Concerning our work in Eurocentric academia, to rethink trans* politics and activism in relation to decoloniality, I will focus with this text on body-politics, knowledge production and trans* imaginary in the context of crisis. This asks also for an analysis of the post-Cold War reconfiguration and multiplication of European borders, as my intention here is to shift the geography of reason, point to counter-genealogies of thought and to decolonial practices of resistance. As a not quite white\(^1\), not quite trans*\(^2\) former Eastern European (from former Yugoslavia, Slovenia), I understand my position through a constant state of transition, dwelling in the border, in a liminal space, which necessarily means taking an un-disciplinary approach in the search for decolonial lines of flight, modulations, interferences and ruptures, that continuously morph the grid, its point system, coordinates, pre-established channels and threads, moving in new directions. Seeking to disrupt totalization and relativism, two sides of the same coin of “objectivity”, I want to understand the embodiment, partial perspective and location through entangled connections as the possibility for dissident research, ways of envisioning transformation and radical social change. This means to engage with decolonial critique in relation to the processes of colonial capitalist divisions and differentiation, when speaking about the coloniality of gender, as well as the global imposition of western Eurocentric feminist, queer and transgender knowledge.

Let me begin with one critical aspect of Transgender studies and trans* politics, - characterized from the 90s on by the debate and contestation over methods, theory, identity, and the very boundaries of the category itself and its meaning in different contexts-, tracing the Western genealogy of “transgender” as a category (V.Prince, H.Boswell, L.Feinberg, S. Stone). Here we should recall the question posed by David Valentine - “How and to what effect is this concept deployed; and what does it do?”\(^3\) This might help us to reconsider the consequences of its rapid expansion in a wide range of contexts, to reflect on the ways in which it can function as a mechanism for surveillance and control, as a “neutrally” descriptive technical term, or on its potentials for resistance or liberation. To move into the sphere of the political where race, class, sexuality, ability, spirituality, geographical location, etc. figure into the naming of people as transgender or trans*, the strong interest lies in studying how this category is productive of the very experience they seem to describe, regulating and organizing

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1. To quote here Marina Gržinić: “In relation to “former” Western Europe, its hegemony (supremacy) and construction of deficient “other”, someone coming from former Eastern Europe is always part of process of
2. The term “trans*” with an asterisk is being used recently as an umbrella concept to include many different gender expressions and identities, such as trans, transsexual, transgender, gender queer, etc. The asterisk emphasizes the heterogeneity of bodies, identities and experiences, which goes beyond the imposed gender binary social norms. Trans* is a concept introduced by its protagonists out of rejection of the terms coming from the pathologizing medical discourse. Asterisk as well points out that while our struggle is common we recognize that there is not just one interpretation of what does it mean to be trans, transsexual or transgender. Both terms, queer and trans* has to be re-thought from decolonial positionality.
bodies in a particular bio-necropolitical recognition framework, as well as decolonial potentialities for resistance.

From the 90s on, in the emerging field of Transgender studies, trans* scholars contribute from diverse theoretical backgrounds with a heterogeneous set of methodological positions, self-reflexive insights and creative interpretations of the meaning of embodiment. Despite the significant enthusiasm that fuelled the making of Transgender studies, as Howard Chiang writes in the introduction of his book “Transgender China”, they have been confined mainly to North American and European (mainly Anglo-American) academic circles, oriented towards exploring and challenging categorizations, gender binary system, the use of transgender people as objects within medicine, psychiatry, law, as well as the conflictive relations with feminism (Sandy Stone, A Posttransexual Manifesto). Western genealogy of Transgender studies is very well summarized by Chiang on a few pages, pointing out the most important books and volumes that have turned Transgender studies into an area of scholarly research, though in many ways also a contested one.4

