

CATHERINE WALSH, WALTER MIGNOLO, FERNANDO HERRERO,  
TINK TINKER

Decoloniality And Disintegration of Western Cognitive Empire -  
Rethinking Sovereignty and Territoriality In The 21st Century

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "DECOLONIALITY"?

*The following is a transcript of the keynote panel session of a three-day international webinar "Decoloniality And Disintegration Of Western Cognitive Empire – Rethinking Sovereignty And Territoriality In The 21st Century", held April 14-16, 2021. The panel consists of Walter Mignolo and Catherine Walsh, co-authors of the book *On Decoloniality* (Duke University Press, 2018) and eminent Native American scholar Tink Tinker as well as University of London professor Fernando Herrero. It is moderated by Victor Taylor, Executive Editor for Whitestone Publications.*

**Victor Taylor:** Thank you, Carl [Raschke], and thank you, Roger [Green], for all your work on this conference. It's been a really remarkable day, so we all appreciate it. As Carl said, I'm Victor Taylor; and I'm one of the senior editors associated with Whitestone Publishing and the executive editor of The Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory which is an online journal that Carl and I started more than 20 years ago. So tonight it's a real pleasure to facilitate this panel on the book *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, and Praxis*. And I have the honor of introducing the panel that really doesn't need an introduction. It's wonderful to actually be reconnected with my friend, Walter. We had several conversations on decoloniality in Philadelphia and Denver virtually not too long ago. I haven't met Catherine yet, but hello, Catherine, it's nice to meet you.

**Catherine Walsh:** Oh, thank you, Victor, for the questions. Thank you to Carl and to Roger for the organization of this, and it's a great pleasure to be part of a conversation with Tink, with Fernando, and also with Walter, who we've been in conversation with now for close to 25 years.

So my reflections, I guess, we'll start from my own perspective: let's say my situated, embodied, grounded perspective of decoloniality. Carl mentioned in the beginning, then in the previous session, different perspectives of decoloniality have been floating. So I'll share some of mine and some that Walter and I sort of wove together in the book, but thinking now, from my perspective.

I guess, maybe a beginning way to simply say what decoloniality is, is a kind of posture and attitude and an action. And I think that the intertwine of those three is particularly central, and I'll explain a bit later why. So, this posture and attitude and action began with the invasion of the Crown and the Cross more than 500 years ago. So, it had a particular beginning in 1492, and it had a particular place, a territory, a land, which we call *Abya Yala*, or what some continue to name as "Latin America" and also the Caribbean, or the Americas in a broad sense. So, decoloniality in that sense points to a kind of resistance and refusal, an insurgence and a resurgence, but also a re-existence.

How to exist despite/against/refusing this order that began with the colonial invasion, and as I'll explain has taken on new and different forms, decoloniality is against colonial domination, but it's also for. So, it's not just resistance or a posture of resistance, but it's for the ongoing creation of

ways of thinking, of ways of knowing, of ways of sensing, being, and living outside coloniality—outside or despite coloniality, and in its borders, its fissures, and its cracks. So in that sense, decoloniality necessarily brings forth or points to the issue of coloniality. The two necessarily go together and began together. So maybe saying a bit about what coloniality is will help sort of define the concept that we have on the table. If we think of it as a kind of matrix of power, and that's something that we write about, Walter and I, in the book, a matrix of Western, euro-centered power that's based primarily on the ideas of race, but also the idea of gender. Sort of that coming together that we can talk more about later.

But also, the use of these ideas to control subjectivity, intersubjectivity, labor, authority, and knowledge, but also spirituality and nature, which often aren't talked about when we talk about coloniality in a general, theoretical sense. So, if we say that coloniality began in *Abya Yala* and then traveled the globe, it gave origin to a kind of what we might term Western modernity, and to Western rationality, and to patterns of power that are constitutive of the ongoing systemic structures of racism, of capitalism, of heteropatriarchy, of Christianity, of anthropocentrism, of expropriation and dispossession—all intertwined.

So, in that sense the structures and patterns of power that operate are not just those of the past, but in fact were constitutive of the formation of modern nation-states and what we might call the corporatization of states today. States that are obviously based on capital, and on transnational alliances, but also in liberal, neoliberal, and even progressive forms, which is something that we've lived in recent years in Latin America. But it's also based in social institutions, including universities and schools, and it functions as a kind of an assumed authority over land, over resources, and over life.

So in that sense, decoloniality, at least as I understand it, is rooted in the living memory and a living reality, or in a lived reality, and then the recognition and refusal and the continuing configurations and mutations of colonial power. Decoloniality is not a lineal point of arrival. The decolonized have come to leave coloniality, to leave colonial power. It's not linear and it's not a done deal, nor is it a kind of dogma or paradigm, or a new replacement word for critical. It's also not a term that necessarily collapses all forms of colonialism into one. In other words, it necessarily recognizes the differences of settler colonialism, of external colonialism, of internal colonialism, and all the ways those mesh together and their specific context. So in that sense, you might say that decoloniality is a concept, it's an analytic, but it's also, which is particularly key for me, a form of praxis, which is increasingly assumed by social movements, by communities, by engaged intellectuals, by artists, by activists, and many, many others against the ongoing violence, dispossession, and war altogether waged against specific bodies, against people's cultures, knowledges, spiritualities, and against nature, and for the insurgent and resurgent creation, construction, and possibility of other modes of that knowledge being existence in life.

So in that sense, and following the second part of the question that you asked, Victor, what does it mean in both a theoretical and practical context? I think one of the things that makes this book unique is that Walter and I wrote it in two parts, each with our own voice and each, in a sense, with our own particular ways of understanding, thinking, and practicing the interdependence and continuous movement of decolonial theory as praxis and decolonial praxis as theory—in other words, theorizing practice. So for me, the decolonial took form first in a concrete, practical context, not in an academic with theoretical sense. I began to think about the decolonial with my first reading of Frantz Fanon in 1971, not in a university or in a

university classroom, but in a study group organized in 1971 by the Black Panthers of which I was invited to take part.

So reading Fanon with the Panthers, with members of the Panthers, is a very different context of beginning to understand the notion of the colonial and the decolonial than it is to read it in a classroom or in the theoretical environment. The second piece of history, which Walter knows but the rest of you may not, is that for 16 years I lived in and worked with Puerto Rican communities in the United States. And it was in that context of everyday life, of education-based work, and of shared battles, including with the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund against the colonial reality of Puerto Ricans in the U.S., that gave me another sense of the decolonial, of the colonial struggle.

I've had to see systemic racism in the context of education and the legal system, but also in the concrete practice of everyday lives, and how race, along with gender, language, knowledge, and existence-based ways of being in the world are constitutive parts of what we understand or call the colonial matrix of power. So, confronting this and working against it and also assuming a kind of responsibility to work against it is part of a praxis that helps me begin to theorize then what decoloniality could be. In the last more than 25 years I've lived in Ecuador, Latin America, and here, based on what even began before that the indigenous movement, which is known in the 90s as the strongest indigenous movement in the region, invited me, asked me, and petitioned me to accompany in certain tasks. And one of these was towards their building of what they call the political and epistemic movement.

