar results and even possible coalitions because ultimately, they manifest different reactions to the same phenomenon of coloniality.

The development of postcolonial and post-socialist discourses reminds us of a musical counterpoint; in many ways, the two discourses coincided, but it happened at different historical moments and in different political contexts, which prevented them from hearing each other. The early postcolonial discourses were largely leftist, anti-capitalist, and still progressivist without questioning the universalized Western norms of education, human rights, democracy, and women's emancipation. Post-socialist trajectory, on the contrary, was marked by an almost emotional rejection of everything socialist and a fascination with Western knowledge, at a time when postcolonial scholars still largely rehearsed the leftist anti-capitalist discourses and at least indirectly opted for socialism. Later, a number of post-socialist activists and scholars started reinterpreting the socialist legacy in a less negative way, criticizing the Western infiltration of the post-socialist academia, NGOs, and other bodies of knowledge production. It happened at the point when postcolonial thinkers developed their anti-Western modernity discourses, and objectively the two positions intersected, although the traditions they had in mind were completely different and they did not hear each other then just like they still do not hear each other today.

One more concept which can serve as a medium connecting various un-freedom conditions and ways of their conceptualizing, going beyond the postcolonialist agenda, is the concept of "post-dependence" (Nycz 2014) if we rethink its original Central European meaning formulated at the intersection of the postcolonial, secondary Eurocentric, post-imperial, post-socialist, and other complexes. "Post-dependence" can be also a pluriversal term applicable to many situations such as the post-apartheid, post-dictatorship, or post-Fordism, as it does not focus exclusively on ideology and class (as in the case of post-socialism), or on race, colonialism, and Eurocentrism (as in the case of postcolonial discourse). The commonality of the experience of traumatic dependence should not be formulated exclusively from the Western/modern position anymore. Yet the imperial-colonial complex cannot act as the universal common denominator either. The post-dependence condition stems from the nature of modernity, yet it is not always unproblematically connected with its darker colonial side. It can be also a trauma of the imperial difference, as in the Russian case, or of a secondary European positionality of Eastern Europeans who have been long multiply dependent on various empires and today are slowly re-entering Europe, struggling to accept the affinities of their experience with the Global South. It is crucial not to withdraw into any local standpoint experience of oppression but to create conditions for an alter-global vision and coalitions against all modern/colonial forms of dependence instead.

Toward the deep coalitions?

In today's situation of the global conservative and essentialist backlash and the alarming revival of nationalist and neoimperial discourses, it is high time

we forgot about discrepancies between the postcolonial studies and decolonial option and look at possible intersections and eventual coalitions which could help us oppose something positive to the global defuturing tendencies. Perhaps the division into the postcolonial and decolonial approaches would be even eventually softened.

The opposition of colonialism versus coloniality can become a source of future dialogues, as we are all now in the situation of the global coloniality, which affects not only the colonized and the subaltern but also, increasingly, the people in the Global North and in the semi-periphery, who used to think that colonialism was not their problem and now discover that their lives are becoming increasingly dispensable within the architecture of the global coloniality. This is a unifying drive for postcolonial and decolonial theorists and activists to build alter-global alliances and intersectional coalitions for the future struggles for a different world marked by a genuine interest in a far-away other and, eventually, a world where no one would be an other anymore, where there will be other economic options than neoliberal global capitalism, other ways of thinking than Western, and other ways of communicating with nature than exploitation.

Initial differences between the postcolonial and decolonial discourses had to do with different types of colonialism in the Americas and in Asia and Africa. These configurations led to accents on indigeneity in decolonial case and on subalternity, migrations, and creolization in postcolonial case. However, today the original links between the metropolis and its colonies are no longer so obvious and visible in the directions of migration waves. So it is wrong to claim that postcolonial studies focus on migrations whereas decolonial thought deals with indigenous populations of the settler colonies who do not migrate. Equally the markings of regional and historical affiliations of the postcolonial and decolonial scholars are not relevant, and researchers who are postcolonial in their origination and decolonial in their views can be found in many different regions of the world—Southeast Asia, the post-Soviet space, or Eastern Europe (Kalnačs 2016).