Without negating the importance of these experiences along with their theoretical and political contributions, my aim is rather to question their application as “universal” set of references with the development of Transgender studies, without problematizing the ways in which they conceal or lack intersectional critical perspectives and practices. Furthermore, in their introduction to Transgender Studies Reader, the volume they edited in 2006, Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle stress: “We were struck by the overwhelming (and generally unmarked) whiteness of practitioners in the academic field of Transgender Studies. This is due, no doubt, to the many forms of discrimination that keep many people of color from working in the relatively privileged environment of academe, but also to the uneven distribution and reception of the term “transgender” across different racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic communities.”5

These concerns demand that we examine the transnational circulation of Transgender as a corpus, as Mauro Cabral writes, a certain number of texts and theories, names and definitions, statistics, analysis, images and interpretations.6 A circulation that also labours in the politics of archive and preserving/erasing of knowledge, which opens


many challenges, as Stryker argues, of how to reread the immense body of clinical, juridical and ethnographic work that documents European perspectives on cultures subjected around the world through exploration, trade, conquest, and colonization. According to Cabral, the production of trans* knowledge and imaginary is heavily determined by geopolitics in a violent colonial capitalist landscape, and many people still circulate across the transnational routes of the industrial academic complex, reified as the objects of colonial knowledge. Thus, following Tlostanova, “we have to question the Western monopoly of knowledge, the very methodology of applying a ready-made travelling theories created in the West, even if by the ex colonial others and those who chose to wear this mask, to the rest of the world with its multiplicity of local histories and trajectories of relations.”

Thinking about the processes of the construction of genealogies, the ways in which the “origin” is being instituted, the production of knowledge, our vocabulary (language) and imaginary, the analytical frames we draw in order to understand what does “transgender” do, and how can we disrupt the colonial capitalist processes of differentiation, hierarchization, exclusion and death, is crucial for our debate around articulation, organization and embodiment of trans* politics.

Here I would like to stress four points:

transgender as a noun

1. Neoliberalism: We should not forget that in the very moment in which “transgender” is being institutionalized, there is a rise and expansion of neoliberalism on global scale after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 - reconfiguration and multiplication of borders. In the Western context, as Valentine claims, this means a broader change in understanding the body and embodied identities, which are being shaped “by shifts in neoliberal capitalist modes of production and consumption where “difference” can be exploited as a market niche as much as enabling new forms of subjectivity.” In her book “On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life”, Sara Ahmed argues, that feminists of color have already explored the relationship between diversity and power, by showing how diversity is incorporated by institutions, and becomes a way of managing or containing conflict or dissent. Hence, we should be deeply concerned by the circulation of “transgender” as a new commodity in both, theory and practice, as well as question the political economy of knowledge production that frame Euro-America as the centre of discourse about gender and sexual diversity, while capitalizing on racial and cultural difference. These transformations also point to the articulation of a set of new micro prosthesis devices for the control of subjectivity, as Paul B. Preciado says, with molecular biological techniques and media networks. As he argues we are facing a new kind of capitalism that is hot, psychotropic and punk, but we

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8 See “Decolonizing the Transgender Imaginary, Transgender Studies Quarterly,”
should add, in the “zones of being”, while cold, bureaucratic, necrotoxic and heavy metal in the “zones of non-being”.

2. Trans liberalism: While in the public discourse, as Nat Raha writes, the visibility of trans* issues is increasing with positive media representations and trans celebrities, intertwined with demands for depathologization and transgender legal rights (such as legal gender recognition, employment rights, rights for trans-related healthcare, marriage rights, etc.), the differentiation of livable trans and gender non-conforming lives along the line of race/ethnicity, class, gender, dis/ability, and migration status remains firmly and increasingly in place. Thus, we have to pay attention to the ways in which transgender liberal politics or “trans liberalism” is inscribed within or fits into neoliberal globalization, and to its complicity with global colonial capitalist restructuring, continuous production of new methods of (border) control, shifting from one group to another in legitimizing liberal multiculturalism/processes of racialization and labour exploitation.