Political and epistemic. And so it was in that context of learning with the movement, and then the task that the movement gave me, and the tasks that later the Black movement here also gave me, that I began to learn, to unlearn, to relearn other notions of how we carry the colonial in our body and what it means to assume a kind of decolonial responsibility which is what I understand as decoloniality, as praxis. So, in that sense, and in part what both movements asked me to put in practice in the university, in work, has been part of my bringing together of the theoretical and the praxis-based notion or practical-based notion of decoloniality. In a very concrete sense, and we can talk about this more later in the question answer period, is over 20 years ago we began here in Ecuador, and Walter has been part of that, a doctoral program that intends to work through not a decolonial program, because that goes against – it's not to institutionalize decoloniality – but rather to begin to think about how we begin to fissure or crack the colonial matrix of power that exists in universities and begin to create other ways of learning, of knowing, of thinking, of sensing, of being, of doing that are interconnected.

So, in terms of the last point, in terms of time to think about closing, what does this mean today? What is the sort of timely and important issue of how decoloniality makes sense today? I guess, I would say in the beginning, it's important to think that coloniality never ends; it's not something of the past that we're resurrecting. But coloniality continues to configure, to mutate, to reconstruct its matrices of power. And beginning to name that is extremely complex; it's not sufficient to say, "the system" or "the colonial system," but we need to be more specific about what we're really talking about. So, I think about, concretely, some of those configurations today taking place. Of the militarization, the policing, the profiling, the surveillance that happens in cities, on the land, and in the virtual sphere, as well as listening to our Zoom conferences.

The various forms of extractivism, of extractivist economies taking place, including those that include extracting knowledges and how those

have advanced in these times of COVID, particularly in the Global South, but I presume, as well, in that territory of the North of Turtle Island. We can think about the re-canonicalization of knowledges and the growing "dehumanities" of universities where technofied knowledges, technological knowledge, is more important and the social sciences are increasingly made silent, eliminated, and the controls that exist in universities today.

But also what I think is particularly key is the targeted de-existence. De-existent present and taking form in racialized, in genderized, in heteronormative, in territorialized and generational forms, particularly with relationship to COVID. And so how certain populations, certain peoples, certain ways of being need to be eliminated and are being eliminated. I think about what's going on in South America, of the almost 50 indigenous black and peasant leaders assassinated in Colombia in just the last three months. Part of an ongoing pattern, but how it's increasing and how COVID is enabling that to happen. I think of the strategies by states and allied forces to attack and kill children and native communities. It's the new strategy, let's eliminate the children, the future generations and that's happening in Argentina, in Chile, in Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador and Colombia, as well as Mexico, as well as elsewhere.

But I also think about the elimination of black youth in cities here, and the levels of feminist-cides, trans-cides, and gender violence, including the trafficking of young girls, and of the well-planned destruction of the Amazon that's taking place, of the devastating levels of extractivism, of expropriation, of dispossession of land and life, and the connections that it makes with struggles elsewhere. I also think of the globalizing movements of Black Lives Matter and land-back and how they also exist here in different ways, but also about the globalization of strategies to fragment, rupture, and divide movements and struggles. I think about the importance and the timelines of decoloniality that I think could not be more clear and it's about today, for me, the struggle and survival, but also about the possibilities of existence otherwise, existence in and making cracks, decolonial cracks in this what seems like a totalizing system of coloniality. It's about planting hope where there's hopelessness, and it's about the crucial work to be done.

Work to be done including, but not only, in and on the land, on territory, but also in and on social institutions, particularly universities and schools. And it's about the praxisic significance of thinking and acting with and what all that means and the different contexts that we are, how to connect across territories, across lands, across peoples, across struggles, not to collapse, to understand the differences but to think and act with. I use a lot the questions of the "hows" because I think they point to not just what is decoloniality but how to practice, how to put into praxis a decolonial posture, attitude, action, how to name, how to analyze the matrix of power present taking form today, and how to resist, how to refuse, how to insurge and resurge, and how to re-exist in these present times. How, as many peoples here in *Abya Yala* argue, how to sew and cultivate life where there's death. These, I think, are only some of the crucial decolonial questions of these times that help us see that decoloniality is not a condition or a presence of the past, but it's this continuing struggle today that begins to bring us together in some ways, to analyze the realities that we're living in, but most of all to assume a praxis not just against this coloniality or colonial matrix of power, but for the possibilities of living, of thinking, of being, of sensing otherwise.

**Victor Taylor:** Thank you so much, Catherine, that was just beautifully said; it was lyrical. Thank you very much. Professor Herrero, would you like to respond to the same set of questions?

**Fernando Herrero:** It's 10:39 Coordinated Universal Time, also called British Summer Time, Greenwich, London, Time. We are in digital convergence and, obviously, when I make reference to those two those two features, we already are activating legacies of British Empire- the industrial and the scientific revolution. And we are activating as well, I suppose, the legacies that we must take into account. Greenwich also is close to the All Royal Naval College, which has a spectacular Baroque in the painted hall and is the place where Boris Johnson was calling for free trade and invoking global Britain in the context of Brexit Britain when COVID was already taking place, already landing in the Isles. So that the Brits have problems admitting to the Baroque but also they have problems admitting to many other things, imperialism and colonialism, under the current global dilemmas. There will be other times and spaces, and this is at least one instance of the digital convergence of communication among three, four, or even a few other interlocutors.

But I stick to the norms. What is decoloniality? What does it mean in theoretical and practical terms? And why is it important and why now? If we take into account notions such as eurocentrism, universalism, racism, imperialism, and we place the prefix "anti," we're already beginning to walk in that direction of decoloniality. It will take into account the prefix "de-" or "dis" or "dia." We see a process of disillusion, of antagonism, of oppositionality and that perhaps may be the beginning of it. I personally see the interrogation mechanism as the process that grabs me more. What is much more complicated will be that construction after that deconstruction. Some other working definitions, and I'm painting with a very thick brush, decoloniality might be said to be the thoughts and the actions of the non-whites reconfiguring the big picture of things.

"White", as understood in the U.S. Census of the existing taxonomy, or off-white, or ethnic white - anything that is white as a dominant category, if we put the light on the negation of that, we are beginning already to see some of the actions, the dispositions, the postures, as Catherine said, that we want at least to pay attention to reconfiguring, or wanting to reconfigure because obviously the big picture of things that we're looking at, we're dealing with the history of imperialism, colonialism, capitalism, racial-ethnic disparities, and subjugation. Clearly, these are unbearably difficult and complex processes that are not easy to understand, let alone dismantle. In the language of the conference, the big power, knowledge, setup, or frame, the Western cognitive empire, I suppose decoloniality may be said to be an insurrection to this type of domination. Another possible definition, maybe, is some kind of historical awareness of vast dimensions that we may want to call imperial or colonial time-spaces. Typically, 500 years across the Atlantic, Europe, and the Americas, and there will be others, were dealing with the interrogation of the universalism of the West, which is a civilization in a category typically called Liberal West in U.S. geopolitics. And they will be again other big names: Western-European legacy, Christianity, civilization, enlightenment, sophistication, or high culture. We only have to think about the notion of classical music to understand what that means, what classical music? And I confess to liking the classical music, but that already tells us something about what we want at least to interrogate. So, decoloniality is about wanting to add other dimensions to that big thing so that it doesn't stand alone, imperiously alone- not out there, but in here, in us. At the most

elementary or silly or accessible level, if I may put it that way, the way decoloniality is used, at least in my immediate environment of the UK at the street level, comes typically in the vicinity of education sectors. So, there will be efforts to put all the less visible names in the curriculum and the study programs under the name of inclusion.

