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Shiva Mainaly (0009-0003-0057-7037)

North Dakota State University (NDSU), United States

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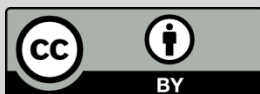
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Are you curious how homegrown decolonial strategies are enacted to question the Eurocentric and North American paradigm of discursive constructions of knowledge? If so, there is no more valuable text than *Decolonial Conversations in Posthuman and New Material Rhetorics*—a compilation of eight articles dealing with a triangular relation among decoloniality, posthumanism, and new materialism. This volume, assembled by Jennifer Clary-Lemon and David M. Grant (2022), rings with a symphony of decolonial voices. In addition to eight chapters, this volume includes a foreword with the title “To Listen You Must Silence Yourself” by Joyce Rain Anderson and an introduction with the title “Working with Incommensurable Things” by the editors.

The foreword resonates with profound implications—educational and social justice-oriented repercussions of colonial reckoning—for decolonization across academia and activist domains. The reviewer surmises that all these implications exist to address the post-BLM landscape pushing for colonial reckoning. In Anderson’s words, “Decoloniality is the struggle...it is time to reframe our practices and de-link from the colonial-imbedded mindset that is rooted in our disciplines...consider social locations to examine the settler logics that are entrenched in our discipline...” (p. ix-xi). These principles, rooted in respect, relationality, responsibility, and reciprocity, encapsulate the essence of this volume. The Editors’ introduction navigates the delicate relationship between decolonial praxis and new materialism, cautioning against wholesale adoption while acknowledging the potential for leveraging post-humanist philosophies for indigenous decolonial strategies. Their deliberations illuminate historical antecedents in Nietzsche and Spinoza (Sorgner, 2009) while emphasizing the invaluable contributions of indigenous decolonial gestures. At the heart of the

introductory part lies the question, “Why would decolonial scholarship have any need for new materialism?” (p. 1). Enumerating some incompatibilities—“The ideas expressed in posthumanism do not constitute a new paradigm, and there is nothing especially new about the vibrant new materialism presently gaining traction in the philosophical academy” (Clary-Lemon & Grant, 2022, p. 6)—ensuing from the decolonial move’s cooptation of new materialism, the introductory part digs deeper into new materialism’s tacit and tenuous equation with the Anglo-American logic of discourse propagation. Acknowledging this bitter truth, the editors finally come up with a significant insight into a potent chance of leveraging the spirit of posthumanism toward enacting a host of decolonial strategies rooted in indigenous cultures. Ultimately, the editors ended with sustained clarity and deliberation by admitting that new materialism and posthumanism “do not constitute a new paradigm” (p. 6) because new materialism is a theoretical concept developed by Western human minds prone to practice alterity, exclusion, othering, and essentialism. To this end, much caution and criticality should be practiced when relying on a post-humanistic worldview and new materialistic conception.

Clary-Lemon and Grant foreground a postulation that decolonial gestures trace back to some of the anti-enlightenment philosophies of Nietzsche and Spinoza, the reason being that all anti-enlightenment philosophers mounted a scathing attack on rationality that naturally thrives on a host of exclusionary measures. Furthermore, Clary-Lemon and Grant caution practitioners of decoloniality and new materialist rhetoric against relying uncritically on the nexus between anti-enlightenment philosophy and the thriving decolonial momentum we as a field must keep afloat. Local strategies of decolonization—which stem from the pure and pristine, rough and rugged native soil—are held in high esteem by both

editors. The editors express great gratitude to other contributors to this volume. Asserting that “decolonization...is not a metaphor, but a continual work of recognition” (p. 3), the editors assert a ground-breaking epistemic conviction that “knowledge must be seen as constellated” (p. 11). In short, the introduction brings the sanctity and gravity of decolonization in the context of the politics of recognition.