*transgender as an adjective*

In this relation, we should read again Leslie Feinberg’s text, “Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time has Come”, published in 1992, which, as Valentine points out, explicitly politicized transgender identification beyond individual radical acts and called for a political alliance between the oppressed by gender norms and a social movement organized around its terms. In Feinberg’s usage, “transgender” came to mean an adjective rather than a noun, a term for an imagined community of transsexuals, drag queens, butches, crossdressers, masculine women, effeminate men, sissies, tomboys, or anybody who felt interpellated by this call for mobilization and banding together in a struggle for social, political and economic justice. While Feinberg’s call was not a liberal one (he said: “Remember me as a revolutionary communist!”), and the word “transgender” took on its meaning at that moment; what has happened? Why it has gradually moved toward a socially reformist trans rights agenda, reproducing inclusion/exclusion by dividing trans and gender non-conforming populations along material hierarchies of race, class, dis/ability, spirituality and migration status?

*trans* as a verb - decoloniality as a verb, meaning doing, taking action

3. Transfeminism: Regarding Feinberg’s and Stone’s work, but also previously in relation to Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson’s activism from the 70s on, we have to emphasize further, that a progressively institutionalized and collective usage of the term “transgender” has important and conflictive relations with the history of feminist, gay and lesbian movement, which in the 90s brought about the term “transfeminism”, introduced by Diana Couvant and Emy Koyama, first at Yale University and after in Koyama’s “Transfeminist Manifesto”. They spoke about transfeminism as a movement

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for and by trans women who understand their liberation entangled with women’s liberation and beyond. These references and their introduction into the Russian context are being discussed at the present moment by trans activist Yana Sitnikova in her texts, “Transgender activism in Russia”, and “The Emergence of Transfeminism in Russia”.  

In the Spanish context the term transfeminism first appeared in the text “Women or trans? The insertion of transsexuals into feminist movement”, written by Kim Pérez F.-Figares, the president of the Gender Identity Association of Andalusia. From 2006 activist group Guerrilla Travolaka and other autonomous trans* and feminists pushed for a pro-depathologization movement as a political project based on transmarikablolo feminist radical critique and struggles. The activists challenged the problems in feminism in relation to trans issues, and trans movement in relation to feminism, in order to make trans* demands for depathologization a common issue. Understanding sex and gender in the sense of technological interventions (technologies of gender), Preciado introduced the term “technogender”, stating that “man” and “woman” exist as a social norm that is maintained by means of control: pharmacological and audio-visual techniques that constantly distort the reality that surrounds us. As he claims, “sex”, “heterosexuality” and “race” are three violent somatic fictions, produced by the western colonial capitalist system and continue to persist nowadays. During the State Feminist Conference in Granada in 2009, “Manifesto for a Transfeminist Insurrection” was written collectively to expose the problems of binary thinking and reduction of feminist struggle to abortion rights, sexism, violence, precarity and access to labour market. In order to broaden the scope of issues, as Miriam Solá writes, - pornography, sex work, depathologization of transsexuality, aids, critique of institutional feminism, mercantilization and depoliticization of LGBT movement, immigration laws and regulations, transmigrations, etc. took place in further debates. Thus, transfeminism that arises after the queer critique and activism, which is exposed to the accelerated process of mercantilisation and recodification by dominant discourses and thus losing its political potential, became the position of those who experiment with multiplicity by deconstructing the political fiction of the binary categories man/woman, while stressing the fact that our common basis of oppression remains capitalism and heteropatriarchy.

In relation to coloniality, the potentials of “sudaca/euraca/norteca transfeminism”, to use Sayak Valencia’s expression, are being discussed in Latin American context pointing to another genealogy, where, as Valencia emphasize, four lines cross: “US women of color third world feminism (by Black, Chicanas, Native American and Asian American feminists); sexual dissidence and its geopolitical displacement to South: from Queer to Cuir; movement for depathologization of trans identities (Stop Trans Pathologization) and pro-puta movement for de-stigmatization and legalization of sex work; minoritized becomings, migrations and economic precarity.”

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17 See Beatriz Preciado, Testo Yonqui, (Madrid: Espasa, 2008).