Museums, for example, recognize that the collections may have problems in terms of language use, provenance, proportional representation, links to complicated events in third-world locations and events, that the colonial may come up in relation to public stature toppling the provision of the narrative of the life of the nation. And let us note the decline of the civilization of language at least since the 80s. The colonial is more often than not near people of color, and this has all sorts of euphemisms around decoloniality. So, people of color, whenever there are people of color, sometimes decoloniality is attached to that or something similar to decoloniality. Minority diversity is always against an ideological dominant white spectrum near what is called "Gaming the UK," which is really awkward for me, it's a really awkward nomenclature, that is official, that you stand for "Black, Asian, minority, ethnic embracing."

Obviously decoloniality kicks in quickly near the notion of racism in cultural life. In relation to mass media, television, film award ceremonies, art, sports, and typically now recently in relation to digital abuse or players of color. There's obviously some official recognition triggered or responding to decoloniality. There's a need for a greater representation of an increasingly diverse population at the level of thought, language, sensibility, looks. If a democracy, I suppose in any Western liberal democracy, using that type of nomenclature that identifies itself as such must open up and respond officially and recognize and admit to diversity. So, democracy echoes ideally an ecosystem, a majority/minority coexistence ideal, so diversity surplus or should be a plus, but a plus for whom and to do what? This is obviously easier said than done. As I said, decoloniality kicks in, to me attractively, but kicks in instantly, the moment we look at notions of "anti" or "dis" or "de." So, whenever we're dealing with the negative prefix to, critiques or interrogations of interrogation operations, or even evacuations of, let's say, complex or painful processes. Easy to see, also, very quickly, certainly in Britain at the moment, but not only in Britain, official and establishment neutralization of decoloniality in the same name of somewhat partial acceptance of a need to recognize that previously mentioned diversity. The minority population in the UK is about 10% or so, so it's very different from the majority/minority tendency in the U.S., but it's also the diversity of thought and experience, and not just looks or even less skin.

And I'll give you one great example of that type of control and neutralization mechanism about the recent report on race, the so-called Sewer Report that says officially there's no structural or institutional racism in Britain. Of course, they have been criticized from an awful lot of corners because it was very shoddily done very regularly, but people are not dumb and they have populated the report with brown faces saying that to bridge this nation. So, don't get too distracted with Meghan Markle and Prince Harry and Oprah Winfrey and the palace, pay attention to this type of report trying to say to Britain that there's no such thing. Racism certainly exists, the people abuse each other through the digital media, but there's no such thing as institutional racism in Britain at this moment.

So, there is, of course, denial of racism, there's the equivocal patient, there is containment, there's mitigation of decolonial impulses against such racism, and one success formula we can say that decoloniality will be some type of anti-racism. And as Catherine was saying before, decoloniality

might be a protestation – protest – you protest against something that you consider to be harmful, deleterious, dangerous so the protestation kicks in. I will close down by saying that the protest is happening, the alternatives to the protest is what I think is a truly phenomenal, complex situation. We are dealing with neutralizations of the recognition of the vast social and political disparities among diverse groups.

In fact, these disparities are not decreasing, but growing exponentially. And not only in the U.S. And COVID exacerbates disparities. Theoretical and practical terms of decoloniality. The first is easy to say, and by theory we mean thought or intellectual life. There's no need to even be humble or be shameful about it, the more of it the better, the more sophisticated, the better. And intellectual life or theoretical life is never enough. But it's never enough and it's not all there is. Less easy is to follow through. You were dealing with academic and scholarly life, and I do like that and I defend that, in my experience is not easy to follow through or combine. We are dealing with an unacknowledged, profound crisis of the university system or educational system that is now failing to acknowledge the vast transformations that are taking place, not only in Britain, but certainly in other parts of the world. I don't think we should fetishize; I don't think we should fall for the virtuousness of the noun of decoloniality, which may behave like one academic brand name like any other, and we should not treat it like some kind of decided deity. But I suppose that it signals some of the things that I've tried to articulate but are not that easy to follow. Practical, I suppose local interventions. I suppose community building, if you know where your community is, and you want to protect it and let it thrive. I was in the previous session and I should say that I really enjoyed it. And Tink Tinker's situation, I think, may or may not travel to other communities and perhaps there's no need for it to travel. But I just suppose that individuals, subjectivities, school activities, will bring out an immense variety of situations and decision-making positions, and I suppose it's up to them to see what best they can, in the conditions that they do inhabit.

So theoretical and practical do not have to happen simultaneously and thought may not find outlet or release in praxis. I want to prevent, by all means, some kind of anti-intellectual disposition that if you do not act on your thoughts, therefore, their thought gets annihilated. I think sometimes thought does what it can and praxis does what he can, and those things may not have to go at the same time. We're not riding the same bicycle; those two tires may go in different directions. Still practical may mean something like collective, local, situated, demarcated. It may very well be an exercise in filial piety to watch previous generations, and they're going, in some cases, in dramatic situations. Again, making a reference to the previous session, dramatic situations of marginalization, brutalization, annihilation, extermination, subordination processes of assimilation. Again, the previous panel was tremendously eloquent about that.

So, this is a tough situation. Why now? I think that we are witnessing vast changes and transformations taking place in the Anglo-zone. I'm making my connection to the Anglo-zone, which is the area that I know the best, the US and the UK. In the 80s, Reagan and Thatcher, and the 90s, of course, we can see previous moments, but the immediate leaving precedent of, I suppose, everyone in this panel, even though we make references to, of course, the 1500s, I suppose the immediate present will be the 80s. We are the children of the 80s and the 90s. And such a hegemonic area of the world is undergoing a decline in power and influence at all levels, from geopolitics, to institutions, to demographic changes, and to the street – what we may call “the street,” how we live, their lifestyle. Such decline is

combining, is not a direct cause or effect, but it's clearly combining with the decolonial impulse or posture or position or attitude that Catherine was talking about and that we are trying to make sense of. And I will say a few more things about the "why now" a little bit later, thank you.

**Victor Taylor:** Excellent. Thank you, Professor Hererro, that was very informative. Walter, it's a pleasure to see you tonight. Thank you for joining us, Professor Mignolo, would you like to continue this discussion with your response to this three-part question? What is decoloniality from your perspective? Perhaps similar/different from Professor Walsh. Then the theoretical and practical context and, finally, I think the pressing question that you and I have discussed before, it was the hot topic in Philadelphia: Why is it a timely issue now?

**Walter Mignolo:** Okay, thank you, Victor and thank you, Carl, and thank you, Roger for organizing this panel, this conference, and I am sorry I missed the previous panel, because I didn't know. So, when I got here five minutes before I realized that there was another panel going on. I hope that there is a recording so I can, because what I heard was quite interesting. So, the three questions. First, I want to say that I subscribe to everything that Cathy said, and I was quite interested in what Fernando had to say from his experience living in London. So, I don't disagree with Fernando, either. So, here are my responses to the three questions, but I will start by saying something that Cathy said. I mean we don't have the same exactly, but we come from Quijano, so for us a kind of anchor is the very concept of coloniality. I cannot think of decoloniality without thinking of coloniality because coloniality is already a decolonial concept.