This is particularly true in the case of decolonial and postcolonial feminists. We exist in a complex intersectionality not only with mainstream Western feminism but also within our own respective postcolonial and decolonial groups. Hence an important internal critique of the dogmatic heteronormative male version of decolonial option in María Lugones's works (Lugones 2008), hence the problematizing and nuancing of various postcolonial assumptions in the works of women of color feminists (Minh-ha 1986, Barlas 2002, Oyěwùmí 1997). At the same time, both approaches face the problem of choosing the tactical allies in our struggles, and often it is a hard choice between feminist and postcolonial or decolonial agendas. Generally, in both discourses, it is the feminist group which comes up with the most promising, less dogmatic, and dialogically open ideas, allowing for freer collaborations with other critical discourses of modernity and looking for alliances instead of concentrating on differences and opacities.

Can there be a dialogue between the postcolonial studies and the decolonial option as the two parallel versions of the imperial-colonial critical discourses? Such a dialogue could bring rethinking into the agenda of human subjectivity and political agency, knowledge production, gender, ethics, and perception. This dialogue is needed on many levels—from the tactical importance of re-building coalitions along the South-South and South-semi-periphery axes for a more successful struggle against neocolonialism, racism, Eurocentrism, sexism, heterosexism, and other xenophobic manifestations of modernity, to efforts to multi-spatially understand the intersecting concepts in both discourses signifying similar things but having different genealogies. Among them, the postcolonial concept of the “subaltern,” whose origin can be traced from A. Gramsci to G. Spivak, and partly synonymic decolonial concept of the “wretched of the Earth,” which echoes the lyrics of *The Internationale* but is used in decolonial option clearly in its Fanonian sense.

We all have to survive in the Western-oriented academy, in the increasingly neoliberal university where institutionalization remains the only way of legitimation. Yet such moves do not come without certain losses and among them a political collaboration with the neoliberal Global North and a necessity to speak its language in order to remain legitimate and be considered safe. A decolonial refusal to institutionalize then is crucial as a realization of the principle of living and acting in accordance with the ideals we defend. And if our aim is to decolonize knowledge and being, then it is not recommendable to turn decolonial option into a “studies,” as it would only add to ubiquitous disciplinary decadence.

Yet this radical refusal to institutionalize obviously forecloses a number of administrative, financial, and other possibilities and may lead to isolation and a lack of legitimation of decolonial scholars. As a minority trickster who has spent many years inside a highly repressive academic system, I claim that it is almost always possible to infiltrate, undermine, and destabilize such systems from within. Having learned like a Caliban to speak the colonizer’s language, the trickster uses this power not to curse but rather to overcome the colonizer intellectually, existentially, and affectively, opening new vistas for both the docile Ariels complying with theatrical multiculturalist rules and the indignant Calibans, striving to forcefully come back to the reservation of irrecoverable past. In the present conditions, the best strategy for critical imperial-colonial discourses is a negotiation, a cunning sneaking of the radical emancipating ideas into the institutionalized structures. Such a skillful balancing is possible only when we have access to more opportunities. In this respect, decolonial option has to learn from postcolonial studies.

We are at the stage when postcolonial and decolonial discourses are more in need of a dialogue than further differentiation and mutual exclusion, of effective strategies for shaping the open and flexible “deep coalitions” (Lugones 2010) of resistance which are always in the making. One of the mechanisms for the organization of this opposition is critical border thinking shared by

both postcolonial and decolonial discourses and first formulated in the works of Chicana predecessors of decolonial feminism (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, Anzaldúa 1999). Critical border thinking as a product of a complex and dynamic interaction with modernity from the position of exteriority, of living in hostile environments yet reinstating one's epistemic rights, leads to an itinerant, forever open and multiple positionality, marked by transformationism, shifting identifications, and a rejection of either/or binarity, turning instead to a non-exclusive duality which is to be found in contemporary models of conjunctive logic, in many indigenous epistemologies of the Global South, and in diasporic trickster identifications overcoming the previous Ariel-Caliban dichotomy in ironic forms of activism. It is necessary to advance an open critical basis, taking into account the existing parallels between various echoing concepts and epistemic grounds of postcolonial and decolonial discourses, and find a trans-disciplinary language for expressing oppositional being, thinking, and agency across transcultural and trans-epistemic pluriversal spaces.

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