We can say that transfeminism, but also trans* activism, is since years now challenged by decolonial critique (see Maria Lugones, Yuderky Espinosa, Fatima El-Tayeb, Sara Ahmed, Marissa Lóbo, Madina Tlostanova, Marina Gržinić, Daniel B.Chavez, Piro Rexhepi…). The focus of analysis is on the coloniality of gender and interventions through the historic relations with Black, indigenous, women of color feminisms as well as queer of color critique. The point is to continuously expose the reproduction of Eurocentrism and racism by marginalizing the concerns around racialization processes, which are actually central to the colonial capitalist gender system and its logics of oppression. Rethinking the potentials in relation to becoming a migrant and relational movements, in which many different practices, voices and discourses, embodiments and mobilities are inscribed, brings us to decolonial turn and positionality.

4. Decolonial (erotic) turn

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Aníbal Quijano, one of the founding members of the research group Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality, formed in the 90s in Latin American context and beyond, introduced a new concept named coloniality being the indispensable underside of modernity from 16th century on. Quijano has defined it as a matrix of power, which operates through four interrelated domains: the control of economy, the control of authority, the control of gender and sexuality, and the control of subjectivity and knowledge. If the critique of capitalism from the Eurocentric point of view privileges the economic relations over others, without negating the incessant accumulation of capital on global scale, Quijano conceptualized the intersectionality of multiple, heterogeneous, global hierarchies and forms of domination and exploitation: racial, sexual, political, economic, spiritual and linguistic. Emphasizing its structural, constitutive and not derivative relations, by claiming intersectionality, these are analytical methods introduced previously by the Black feminists (Combahee River Collective, Kimberly Crenshaw, Audre Lorde, Patricia Hill Collins among others) and developed further by and with feminists of color (Chela Sandoval, Chandra Mohanty, Gloria Anzaldúa, Cherie Moraga…) to point to their historical, theoretical and practical exclusions. According to Tlostanova, through such analysis we can understand how the West determines one single norm of humanity, and in relation to it legitimate a single knowledge of economic and social system, spatial and temporal models, values and cultural norms. The coloniality, which operates as an active process, reconfirms differences between societies, subjects and knowledge(s), while destroying lives to save modernity and capitalism.

If postsocialism in such framework of analysis is not at all postcolonial, this means that we have to modify the basis of our analysis and its paradigms, conceptualizing the entanglement of modernity, colonialism and capitalism in order to understand the East in condition of coloniality in relation to the West. As Neda Atanasoski argues, “what is crucial here is that if postsocialism is relegated to periodizing a particular moment of regional transition that at once affirms the death of socialism and consigns it to an ideological formation inferior to Western modernity and universality, it particularizes


22. See Madina Tlostanova, “Post-Soviet Imaginary and Global Coloniality,”
what is actually a global condition in which the West situates the universal claims of human rights, freedom, democracy, that underwrite its global violence. This implies as well taking into account the imitation of Western modernity by the East, with racism in its core.

It is within these processes, where the colonial history of European colorblindness is inscribed, though the concept “race” has its geographic and intellectual origin in Europe. While racism is silenced or presented as a marginal problem we have to emphasize that racialization is the main logic of global capitalism/coloniality, which regulates and differentiates the social, political and economic space. This is today a process of colonial capitalist differentiation, as Gržinić argues, between the first and second-class citizens (racialized citizens, LGTBIQ+, sex workers, disabled…); non-citizens (refugees) and migrants, who are violently discriminated on global scale. These brutal processes of selection of migrants, in terms of racial, class, gender, sexual, religious categories, construct us as differentiated subhuman(s) through different processes of dehumanization.

Pointing to the geo- and body-political aspects of the organization of European space, Kwame Nimako and Marina Gržinić expose the following thesis in their conversation, during the workshop “Education, Development, Freedom” at Duke University (Durham, USA), organized by the Centre for Global Studies in February 2010, and filmed for the video Naked Freedom.