And that decolonial concept was introduced in 1992 in the Third World and was a breakthrough because up to that point, that big talk of the 80s was the nation, cosmopolitanism, and modernity. Globalization was starting but not quiet. And so Quijano comes and says, "well, listen guys" – well, he didn't say it like that – but you cannot think of anything without coloniality. There is a kind of coloniality: the darker side of modernity. Modernity is a kind of unfolding of – an ontological unfolding – universal history. It's a bunch of narratives, it's a bunch of narratives that justify certain attitudes that justify the code, let's put it on the way. Not to say the colonial matrix of power because it's too long, but I say the colonial matrix of power is a code, a code created, reproduced, and defended by modernity. So, what is decoloniality for me, and for Cathy, and for Quijano, and for many other people who are working after Quijano?

It is other things, you know, now it is the constant analytics of how the colonial matrix power, the Code, was historically put in place in the 16th century. Don't look for it in Greece or Rome, there was no such thing. There were, obviously, things that made that possible but coloniality and the colonial matrix of power fabrication of the 16th century, and as Cathy said, from there after the 18th century began to kind of expand all over the way. So, in that sense, I would say that coloniality, and also Cathy said it, colonialism is very different from coloniality because colonialism is over. But a student of mine said in a way that I cannot avoid remembering. She said coloniality is not over, it's all over; and all over means everything that Cathy and Fernando were saying, I will not repeat that. So, it's a third-world concept that was not a disciplinary concept; it was not born in the university.

Coloniality came out as a consequence of the debate of dependency theory, and by the end of the 80s, Quijano began to realize that there were some problems on the one hand with dependency theory, and the other is

what was happening already in the late 80s in Asia. And the problem was a state. So, we could no longer think of decolonization as we thought during the third world, because at that time decolonization meant to kick the settler from the region and create their own nation-state. And that was done and was a victory, but it also was a misery because political theory and political economy were not challenged, education was not challenged, so the only thing that happened there is that the local natives were doing exactly the same thing that they said that everybody. And that ended up, as Fanon already was receiving in '61 in *The Wretched of the Earth*, that the state will end up in the hands of a local minority; we can continue to oppress, repress, this process. So, that's more or less coloniality after Quijano.

I would say more about what he means and why now, but I want to also say that, since today everybody and their family is using decoloniality, I want to say also that decoloniality depends on whom. Because if you take just the Americas, the Americas were founded in three diverse ethnographic populations: the indigenous people that were here for centuries, before Christ, so we call them now the *Abya Yala*, we call them now the First Nation, and then a bunch of people without passports and without invitation come in from Europe and kind of settled. And settled and began to kind of install all kinds of government, royalty, their own university, the University of Mexico, they dispossessed the land, and kind of in that process, they created a new kind of economy that consisted in reinvesting the surplus.

No economy at that point was reinvesting the surplus, I don't have time to explain that. And that's what we call capitalism today. Capitalism for us, it is not something that [not sure what was said] as a hasty recapitalism in three volumes published by Cambridge offers there. But what we call capitalism was the economic domain of the colonial matrix of power that was related to government, related to control of knowledge, and related to the invention of the category of the human. So, the human with age allows kind of the classification, ratios classification, to justify the rotation of labor and to justify this process here. But also, man kind of justifies gender or sexes, which one thing was in Europe, another thing was what Indian women enter into the picture, and the third pillar was the invention of nature. Nature doesn't exist. On the one hand, it's life.

And on the other hand, it's not an entity that can be named and can be represented, but the concept of nature, the concept of black, and the concept of Indians were three pillars of reducing the enormous diversity of life into categories that can be controlled. And the most devastating thing there was the kind of separation of the human from nature. So that is what the kind of non-invited people did, and they began to construct the Code, the colonial matrix of power. So, the third population was the kind of the forced migration of captive Africans that had been enslaved and kind of exploited in the plantation.

What I want to say here is that for three diverse groups, decoloniality means something else. For the indigenous people is the question of land. For non-indigenous people, like Cathy and myself, Creole and Mestizos, immigrants, I mean it's interesting that we cross paths of life. Cathy wanted to leave Ecuador and I came to live in the United States, but we are neither indigenous nor Afro. So, decoloniality began to mean for us, for me, what I began to understand through Quijano. I mean, the day that I read the concepts of coloniality, everything that I was looking for, searching, trying to make sense kind of, came all together. And then for Afros, the center of the African diaspora, what I would like to say is that what I see is that what decoloniality means is to kind of disclose the fiction of human and humanity.

So, the question is to wrestle with your humanness that the human has been destitute. So that is one of the main things that I see in the long Caribbean, Afro-Caribbean tradition. So that's a little bit to make you think that decoloniality is not the kind of universal code, but it's pluriversal and it depends on the lived experience and how coloniality, which is all over, touches different people. So, for me, when people ask "what is coloniality" I said, well, where do you feel coloniality? Where do you sense it? Where does coloniality touch us? And then, what do you perceive it? Because colonialism is something that you can't understand rationally, it's not a concept in the kind of model for some other ecological cultural house, that kind of decolonial house. And then we have colonizing sexuality. After Quijano came Maria Lugones, and then she kind of put the second stone, building stone of decoloniality because, while Quijano was kind of coming from Marxist he was talking about domination, exploitation, conflict and decoloniality was one of the manifestations of the conflict.

But then came Lugones, as we say in the United States, lazy and a woman of color, she says "I'm starting from Quijano" kind of respectfully critiquing his limitations when he was talking about sexuality. She said domination, multiple operations, and conflict. So, the question is not just exploitation of labor, I mean that was Quijano's main archive. Maria said no way, wait a second, I agree with you, but there are other ways of doing it. So, then you see, modernity, coloniality, decoloniality are three aspects of the same bottle it's trying to control and trying to kind of run away from this control.

So, sexuality, decoloniality, and decolonizing sexuality, or decoloniality and sexuality have a different configuration, but also kind of LGBT, two-spirit people have a different kind of configuration and need to approach coloniality. And there are also a lot of spheres that now are picking up like, for example, coloniality and tourism or colonizing tourism. But people who are kind of affected because they are local. So, tourism is kind of taking them as a kind of exotic to be enjoyed like observing the dance and the flowers. So, we have coloniality or decoloniality of design, decoloniality of fashion, so colonialism is all over and means many things for different people. Some are fashion, but that's okay, we cannot prohibit that. But the question is that takes me into what does it mean, theoretical and practical.

I will say that the Code, the colonial matrix of power, is controlling our praxis of living. So, beyond everything that has been said about the kind of the practical, I would say that there is no distinction between theoretical and practical for me, because decoding, breaking the code of coloniality is a praxis. And we have to invent, we have to create a different code. And a different code will kind of take us into a different kind of praxis of living. Today is very difficult because the banks and the interstate system and the media, on the internet, but beyond that there are a lot of places where the code, the decolonial code can be built, and if it's being built. So, for me the question of the theoretical is practical because if we don't break the code and invent another code we just change the content but not the theme of the conversation.