The first chapter, “The Politics of Recognition in Building Pluriversal Possibilities” by Robert Lestón, reframes decoloniality as a struggle. To Lestón, “Decoloniality is not an academic area of research. Decoloniality is not an academic trend. Decoloniality is not a movement. Decoloniality is not a discipline...Decoloniality is not a study. Decoloniality is the struggle” (p. 22). What sets this chapter apart is his anaphoric style of saying what something is not before saying what it is—a stylistic approach that exemplifies some difficulties in presenting decoloniality. To reflect on this methodically, the author makes use of the insight of Frantz Fanon into counter-colonialism and urges his readers to “look for the cracks in the colonial patriarchy of higher ed, to identify them, and to begin filling them in with pluriversal knowledge” (p. 23). What catches his readers off guard is his incorporation of the thrust of the ‘buen vivir’ movement in Ecuador and the ideological implications of the Zapatistas uprising in Mexico (p. 26). Simply put, the ‘buen vivir’ and Zapatista movements mark the crescendo of decolonization grounded on indigenous epistemologies, native cultural ethos, and pristineness of tribal land. The fact that the ‘buen vivir’ movement granted agency to natural elements exemplifies a decolonial jolt to the deep-seated duality-driven paradigm of Eurocentric and North American knowledge-making. In this spirit, the idea of living well—which is central to the ‘buen vivir’ movement—is pushed to emerge only if home-grown decoloniality is understood not as “a new paradigm or mode of critical thought,

but as a way, option, standpoint, analytic, project, practice, and praxis” (p. 35). The first chapter demonstrates Lestón’s capacity to shine a light on the praxis of decoloniality vis-à-vis unidentified indigenous epistemologies.

The second chapter, “Performing Complex Recognition” by Kelly Medina-López and Kellie Sharp-Hoskins, dwells on the politics of recognition and emphasizes that the longing for recognition is deeply entrenched in the core of each self. In the context of academic mentoring, recognition emerges as a complex phenomenon, according to the authors of this chapter. From the vantage point of the authors of this chapter, both humans and nonhumans contribute to “the acknowledgment of the differential bodies within a scenario of academic mentoring” (p. 32), with the proviso that any claim to recognition predicated on the principle of visibility and reciprocity resembles a Eurocentric trajectory of recognition. Accurate recognition rests on the dynamics of the emergence along the axis of complexity formed by the geopolitics of knowledge-making (Cushman, Baca & Garcia, 2021), mediated relationality, and entanglement of humans and nonhumans.

Keeping with the same thrust of decoloniality, the third chapter, “Listening Otherwise: Arboreal Rhetorics and Tree-Human Relations” by Ehren Helmut Pflugfelder and Shannon Kelly, has a robust repertoire of decolonial strategies nourished and enriched by indigenous epistemologies of place, plant thinking, environment, and human immersion in surroundings. Interestingly, the authors of this chapter propose a vigorous decolonial move called ‘listening otherwise’—“a relational, inventive openness to the material interactions that historical, Western ontological assumptions cannot disclose” (p. 81)—as an indigenous style of communicating with plant, wood, forest, and various natural entities, including their complex

intra-actionality and entanglement. To that end, this chapter is designed to define explicitly some decolonial jargon: plant thinking, sylvan rhetoric, and arboreal rhetoric, to name just a few.

Indeed, the disclosure of decolonial axiology's pragmatic potential has happened in no chapter other than the fourth chapter, "Smoke and Mirrors," by Christina V. Cedillo, who unearths some nuggets of the ecological wisdom that indigenous people have embraced and cherished for the last five hundred years. Cedillo recommends reviving, invoking, and enacting indigenous ecological wisdom to hone the extant decolonial practices to their brutal efficiency. Resorting to a couple of indigenous rhetorical practices about ecological wisdom (teotl and nepantla), Cedillo endeavors to map a distinctly homegrown decolonial framework in which humans' entanglement with nature is perceived in a manner most vivid and vibrant, with the adoption of teotl—"continually dynamic, vivifying, self-generating and self-regenerating sacred power" (p.103)—and nepantla, "a place of uncertainty and identity breakdowns" (p. 105). As a praxis, teotl involves tapping into vibrant energies laid dormant under the veneer of smoothness and symmetry of every phenomenon. What induces the free play of forces buried beneath the layers of human-centric structure and texture is teotl. By the same token, nepantla specifies a strategic move to distrust coherent identity, stabilized selfhood and closed cultural anchorage that work favoring agents of western modernity and colonizing mission. The constructed notions on everything formulated by settler colonizers, along the axis of the Western narrative of progress and modernity, are unpacked and untangled, with the single most revisionist goal of counter-narrative as part of nepantla.