Kwame Nimako:
“We are here (in EU) because you were there (in Africa)!”

Marina Gržinić:
“We are here (in EU) because you want to go there (in Eastern Europe)!”

This is developed further around two important questions to take into consideration. As Nimako emphasizes, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, former Eastern Europe was subjected to the process of political reorganization, integration, and subordination to the Western model and servitude; this consisted in re-implementing directives and legislation already active in the EU. Such relation we can name, following Gržinić, the relation of repetition. It is a repetition of Western Europe’s political and economic model, of its structures of government and governmentality, its modes of life and modes of death, the institutional and migration control, its system of knowledge (theory) and aesthetic regimes (art), activism, etc.

This specific process of coloniality through repetition is as well functioning through a suppression of “local” histories, knowledge and practices of resistance. Likewise, while Western Europe is also naming itself

26 See video “Naked Freedom” by Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid (2010), http://grzinic-smid.si/?p=413
“former,” it seems that it does not have to be conscious nor responsible of its historic and contemporary colonial and fascist regimes of power. Moreover, by claiming the division West/East “obsolete” after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the division Occident/Orient is escalating. As Gayatri Spivak explains, “terror in this guise is not a monopoly of some Muslim fundamentalists. It is the preserve of whatever entity - including our democracies - convinced that its enemy is by definition the enemy of “humanity,” “civilization,” even “God” himself - a theological enemy.”

The second issue Nimako points out is the process of zonification. We can say that the European politics of apartheid transformed former Eastern Europe into a border-zone in the way that the territory of former socialist countries functions as a buffer zone to control and block migrations from Africa and Asia, while migrants from former Eastern countries are at the same time subjected to control, discrimination (employment), and processes of deportation from the “former” Western Europe.

The countries of the former Eastern Europe, which became subsidiary States, perepheralized in its servile relation to the EU politics, show on the one hand, contempt towards “those below them” in processes of constant hierarchization, and on the other, intensified servitude towards European colonial/imperial centers. Ethno-nationalism and differentiation with labour division on a global scale are today presented as “liberation” from what was suppressed during decades of communism/socialism. To ethno-national constructions, European abstract universalism as a form of “new cosmopolitanism” is being counter-posed. Correspondingly, what we are witnessing in the current context of old-new forms of European migration politics and re-launching of Western hegemony (supremacy) is as well, referring to Jin Haritaworn, how “the sign of diversity moves from the racialized body, (who becomes the ‘migrant homophobe’) to the sexualized

one (who becomes the “injured homosexual” in need of protection from the ‘migrant homophobe’).” While the “former” Western Europe, its politics of racialization and discrimination now integrate within its borders those “Other(s)” who were discriminated in the past (women, LGTBIQ+…), and who in many contexts continue living without the full recognition of their rights, as Gržinić argues, it produces at the same time its non-white population, migrants, refugees, LGTBIQ+ of color, as “Other(s).”

Taking into the analysis the body-political aspects of migratory control we see that coloniality, as Tlostanova states, has as its central element the idea of classifying humankind and the ontological marginalization of non-western and not quite western people. In all cases modernity justifies violence and the negation of the human rights of those who are labelled as not quite human (i.e. not quite European, not quite Soviet, not quite Christian, not quite White, not quite Women, not quite Heterosexual, not quite Queer, not quite Trans*…). A decolonial turn with its on going attempt to push for a conceptual denaturalization, therefore, aims at undermining the fundamental logics of modernity and its disciplines, in need for assertion of rights (also epistemic) of the wretched.