So, for me, what it means is to live in such a way that it's a practice of living, but the praxis of living is a praxis of thinking. It's a praxis of deciding how you want to live your life in the context of the colonial matrix of power. So, why is it important today? Well, I would say that many things have been said, but I will just say one or two. Number one is that it's a different option, because all of the existing options, ideological belief systems or what we call religion, disciplinary, they run out, they have been exhausted. People began to realize that there is no other option and then

began to realize that there is something that all these options, I mean liberalism, Marxism, and Catholicism, and human science, and the humanities, and natural science, they are all part of the colonial matrix of power. So, you cannot as Einstein said, you cannot change anything with the same mindset that all those things have been created.

But beyond what I said was still within the Code, I think that decoloniality is kind of running away, no longer thinking. We think that code, but in the exterior if you have a code. So, that is one reason why it's important today. The second is because our life and the life of the planet is in danger, and one of the main dangers among all that Cathy and Javier have been saying is food. Because if we don't eat properly our organs cannot think and the best way to control people is to deprive them. I mean, we know that there is a lot of humanity that has food scarcity, but if the danger beyond scarcity is food poison. And food poison is related to climate change and climate change and food poison is related, as we saw by COVID, with the people who control that and do not care about anything other than having more means of control. They don't need more money, but they need money to control, to create curtains to stop the lights of the sun, as Bill Gates is trying to do now. So, that's the second thing. And the third thing is we have to recall, and we have to recall, because we are living now on the planet, in a change of era, and no longer in arrows change.

You cannot understand what is going on today, I think, in a new "post," a "post-post." And so, decoloniality here, if coloniality is over, it's all over, decoloniality is all over but in different ways. So there is no longer the possibility of thinking of decoloniality universally. We don't need another universe, and nobody needs to control, so that is why we talk about pluriversality. Pluriversality hears the multiple responses to the fact that the code of coloniality is all over.

**Victor Taylor:** Thank you, Walter, thank you very much. I think, before we move to Professor Tinker, I just want to say that, between Walter and Catherine's discussion, if you read *On Decoloniality*, you see how these two scholars create a wonderful dialogue, so I just want to re-emphasize that this book is very accessible and is shaping our conversation tonight. So, it's a pleasure to now turn to Professor Tinker to talk about decoloniality. I think some of this was discussed in the earlier session that we had, and I really appreciated your analysis. But to come back to the three main questions that have been suggested, about how do you understand decoloniality, and the tension between theory and practice, and then, today, where is the urgency? Where do you see the urgency for thinking about decoloniality?

**Tink Tinker:** It's my pleasure to be a part of this conversation. And let me say as strongly as I can how much I appreciated reading *On Decoloniality*. I really, deeply appreciate much of the analysis there that Catherine and Walter are engaging in, and it captures much of the kind of analyses that American Indians have engaged both in community and in academics over the years. But as I said the other day, I guess it was Monday, Walter, when I was in your class at Duke, it seems to be my job as an American Indian scholar in the world to make things more difficult. To increase the complexity. So, I've got to offer my critique of the book *On Decoloniality* and hope that it promotes useful dialogue and discussion, as well. Let me start by saying that it's really difficult for American Indians to abandon our languaging that names the process of oppression and genocide that we have experienced for 400 years and continue to experience to this day so that I would object to narrowing the definition of the word

decolonizing to those attempts at flag independence in Africa, Asia, and other places, after World War II. That's not good enough because we've been fighting decolonization since the first of the euro Christian invasion of our land here on Turtle Island. And we haven't stopped because colonization has not stopped. The colonizing of our euro Christian relatives continues to this day.

Part of the problem is, I think, as I read this book and thought about it, is when I'm in an academic discussion – and I was 33 years a professor in higher education and teaching adjunct in higher education for 15 years before that, so I've had an almost-50-year career of teaching in higher education, participating in academic conferences – it's always difficult for me to find a way to buy into some academic conversations, because the language presumes a certain normativity. Not that you presume a normativity, but the language you use presumes a normativity that isn't automatically there for me. See I'm speaking a colonial language, I'm speaking English. And some of you, you know, Walter, speak Spanish as native tongue. That's another colonial language and my native relatives in the south speak Spanish as a, you know, a way of accessing the outside world outside of their own communities.

Yet, the presumption of normativity and that use of language means I have to really undo some of that language before I can get involved in a conversation. Let me give you a couple of examples. Notions like natural and supernatural, sacred and profane, Eliade's book, there's no way I can get involved in that conversation because in Osage we don't have a word for "sacred" or for "profane." We don't have a word for "natural" or "supernatural." To pick up on Walter's discussion and chapter six, Walter, or seven, where you talk about nature, count me among those whose language has no word for nature. We can't separate ourselves from nature because nature is that which must be me, isn't it? Me and everything else. And if it's me and everything else, it's everything that's alive, including Carlos de la Torre, what I said in the last session, stone. And I have my own stones right here with me that keep me powerful and safe.

If it's everything that's alive, why not just say life instead of constructing this abstract noun "nature"? Well, that will bring me to a second concern. Namely, those colonial languages, European languages generally, are what we call noun-based languages where nouns, nominals, reign supreme. Best example, of course, of that is German because in German, they capitalize every noun. Just to make sure you know what's important they capitalize it. You may not know what it means, it may be so abstract that it requires a full-volume text to unpack with the noun means, but the noun reigns supreme. And hence in academic discourses it's the nouns which are so wonderfully abstract that they can make and break academic careers and people can write dissertations, and not just dissertations but books, monographs in order, not just to get a job, but to get promotion and tenure, and eventually a full professorship, and if you're really good at unpacking abstraction you get a named professorship.

But then it's really difficult for a native person to buy into that without abandoning our whole world of languaging and adopting just the colonial discourse with its abstractions. And decoloniality is, for me, that kind of nominal abstraction. So, I read this wonderful book *On Decoloniality* and I have to say when I finished it, I did not yet know what decoloniality exactly was, it'll probably take another three volumes for you all to explain it to this poor Indian before I can begin to see light at the end of the tunnel. Decolonizing is a verb. That's the work we do in our communities. That's what my relatives were doing four winters ago up at Standing Rock outside of the community of Cannonball when they were trying to stop the invasion

of Dakota Access Pipeline, digging a tunnel underneath their water supply, underneath the Missouri River in order to ship this dirty buck an oil field, fracked oil, crude oil South so they could ship it out of the country so that other people in the way... It's not even being used in the U.S. It serves one purpose only, and that's the colonizer's purpose of making more money. Pure and simple. Inventing money.

And of course, The Lakota people from Standing Rock Reservation were arguing, this is unceded, non-treaty Lakota land. It may not be a part of the reservation, but the abstraction of American law came to the rescue with the Dakota Access Pipeline. Namely, this isn't your land, you have your reservation over there, this is now private property, never mind that you never ceded it in treaty. But it belongs to someone else, and they've given us the okay to tunnel from their land to the other side in order to ship this pipeline south to Houston. And so, the courts always decide in favor of the colonial abstraction, the legal abstraction. And we're left to protest it, to try and stop it and, of course, my relatives up there were successful for a long time in delaying that process. It costs the oil company millions of dollars.

