



The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options (Latin america otherwise: languages, empires, nations)

By Walter D. Mignolo

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During the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, coloniality emerged as a new structure of power as Europeans colonized the Americas and built on the ideas of Western civilization and modernity as the endpoints of historical time and Europe as the center of the world. Walter D. Mignolo argues that coloniality is the darker side of Western modernity, a complex matrix of power that has been created and controlled by Western men and institutions from the Renaissance, when it was driven by Christian theology, through the late twentieth century and the dictates of neoliberalism. This cycle of coloniality is coming to an end. Two main forces are challenging Western leadership in the early twenty-first century. One of these, “dewesternization,” is an irreversible shift to the East in struggles over knowledge, economics, and politics. The second force is “decoloniality.” Mignolo explains that decoloniality requires delinking from the colonial matrix of power underlying Western modernity to imagine and build global futures in which human beings and the natural world are no longer exploited in the relentless quest for wealth accumulation.

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Editorial Review

Review

“It is dense, but refreshing and ultimately uplifting. Walter Mignolo’s visionary ideas about the decline and fall of (Western) modernity and hence leadership should be on the syllabus in schools, let alone higher education institutions.” - EC, *The Latin American Review of Books*

“Such a rich and ambitious book, apparently unafraid of taking risks, will prove controversial for it messes with many a wasp’s nest. *The Darker Side of Western Modernity* is recommended reading for those in search of a challenge rather than a confirmation.” - Sara Castro-Klaren, *Modern Language Notes*

“...the book is elegantly written, even poetic or lyrical at times...I have always appreciated Mignolo’s ability to refine and rework his ideas, and this book seems to be the best example of such evolutionary thinking yet.” - Darrel Allan Wanzer, *Cultural Studies*

“*The Darker Side of Western Modernity* is a significant, visionary, and hopeful text. More than just revealing the logic and strategy at work in the ‘darker side of Western modernity,’ this book makes evident and gives life to decolonial delinking and thought. Walter D. Mignolo’s eye is toward emergent processes and projects of political-epistemic resistance, disobedience, and transformation that give sustenance, reason, and concretion to the prospect and anticipation of other possible worlds. Through these processes and projects, Mignolo remaps the order of knowing, reading, and doing, while also indicating paths and perspectives for significantly different communal futures.”—**Catherine E. Walsh**, Director, Doctoral Program in Latin American Cultural Studies, Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, Quito, Ecuador

“Walter D. Mignolo is one of our leading theorists of coloniality/modernity and decolonial thinking. With this superb book, the third in an ‘unintended trilogy’ exploring the nature and limits of modern social thought, Mignolo continues his ambition to ‘break the Western code’ embodied in its rhetoric of modernity and logic of coloniality. This volume brings to light a darker side of the project of modernity, the oppressive relations that were at its heart, and offers decolonial options for the building of communal futures different from our pasts. It is necessary reading for all those interested in the emancipatory potential of social theory for dealing with the challenges of the twenty-first century.”—**Gurminder K. Bhambra**, author of *Rethinking Modernity: Postcolonialism and the Sociological Imagination*

“It is dense, but refreshing and ultimately uplifting. Walter Mignolo’s visionary ideas about the decline and fall of (Western) modernity and hence leadership should be on the syllabus in schools, let alone higher education institutions.”
(*The Latin American Review of Books*)

About the Author

Walter D. Mignolo is Director of the Institute for Global Studies in Humanities, William H. Wannamaker Professor of Literature and Romance Studies, and Professor of Cultural Anthropology at Duke University. He is the author of *The Idea of Latin America*; *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*; and *The Darker Side of The Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality and Colonization* and a co-editor of *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires*.

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