To challenge the colonial formulation of gender classification, Maria Lugones’ work is crucial here. On the one hand, because she developed a critique of Quijano’s understanding of sex as biological, of his failure to see that within the concept of gender the idea of sexual or biological dimorphism (man-woman dichotomy), heteronormativity and the patriarchal distribution of power are inscribed. On the other hand, her analysis of gender within coloniality poses important challenges for transfeminism by revealing that Eurocentrism and racism are embedded in the universal notions of the gender binary system. Along these lines she exposes how gender and sexual diversity are filtered through a colonizing binary gaze and presented as naturalized ideas of “sex” and “gender,” both operating as Eurocentric categories. Lugones’ main claim is that the sexual difference, which is itself a colonial invention (fiction), is not socialized as such. The enslaved and racialized workers, as she states, were bestialized. The concept of gender does not pick them up as men and women in a Western sense, negating their humanity and gender, while erasing the facts that in many societies and locales before the Western colonization such categorization did not exist, or categories of seniority, professional and clan principles, etc. were more important than biologized gender. Instead, as she writes, we must understand its meaning within the particular cosmology/metaphysics. These are important statements because the traces of those histories of removal and dispossession remain, as do their entanglements

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31 See Madina Tlostanova, “Post-Soviet Imaginary,”
34 See María Lugones, “Colonialidad y género: hacia un feminismo descolonial” [Coloniality and Gender: Toward a Decolonial Feminism] in Género y descolonialidad.
in global sexual and gender politics today. As Yuderkys Espinosa, Diana Gómez and Karina Ochoa argue, through such analysis, the reach of her postulates is entangled with today’s reempowered critique and work already previously developed by counter-hegemonic, antiracist feminisms, which at the same time have an important influence on the development of decolonial option.\textsuperscript{35}

If we situate the “postcolonial” and postsocialist dialogues within this context, we have to take into account a specific features of the coloniality of gender, as Tlostanova writes, due to the erasure of socialist gender trajectories and the pre-socialist “local” genealogies of women and feminist struggles, as well as the multiplicity of gender expressions and dissident sexual experiences. This is related with the intensified imposition after 1989 of Western feminism and queer theory as a new kind of mind-colonization, to use Tlostanova’s words, supported by grants and accompanied by particular ideological demands, but also to difficulties for a proper production of transfeminist knowledge and articulation of struggles from decolonial positionality, which would take into account a specific pre, post and socialist experiences. Relatively scarce or entirely missing from the analysis is a sustained critical engagement with gender dissident practices, embodiment, history, and culture in the former East, with the ability to capture the systems of knowledge and experiences that exceed the categorizations of gender, sexuality and even transgender. While such discourse is yet poorly or not at all conceptualized, our condition should be regarded, as Tlostanova argues, in its complexity and dynamics with today’s dispersion of former socialist subjects in different directions.\textsuperscript{36} Many of us, we are migrants, crossing multiple body- and geo-political borders while being displaced from our countries due to a number of factors – colonial/imperial wars, homotransphobia, poverty, etc. Thus, it is necessary also to interrupt the existing conceptual frameworks from trans* migration experiences, becoming and movements, while interrogating the complicity of our feminist and LGTBIQ+ struggles in the very oppressions they claim to oppose. This means asking at the same time how we might better engage materially with dismantling white supremacy, colonization and capitalism in all their forms. In reference to Chiang, this also implies insisting on a radical approach to developing analysis by leaving behind western-derived meanings of sex-gender altogether, or at least problematizing them.\textsuperscript{37}

By creating new codes in the act of re-existance, decolonial subjects question and intervene continuously into modern/colonial logics of naming and categorization, resisting, creatively appropriating, translating, transforming, and critically redeploying the concepts by making a cut in the knowledge production flow and fight against the colonial violences.

To the extent to which the body - a culturally intelligible construct, and the modern/colonial techniques in and through which bodies are positioned and transformed are in fact inextricably related, we have to discuss as well its relations with the visual, - with the production of images and trans* imaginary. Entangled in the colonial/capitalist system in order to stimulate desire and reconfigure the everyday, physical, political and sensible conditions of embodiment, they shape subjectivities for the hypermachine of