But at the same time, eventually, the colonial matrix of power, another abstraction, Walter, but one that I like, the colonial matrix of power wins again. See for us our languages are verbal, verb based. They're rooted in the ongoing living of life. What's happening now. What you all might call praxis, so that when I write an essay, and I've published half a dozen books and nearly 100 chapters in journal articles, almost every one of those pieces of writing have been circulated in the Indian community before I publish them. Because if they do not float in the Indian community, if they don't understand what I'm writing, then I've got to scrap it and go back to the drawing board and rework it in a different way. It must make sense to my people or it isn't any good. It's too abstract. And even at that, you know, my first book was *Missionary Conquest* and my own clan father, Morris Lookout told me, "Son, that was a wonderful book. I read it twice. But, son, I had to buy a dictionary to read it." And I thought it was pretty accessible. But there's an occupational hazard when you teach in the academy that even my stuff had begun to become too rooted in academese, in those nominal abstractions. And I realized that even as I critique *On Decoloniality*, for us, colonialism, I said, is ongoing. And it's colonized us deeply, colonized our use of language.

So then, when we have a meeting to talk about particular sites that are important to us, sites where our interpreters go in order to talk to the *Wanagi* who live in those sites, our political leaders will talk about them as if they were sacred sites. So, they'll talk about how this site has been sacred to my people since time immemorial. But wait a minute, the land where I am right now is sacred. Every land is sacred. Every inch of Turtle Island is sacred. If every place and everyone is sacred, what does the word "sacred" mean? Why don't we just say everything, or since we don't have a word in Osage for "thing," we'll say everyone is sacred, including especially that one who is most involved in giving life and taking life: our grandmother, the Earth herself, the land. So, instead of talking about sacred sites, we need to talk about why it's much more complex than that, it's not just that this site is sacred. Indian people haven't read Eliade, they haven't read Durkheim.

They've just picked up this word because it's been imposed upon them by Christian missionaries. The missionaries came and they wholesale re-worked our languages, one at a time. And they picked words so that they might signify as those abstract nouns that work for them in their Christian theology. So suddenly we have the word noun Osage that means "sacred":

*wakan*. And the great *wakan*, *wakanda*. Ah, the missionaries latched onto that one and said that your word for God. And immediately took our collateral egalitarian culture and turned it into what I call an up-down image schema, picking up on the language of cognitive linguistics in George Lakoff and company. Suddenly we have a God, or male sky God even, called *wakanda*. But see, what that does is it makes that word completely unusable in its old way for us so that we have to decolonize our own language in order to reclaim it. In order to say, wait a minute, *wakanda* is that energy force that is life-giving for the cosmic whole. And it's not up here – it courses through every living person. That is every stone, every tree, every lake, every mountain, every buffalo, squirrel, eagle, sparrow, and me, and you. See, when you make it that sky God, suddenly it's no longer useful that way because Osages today have been converted to Christianity and they think *wakanda*, our word, means that Christian male sky God. That's the trouble we're in and why we must decolonize.

One last example. I spent years, 25 years, a quarter-century, volunteering my time as Executive Director and Spiritual Elder here in the Denver urban Indian community at an institution called Four Winds American Indian Council. And once a week we would get people together for a ceremony, give people a place to gather, a place to be Indian, a place to talk to one another. A place to be Indian just for, you know, two or three hours, have a meal together. But when we first started, I'd go around the circle starting to my left and give every person a chance to pray. And every person would take time to pray until about five years of doing that. Some of those people began to question me in terms of decolonizing ourselves: "Tink, isn't prayer a colonized form? Doesn't it involve that up-down hierarchy? Doesn't prayer mean petitioning some higher power?" I had to stop and think, yeah, the Osage word for prayer is [*wada*]. And *wada* just means "to talk," what we're doing in this conference, *wada*. Only we're inviting in, at this collateral egalitarian level, the *Wanagi* from the *Wanagi* world. And we're just talking to them. We're not petitioning them, they're not above us, not below us. So, we're just talking to our ancestors as equals.

And hence, we had to abandon the use of the word "pray" and it was the most natural thing in the world for us to use the colonial language. And when we abandon it, the most natural thing, once we decolonized it, the most natural thing in the world for us to abandon the word "prayer" and do you "talk." So, we would sing our songs, have ceremonies, invite the *Wanagi* in from the *Wanagi* world, and give everyone a chance to talk to the *Wanagi*. That's what we're up against and why when you read Indian titles, they don't talk about decoloniality, they talk about decolonizing. Because that's our project here on Turtle Island. I don't know about natives in the south, but here on Turtle Island and Canada and the U.S. that's our project and that's my initial critique of On Decoloniality which, if you remember, I already said, I deeply appreciated the analysis and we'll go back to it again and again.

**Victor Taylor:** Thank you very much, Professor Tinker, I thought, maybe before we open it up to general questions, that the panelists would like to respond to each other. I would imagine that Walter and Catherine would like to comment on Professor Tinker's reading of *On Decoloniality*.

**Tink Tinker:** yeah, let me just add one thing, Victor, I go by "Tink," I don't presume a colonial title.

**Victor Taylor:** Okay, thank you. Catherine or Walter?

**Catherine Walsh:** Thank you, Tink, for your precious words, for the teachings that you gave us in this short time, and for speaking from the land. Here in Ecuador in the Andean region, as you said, many of the words that dominant languages like Spanish, like English, assume as nouns don't exist in Kechua, as we call the majority indigenous language here and Equator, but also in other native languages. I think the politics of language, of languaging, the politics of naming is part of the colonization of genocide and linguicide. Of how to destroy languages, and in destroying languages how to destroy the base and the interconnectedness of thought and life. Here the notion of Pachamama, or Mother Earth, Mother Nature is a concept that is extremely distinct from nature in the dominant way that it's used. But extractivism also is a way to extract the significance and lived meaning of Mother Earth, to destroy and to create a notion of nature's resource. So, I think those learnings, teachings that you shared with us that are that are collective from your tribal nation, but also from your indigenous relatives throughout Turtle Island, but also the relatives, here in Abya Yala, in Turtle Island South, or Abya Yala South, connect in many, many ways. And I think certainly with the relationship to the book and in the difficult task that Walter and I assumed together to each write from our places, but also to write from a legacy that a close friend, Anibal Quijano, that Walter mentioned, gave us.

So, we didn't create the notion of coloniality nor decoloniality, but one of our now ancestors gave us that term which we sort of extend to the notion of a colonial matrix of power, yes, but also to something that people that live the reality, the colonial continuation of colonialism, with its genocide and destruction that continues and continues in multiple ways, doesn't need a word to name it. They know what it is. So, I think part of our difficulty in thinking about the book was also how to think of coloniality and decoloniality in ways that make it more of a verb and less of a noun. Less as a set state of things, but also as this ongoing construction.

