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The Politics of Decolonial Investigations. By WALTER D. MIGNOLO. Duke University Press. 2021. xxvii + 707 pp. \$38.95. ISBN: 978-1-4780-0149-2

In November 2021, international delegates at the Cop26 conference in Glasgow debated and pledged commitments of varying ambition to end harmful emissions and realise net-zero goals. Yet despite the diverse approaches covered, few explicitly considered the coloniality of the climate crisis - including the high number of indigenous climate activists around the world who are murdered.

For Walter Mignolo, prolific Argentine thinker and author of *The Politics of Decolonial Investigations*, any pledge oriented towards 'living rights' must extend beyond human ones to the rights of our Earth. In short, "no living organism at this point in time is immune to coloniality". His new book addresses this reality with two broad, intersecting aims, to "heal colonial wounds and shrink the wide spectrum of Western overconfidence to its own size". Mignolo's extensive work into revealing the 'dark side' of modernity, on coloniality and the geopolitics of knowledge, are reflected on and extended in this substantial volume. Each chapter approaches the worldmaking contours of coloniality of power, covering in rich detail the origins and historical sustenance of the rhetoric of modernity, and its consequences (the Westernization of the planet) as well as the possible praxes of decolonial epistemic and aesthetic reconstitution, through which the Western totality of knowledge may be challenged and dismantled. Between 1500-2000, Mignolo explains, Europeans did not just dominate economically, and by military force, but also enforced and controlled a university of knowing and sensing (since aesthesis, he writes - sensing and emotioning - is indivisible from knowing and believing). As such, the ultimate, most pressing decolonial undertaking is to 'delink' from the universality of Western Civilisation's gnoseological and aesthetic domination, and to reconstitute those non-European language knowledges the latter has converted into "destitute exteriorities" still subject to its domination. In this task, Mignolo extends his own previously published work and that of thinkers such as Anibal Quijano, whose contributions are fundamental.

The volume is a collection of thoroughly reworked articles, together representing a fresh contribution. There is certainly a convincing rationale and value to bringing these papers together, particularly in tandem with the newly written and extensive (at 80 pages) introduction, which gives the reader an accessible framework for the sections that follow. One of the striking characteristics of the volume is the razor-sharp clarity of its purpose and its argumentation, something especially welcome to readers navigating various and overlapping approaches to decolonisation, de-westernisation and decoloniality; Mignolo's writing is frequently supplemented with explanatory brackets. *The Politics of Decolonial Investigations* is not a book that assumes detailed previous knowledge on the part of its reader.

Yet a somewhat thorny question remains: if "delinking" from the colonial matrix of power (the instrumentalisation of the coloniality of power) means reevaluating the *terms* of the conversation, beyond its contents, then is an academic book a suitable format in which to unpack decolonial ideas and claims? The book is published by Duke University Press, and as Mignolo acknowledges, Duke as other elite UK and US universities with strong international recruitment and global campuses, commodifies and exports knowledge to the Middle East and East Asia. The hidden rules of publication entrench existing academic hierarchies: access to the dissemination of ideas via a credible book (itself a convention of western European epistemological values) is not a level playing field. Mignolo acknowledges such objections in the preface, but only as "opinions", locating them outside the epistemological concerns of the book rather than embedded in its very pages. This felt like an unsatisfying omission, briefly frustrating the scrutiny and rigor of the volume as a

whole. However, *The Politics of Decolonial Investigations* remains a hugely provocative, far-reaching, comprehensive and accessible book for scholars engaged across disciplines, geopolitical foci and languages. It proposes a particularly valuable provocation for scholars of European languages, especially challenging those of us whom the jumping off point for our analysis is so deeply situated in Modern Languages' Eurocentric knowing and its attendant tactics of domination as to be taken for granted. It challenges and rewards the reader through its significant contributions to theory and the routes it offers to decolonial futures.