\textsuperscript{35} See “Tejiendo de Otro Modo: Feminismo, epistemología y apuestas descoloniales en Abya Yala,”
\textsuperscript{36} See Madina Tlostanova, “Post-Soviet Imaginary,”
capitalist production. Achille Mbembe defines this phenomenon “image capitalism”\(^{38}\), we can call it as well, refereing to Joaquin Barriendos, “the coloniality of seeing”\(^{39}\). In this sense, the production of trans*imaginary in opposition to the mainstream (also transgender) visual codes, has to challenge the colonial binary gender system, conceptualizing political interventions from multiple local interrelated positionalities, with the aim to disrupt the logics of colonial visual orders, -to make visible beyond what we already see. Directing the critical attention towards the questions of embodiment, positionality and the visual, means taking into the analysis much more complex system of colonial power relations that also point to the need of breaking down the body politics in a molar sense (a whole, integrated body with one identity), in the name of multiplicity, affective and sensibility, its resistant and transformative political potentials.

With reference to the “Transvestite Museum of Peru” (2003-2013)\(^{40}\), a project developed by philosopher and drag activist Giuseppe Campuzano on the one hand, and “East Art Map” (1999-2005)\(^{41}\), a project and book edited by the group IRWIN to (re)construct the history of contemporary art in Eastern Europe, on the other hand, I want to think about the potentialsities for re-reading postsocialist space by making gender and sexual dissident antiracist practices the central political question for any construction of history and articulations of our struggles against the logics of coloniality. To elaborate a politically dis/continuous narrative allows us to imagine new forms of community and commons, as well as to undo the foundational myths and ideological fantasies that lay hidden under the colonial/capitalist, socialist and postsocialist nation - state binary gender system. Such a map would mind the gap through its attempt at a decolonial erotic counter-reading and intersectional thinking of history, bringing together objects, images, texts, documents, press clippings, artistic and activist practices related with gender/sexual dissidence, feminist, anti-colonial and antifascist struggles, in order to render visible its own contingency and the social processes that led to its constructions. It is not about uncovering the lost truth from the past, but instead it becomes a creative process of inventing the new truth, which is coming from the past. Learning to read the material as it is, in its fragmented and shattered form, not to search for the ways back to some original unity, not by restoring their original meaning, but by elaborating a performative archive in order to expose the forms in which colonial/imperial capitalist discourses around body, race, ethnicity, class, ability, gender and sexuality were initially imposed in former Eastern european space, how they were modifying and updating through time, to our present state of fragmentation.

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Above-said makes me focus our attention to the theoretical, artistic and activist work done during the last three decades in the context of former Yugoslavia, by Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid, first as members of the group Borders of Control N.4. The artists produced one of the first videos in former East during socialism, entitled “Icons of Glamour, Echoes of Death” (1982) and “The Threat of the Future” (1983) in which they present and dramatize conceptually and politically the institution of masculinity and lesbian relations through drag practice as well as lesbian feminist positionality. Staging a performance in front of the camera they speak about sexual and gender politics, female pleasure, sadomasochism and pornography. Gržinić further developed a theoretical research on dissident feminist practices, artistic performances and spaces in her texts, “Former Yugoslavia, Queer and Class Struggle”, “Europe: Gender, Class, Race” and “Dissident feminisms, anti-racist politics and artistic interventionist practices”. With her work she continuously questions the processes of racialization, class divisions and labour conditions, as well as the construction of feminist genealogy, by articulating a different history of feminism seen from the former Eastern Europe.
In their video “Relations: 25 Years of the Lesbian Group ŠKUC-LL (2012)”, Gržinić and Šmid elaborate a testimony of counter-power of lesbian movement and its struggles for visibility and emancipation. From the dissolution of socialism at the end of the 80s, through war and transition in the 90s, up to present time of global capitalism, the video brings together critical discourses, artistic potentialities and political interventions in relation to politics, economy, law, culture, arts, and institutions. Since the 80s on, ŠKUC-LL and its founding members Nataša Sukič, Susana Tratnik, Tatjana Greif, Nataša Velikonja produced the most important analysis and political interventions in the form of texts, books, performances, events, actions and manifestations, redefining the very point of struggle(s) against discrimination in Slovenia, as well as locating the memory for our future. The need for a persistent redefinition of the subject of feminist movement in Slovenia expressed itself first as a political lesbian stance. As stated by Gržinić in the radio program “Lezbnomaniaya” (September 2011) which was hosted by Nataša Sukič and recently passed over to Urška Sterle on Radio Študent Ljubljana: “Before being feminist, we were lesbians.” Lesbians that took the position through a rereading of history, language and performativity, developed a sharp critique of Western activism, as well as established alliances across (post)Yugoslav space, not only among lesbian activists but also with other minoritarianized groups. Amongst this critical audiovisual production that goes back to the Yugoslav Black Wave, it is necessary to mention and develop further the analysis of Želimir Žilnik’s film “Marble Ass” (1995), which is the only fiction film depicting trans* practice, showing the subversive power of the transvestite and sex work to challenge nationalism at its core, by disrupting the very idea of natural, essential and identity.