And so, in different places of the book I think we maybe assume some of that verbalizing of language, rather than making it nouns all the time, but I think it's also important to think about what the action of decolonializing is. What it means in different territories and lands and for different peoples, what it means for first nations, but also what it means for people who have been racialized by a system that continues to not just inferiorize and negate or sub-alternize, but to actually exterminate. And so, I think it's important to sort of think about how also the decolonizing work that needs to be done is being done. How does it take place? Who and how do they do it? And what does it mean in each context? And I think that takes us away from the fear that what we're talking about can somehow be put into universal academic language, which is exactly against what we're arguing. We're talking about life and about it. some people's lives or everyone, in your language, Tink, everyone's life matters. Whether that's a human life, if we want to use the term "human," which is also another term that needs to be rethought, but to think about all living beings and how that's being destroyed today and how it's targeted. So, because of time I won't go on, but I want to thank you again for your words, for your teachings, for the learnings that you assumed, that you shared with us today that I take to heart, thank you.

**Walter Mignolo:** Thank you, Tink, I'd like to continue the conversation we started on Monday. A couple of things, I mean, I agree with you it's just I don't have... Let me put it this way: My ancestor Italian went to Argentina at the end of the 18th century. And there were all kinds of big, great immigration. They were poor Italians because Italy didn't provide a good

living. So, and the government was trying to kind of populate because they were exterminating indigenous people and they needed to replace the country and they were bringing the British railroad and the British debt and the British want all the kind of the cow and the Syria to just go to London, so they needed people to work. So, the government gave 100 hectares to each family and then I learned later on that those lands belong to *Indios Ranqueles*, as the history of Argentina says. So that was a kind of moment in which I began to understand coloniality from my own kind of experience. And also, when I wrote *The Darker Side of the Renaissance* I got very much into languages because my training is in semiotics and philology, so I constantly go to philology. And the chapter you mentioned, I think it's seven, I put nature in quotation marks because I said more or less what you're saying, that nature is a kind of ontologization of the flow of life, and I think I used the flow of life, and in the universe, in the cosmos, in earth, etc, etc. So, I agree with you. The question you have for us, for Catherine and I, and you said Spanish is an imperial language. We are into languages in which the noun prevails. So, if Heidegger was kind of Osage he could not have written *Being and Time*. He wrote *Being and Time* because, in German, all the nouns are capitalized and he could not write a kind of an ontology of relation, an ontology of flow, an ontology of everything moving would have been quite difficult.

So, that is one thing. But I agree with Cathy, we just study because when Quijano, after defining coloniality, he said, what is the task of decoloniality epistemic reconstitution? So epistemological reconstitution. Why? Because the Code, the colonial matrix of power, has four key operations, classifications. Quijano wrote about a lot of that. Hierarchy, racist, sexist, nature separated from the human. Exclusion, all kinds of exclusion and regulation. So, the regulation of the classification is that we kind of maintain this code making us believe that this is reality represented by the science, by the discipline, etc. So, that is there for me, the task of recoding, and when we start talking about recoding we are learning for you people and from kind of the African before colonization.

And what we are learning now from you, I mean, instead of learning from Aristotle and Plato and Heidegger, we are learning that to recode we have to recode our relationship with the cosmos, our relationship with Earth, and our relationship with land, and at the same time, get out of the kind the noun and be aware that everything is in constant flow. So, that's kind of the recoding. The recording goes from Earth, land, relationality, duality instead of dualism, complementarity and duality. I take your critique on nouns very, very seriously, but at the same time, I just want to add that what gave me energy, a new way of thinking about these things is coming from you.

**Fernando Herrero:** Many, many things that one can say. First, I also love Quijano, but we should not forget, Walter knows that he's coming from also grey Latin American tradition, and we can mention Leopoldo Osi, [OTHER LATIN AMERICAN FOLKS] and even [LATIN AMERICAN PERSON] and his critique of the universalism of Western cultures in 1957. So, again, we love Quijano but I think we should vindicate, particularly because I'm going to Americanize my response in the sense of zeroing in on the USA. But we always need to vindicate Latin American thinking that may be an avant garde type of thinking. And it doesn't have to be perfect, but that critique of the universalism of Western cultures is already happening in the 50s, if not even earlier. And I want to echo Tink's critique of Walter and Catherine Walsh, but I want to do this from a critical solidarity standpoint. *The Darker Side of the Renaissance* is, for me, my

favorite book, a book of Walter's, and I think decoloniality, to me, grabs me less.

So, because we do not have a lot of time, let me say why. I want to echo Tink's comment about the generality of the general approach in the book. I think both Walter and Catherine are guilty, I'm going to say just like this, I think they're guilty of idealism, nominalism, and a certain degree of generality. And perhaps I may say, too easy a way of explaining things which sometimes falls into the formulaic. What am I talking about? I'm talking about that if I tell you what I am drinking and instead of saying, "I'm drinking Diet Coke." And then you ask me "what are you drinking?" "I'm drinking a Coke product." And then you ask me again, "what are you drinking?" "I'm drinking a beverage." What are you drinking? Refreshments. What do you mean? What are you drinking? Liquidity. I think the move in the book is towards the liquidity instead of the concreteness of the historical and the specific situation of colonial situations. And perhaps Walter and Catherine will say, look, in relation to the western cognitive empire, we do need also our big abstraction.

So, we do need colonial situation, we do need that big singularity, we do need a big noun to, I suppose, because we're dealing with big processes and complex situations, we, I suppose, we have to be, I'm going to say it with quotation marks, we have to be somewhat simplistic in our discourse in countering that big phenomenon. And I will close down again with the same type of critique of a little bit of a, I say this carefully and empathetically, a little bit of a simplistic explanation that essentializes racial and ethnic categories, because what Walter did there is a very simplistic painting with the palettes of the white, brown, yellow, red, and brown. Now, if we look at 500 years, I don't know about you, but you know, after two or three generations, I get tangled up. Things will be very complicated precisely because we're dealing with complex processes and transformations. So, if we approach a country like Mexico, or a country like India with a colonial label or decoloniality label, in the last three, four, five hundred years on, unless we historicize carefully what we're talking about, we are going to be ending up in some type of general formulaic dichotomy of colonizer/colonized that, to me I think, at times, it will not help understand much less get out of situations.

And I will close out with the following general problem that is I embrace the problem myself. I'm not throwing the problems out; I'm embracing the problem. If the West is The House of Being, I suppose, both Walter and Catherine's wager is to go red, to go indigenous. Now, why not brown? Why not Latino? Why not white or ethnic white? They zero in on the indigenous, so the automatic question is why that operation, what he says, a leap into the void? Is it a way of presenting, as opposed to racist structure, something that they're not going to take and simply is a way of a provocation? You cannot be Walter, or you can say you're learning from Tink, and Tink only. You cannot essentialize the source of information, the native source of information, and disregard all the things, because otherwise you're simply privileging what I said before at the very beginning, the minority route or path into an honest production. So again, that is, I suppose, points of challenge to issues and complications that are not - if we put decoloniality with different categories, not essentialize the category, it cannot just be a feeling. It cannot just be an essentialist assumption of something. If we put decoloniality with the category of labor or geography and temporality. I said before, time spaces, anytime spaces, there will be a plurality of collectivity doing a plurality of things. So, therefore, there are no givens. And I close out with the following: here we are in the digital world. So, what does it mean to appeal to land or

time-space when we're dealing with the increasing penetration of other digital culture and the colonization of data and very complex phenomena that we're all trying to understand or catch up with that are taking us all by surprise and disrupting all the categories that, speaking of code, that is the dominant code nowadays? The Amazons, the Netflix. Thank you.