Getting into a spirit of decoloniality set in full swing by the entire gamut of practices relating to the rhetoric of locality and indigeneity, A. I.

Ramírez, in the fifth chapter, "Perpetual (In)securities," explores the affective capacity of murals on the US/Mexico border from the vantage point of an indigenous perspective characterized by "sensorial and sensual methodologies, such as *the facultades serpentinae*, and the heuristic of *lecho de serpientes*" (p. 117). Literally, *facultades serpentinae* means a nest of serpents; figuratively, it implies a phenomenal approach to observing things, events, and eventualities from the subjective observation axis if we plumb the depth of indigenous cultural and societal experience. It advances a phenomenal, observational, and intuitive approach to perceiving things in their earthly realms by discarding the Western rationality-laden analytical framework. Along similar lines, *lecho de serpientes* enforces "the ability to shift between attention and see through the surface of things and situations" (p. 116). To counter what Ramírez calls 'border terrorism,' sensuous rhetoric stemming from the native soil is used as a perspectival frame that truly adds up to the ongoing decolonial momentum.

The most innovative chapter in this volume is the sixth chapter, "Corn, Oil, and Cultivating Dissent through Seeds of Resistance," written by Matthew Whitaker. This chapter emphasizes how indigenous people in Nebraska planted "sacred seeds of Ponka corn in the projected path of the Keystone XL pipeline" (p. 147) in the name of resistance against the Keystone XL pipeline. Planting the seeds of Ponka corn on the soil of the land along which the pipeline was being made speaks volumes about a potent and potential configuration any local decolonial strategy of resistance is capable of taking on. Citing Malea Powell, Whitaker treats the ceremony of corn seed planting as a mode of survivance—a fulsome concept in indigenous rhetorical practices, simultaneously implying survival and resistance.

Judy Holiday and Elizabeth Lowry introduce granting personhood to rivers as a distinct and dignified attempt at decolonization in the seventh chapter, "Top Down, Bottom Up." Their ecological insight is patently evident in their assumption that "rivers are legal persons" (p. 181). As claimed by them, the government of New Zealand granted personhood to the Whanganui River, a superb ecology-friendly decolonial move, whereas the US dithered about proffering personhood to the Colorado River. With these examples, it was evident that Western notions of ontology and assemblage do not lead to the success of an environmental mission of granting personhood and a living sense of agency to rivers and other entities in Nature. Therefore, both authors recommend that scholars indeed committed to decoloniality cast doubt on Westernized ontology and then take recourse to predecessor epistemologies.

Last but not least, the last chapter, "Becoming Relations" by Andrea Riley Mukavetz and Malea Powell, makes a case for relations rather than who enters the relationship and between whom

the relation grows. For Mukavetz and Powell, relations are of prime importance for those indigenous scholars who want to escape the colonial matrix of power. Braiding the sweetgrass, smelling its scent, and engaging with the act of making helpful stuff out of this grass—all help indigenous people deal deliberately with what Lea Ypi calls historical amnesia, colonial conquest, cultural dislocation, and traumatic jolts (2013, p. 159) and set up a new line of connection with their disjointed past and dislocated cultures. Braiding sweetgrass is an instance of decolonial development because while braiding sweetgrass, those engaged with braiding are enacting epistemic disobedience.

Conclusively, an eternal touchstone for enacting what Miranda Fricker (2013) calls epistemic justice, the book *Decolonial Conversations* tends to empower all the folks who have been prone to endure the lingering and lacerating legacy of settler colonialism, instrumental rationality, modernist logic of conquest and subordination and so-called radical thoughts and programs complicit with Eurocentric imperialism.

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Author information

Shiva Mainaly (0009-0003-0057-7037)

e-mail: shivaharimainaly64@gmail.com, shmain01@louisville.edu, shiva.mainaly@ndsu.edu

Shiva Mainaly is currently working in the capacity of a postdoctoral research fellow at North Dakota State University (NDSU). He has a Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Composition from the University of Louisville, with a concentration on New Materialism, Posthumanism, and Object-Oriented Ontology. Shiva has presented many papers at some popular conferencing venues.