As Tatjana Greif points out, the Western style LGTBIQ+ activism is falling into a mainstream conservative flow, as it tries at all costs to be integrated, included or

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assimilated. Alongside this we have to read a recently developed critique, put forward by various authors from former Yugoslavia in the book “LGBT activism and Europeanisation in Post-Yugoslav space”, edited by Bojan Bilčić, in which they interrogate a linkage between “Europeanisation” and “gay emancipation,” showing how certain forms of gay activist engagement are elevated to a measure of democracy, progress and modernity while relegating homo-transphobic attacks to the status of non-European “Other(s)”, who are inevitably positioned as appertaining to the patriarchal past that should be left behind. As Piro Rexhepi writes in his text “From Orientalism to Homonationalism: Queer Politics, Islamophobia and Europeanisation in Kosovo,” this separation serves the purpose of creating and strengthening a local liberal European-oriented elite, which then acts as local interlocutors that, in advocating Europeanisation as the solution to violence directed towards queer communities, become vehicles of EU expansionism. In this sense, as Rexhepi argues, inviting-in, disidentifications, and imperceptibility, may be just some of the living strategies “queers” are as well using “to confront the normative liberal politics of coming-out and visibility to avoid being absorbed into neoliberal governmental technologies.”

Within this material among many other we should search for in the context of ex-Yugoslavia and the former East - it is crucial for us to engage in “reading sideways”, to use Somerville’s and Puar’s expression. As they writes, this means linking together seemingly unrelated and often disjunctively situated moments and their effects in ways that attend to the interconnected histories of racial, gender, sexual and other bio-necropolitical formations and regulations. By shifting the geography of reason and questioning Western universalizing progressive narrative, we see that, as Espinosa Miñoso argues, “The future already was”. It is the European colonial capitalist expansion, which started with the conquest of America in 15th century, and by progressively introducing the first regulations and punishment laws, prohibition of homosexuality and multiplicity of gender expressions deployed gender and sexuality as technologies to categorize colonized subjects and organize their subsequent removal, re-education or genocides. Therefore, based on continuous re-elaboration of counter-genealogies of dissident embodiments by minoritized positions, excluded from white, western feminist and LGTBIQ+ movement, decoloniality as a political intervention - having in mind its performative potential, meaning doing or taking action-, is thus a radical attempt to de-universalize, de-naturalize, and dismantle capitalist/colonial material and affective hierarchies, political, institutional and border structures operating globally today. As the artistic-activist group Diásporas Críticas claim, we need to grasp it as a tactics “that traverse materiality and writing, memory and archive, affect and body.”

47 Cisneros Anyely, Rebecca Close (Diasporas Críticas), “Decolonize”, glossary of common knowledge,
relation to Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, socialism, and the (post)socialist erasure of anti-colonial, anti-fascist and feminist solidarities, we can begin to unleash the binds that produce the modern/colonial capitalist terms of recognition, and continue to create our resistance from different envisioning that gender and sexually disobedient subjects had and have to subvert the regulation of bodies, labour and space.

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