**Catherine Walsh:** I have a number of responses, Fernando. First, I think, and this isn't my response, it's not justification, but it's also thinking with what the project of the book was. It was to open a book series to begin to introduce the categories, the processes, the actions, the postures, the attitudes that underscore the series, but not to go into major abstraction or depth because it was an introductory book with the idea that this is a collective project, which is the series, and that other texts will follow from different authors, from different places, from different perspectives. So, we were both, I think Walter, if I can say this, we were both very careful about not assuming an authorship or an ownership of many of the issues that we cover. In my own case, as I mentioned in the beginning, we wrote in two different parts because part of our argument was, yes, this is different voices and different and different embodied people writing this from different histories, herstories and trajectories.

So, in that sense, my part takes what I consider essential is thinking from a lived praxis, both from a praxis that has crossed and been part of my story, but also or many of those social movements, communities, and people's which I've been asked to sit and listen to and work with. To thank, with more than anything. So, at least I can say in my part it's not a generality but it's rather thinking from people I'm in conversation continually with. Everyone, every example that's included in this first part is somehow part of my own road of walking, and asking, and thinking with which was a challenge in and of itself, because I had to leave a lot out. We had a certain length of the book that we had to keep in mind. But I also feel somewhat uncomfortable, Fernando, with some of your language, both in your comments now and your comments before. To think about minority-majority, to think about non-white as a category which, I believe Shamaanth put in one of the chats doesn't exist, which I agree does not exist. In the notion of the third world, the notion also that diversity and inclusion, that democracy or democracies are maybe part of decoloniality, which I would strongly disagree with. This is part of a much longer conversation that maybe we can have in some other space, but I'm very fearful of what I've referred to in the book as "decolonial dangers," as the notion of decoloniality is as true as Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang say making decolonization a metaphor, making it mean everything and taking away its significance of struggle, of doing, of action and of the intertwine of thought, of being, of knowledge, of life. So, that's my short response but I think we also need to be very cognizant and that goes back to Tink's words before of how we use language and what language signifies and constructs in terms of a particular view of peoples, of world, of struggle, of life.

**Walter Mignolo:** I disagree now with Fernando. First I agree and now disagree. I think you missed the point, you missed the target by far on two counts, and I will just mention the two counts. This is not a book on the tradition of Latin American philosophy or thought. It's like if you say to a psychologist kind of after Freud, you said, "Well, why don't you think about young and there are many... No." Quijano is our Freud, is our Marx, is the way we began to think about that. If you read my *The Idea of Latin America*, there you have a woman. No question about that. But Quijano offers something, he opens up the colonial matrix of power. So, you missed

the point on that. And the second point is when we talk about brown and yellow, etc. – it's not us, it's Immanuel Kant. It's Immanuel Kant that established the classification of people of color according to the four continents that was kind of already canonized in the 18th century.

So, the first target that you missed goes to the second. My part of the book is addressing Western epistemology as kind of, as I said before, as kind of breaking the code. So that is the main thing. I am not talking about *The Wretched of the Earth*; I am talking about how *The Wretched of the Earth* was possible. What is the logic, the system that made that possible? And once we know how the system works and continues to work, so what are the kinds of possibilities we have to get out? And that is where decoloniality is kind of the name, of the grammar, of many ways of decolonization. And I said in my first part that people are kind of doing today, trying to delink, get out, extricate themselves from what modernity, coloniality, neoliberalism or Marxists want them to be.

So that is what pluriversality means, it's where people began to take their destiny in their own hands, and they are starting to take destiny in their own hand because they began to realize that it's not just capitalism; it's larger than capitalism that's kind of controlling our life. So that is the structure. So, the question is, we have a macro-history of western micro-history and macro theory. So, if we don't do that, I say, well, you see, I told you. These people are not able to think by themselves. They need our theory in order to kind of understand themselves. That is the big point of my book. It's up, not down.

**Tink Tinker:** Thank you, I will in just a few words because we only have a few minutes left. If I talk about what we American Indians in the United States, indigenous peoples, native peoples on Turtle Island hope for, we do have a vision that is beginning to congeal about what we want to happen for our children and grandchildren. I ended a piece I wrote a year ago with the question: When I die and I go into the Wanagi world, will my ancestors recognize me as Indian? As native? As wazhazhe? I'm a citizen of the Osage Nation. Will they recognize me? Or will I have been so colonized that they, the old ones, will no longer recognize me as one of themselves? That's my greatest fear. I have a 12-year-old daughter. I have sons who are in their 40s and 30s, but I have a 12-year-old daughter and I'm really trying to coach her into understanding what it means to be wazhazhe.

How to handle herself as a wazhazhe woman so that our ancestors will recognize her when it's her time to cross over into that Wanagi world. That means we've got some serious decolonizing ahead of us. Some serious decoding of this colonial matrix of power and all that that represents. It's a matter of attacking all the institutions around us because none of them have any distance from or freedom from being colonizer institutions. Museums are filled with artifacts stolen from our ancestors' villages 100, 200 years ago. Those are colonial institutions of power. I've been invited to come look at exhibits that come to museums in Denver and I usually declined saying I'm just not a museum person, I can't give the museum that kind of credence. And it gets done the same way, all over the colonized world. In Taiwan it's Mandarin peoples who are the colonizers and so there's a new museum on the east coast of Taiwan in a city called Taitung, a new museum to indigenous people of Taiwan. And there are some 20 or 30 indigenous communities all isolated on the east coast of Taiwan. I went into the museum; my son lives there and he wanted to take me. I was struck with how this museum is just like every American Indian artifact anthropological museum in the U.S., and it's brand new. So, they had one nation, they called them, again, tribes just as colonizers do here. They want

to make sure we're not called "nations," because that gives a status equal to the United States. They want to make sure we know we're less than, so they call us "tribes."

Even the word nation is one of those nominative abstractions that doesn't quite work. But as I went from one room to the next room the museum had model exhibits of one tribe after another and all of their artifacts. So, we can't get away from colonialism even by leaving the United States and going to some place like Taiwan. That means we've got a lot of work to do. And I think that work is decolonizing – it's a verb, it's an action and it's really tough, for me, Catherine, to try and make decoloniality a verb, it really is. And impossible for me to go into an Indian community and tell them decoloniality is a verb. But I respect you all and look forward to more conversation. That's all I had to say.

**Victor Taylor:** Thank you very much, Tink. And, if I may, just very quickly, Roger, Charles H. Long, the great historian of religion taught for many years at Syracuse, went to Santa Barbara, he used to tell a story. I don't know the origin of it, but I'll sort of paraphrase it. There was a museum exhibition of an indigenous group of people, and they invited some members of the community to attend the opening and one ethnologist and anthropologist after another gave a report on the community and the people. And, at the end of the session, they turned to the representatives of the community and they said, well, what do you think of our exhibit? And Professor Long said, the response was from the community, "these sound like very interesting people, we hope to meet them someday." If you knew Charles Long you know the significance of his stories.

Thank you very much. He was a remarkable professor and person. I want to thank everyone, especially our panelists tonight. I think it was a wonderful discussion, it was a wonderful day, actually.