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Jennifer Clary-Lemon and David M. Grant (Eds.), **Decolonial Conversations in Posthuman and New Material Rhetorics**, Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2022, 252 pp., $129.95 (hardcover).

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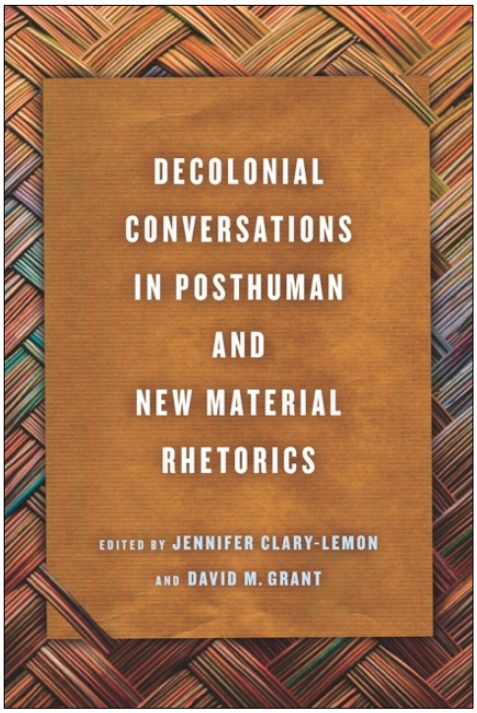

Editors Jennifer Clary-Lemon and David M. Grant have compiled a fascinating decolonial intervention that is both timely and long overdue. The central argument of the book revolves around the synergistic potential of aligning new materialisms and decolonial action as mutually beneficial frameworks for transformative action, highlighting an existing scholarly gap between the two. Featuring contributions from experts in rhetoric, composition, and communication studies, it presents alternative modes of thinking that not only broaden intellectual vistas but also encourage a "healing" discourse. By deliberately advocating and making space for scholarship that decenters Euro-Western theoretical frameworks, ***Decolonial Conversations in Posthuman and New Material Rhetorics*** also unpretentiously acknowledges the privileged positionality of the North American academy. Perhaps most important, the book is an interdisciplinary call for collaboration that considers the globality of the Anthropocene without being limited to national borders or performative at best. The "anthropogenic turn" is meant to serve as a bridge and an *epistemic* tool, to reorient toward a desirable and decolonial future for all. More poignantly—and radically—it effectively counters the frustrations and anxieties of otherness and marginality in the fields of writing, rhetoric, and communication studies.

In "The Politics of Recognition in Building Pluriversal Possibilities: Posthumanism, *Buen Vivir*, and Zapatismo," Robert Lestón invokes the works of Frantz Fanon and the notion of "decoloniality" as an "interconnected global struggle" that "belongs to those who have suffered the most under 500 years of colonization" (p. 22). Lestón further contends that prevailing posthumanist perspectives fall short of accepting diverse knowledges and ways of life beyond the Eurocentric. Instead, Lestón advocates for drawing insights from the specificities of *buen vivir* movements among Ecuadorians and Zapatistas to make way for epistemic "delinking" (Mignolo, 2007) or *desprenderse* (Quijano, 2000) that detangles oneself from Euro-Western history of thought and *relinks* traditional ways of "being" and living as central to ones' pluriversal identities. In that sense, rhetoric and writing scholars ought to be deliberately complicit in their decolonizing efforts of helping communities that have "ancestral, border, and non-Western cultural knowledges" (p. 23). *Listening* as a way of resistance and subversion to restore the dignity that the Zapatistas lost with the onset of colonization or finding ways to change the mode of *thinking* attached to colonizers' discourse are practical accomplishments within the community. In a

similar vein, the author alludes to the indigenous Ecuadorian idea of *buen vivir* or *sumak kawsay*, each of which embodies the idea of well-being and having a fulfilling life, embracing both humans and nature—contrasting Western ideologies centered around progress and modernity, which often adhere to a "linear" developmental logic. As an epistemological line of thought, *buen vivir* invokes a nonlinear conception of temporality that concedes a connected past, present, and future, without the need to "overcome" one's present.

In the succeeding chapter, "Performing Complex Recognitions: (De)Colonial (Mis)Recognitions as Systemic Revision," authors Kelly Medina-López and Kelli Sharp-Hoskins narrate their shared mentoring journey while addressing the struggle for representation in academia, issues of misrecognition in academic fields (e.g., Chicanx studies), and institutional visibility through a student named Itzel. As an attempt to counter this problem, the authors advocate for employing complex recognitions as a methodology, disrupting closed loops of acknowledgment through decolonial misrecognitions. To that end, the notion of "systemic revision" aims to rectify a narrowly shaped Western canon while opening up new possibilities for the future.

Similar to Lestón's opening thesis in the book, "Listening Otherwise: Arboreal Rhetorics and Tree-Human Relations," penned by Ehren Helmut Pflugfelder and Shannon Kelly, also echoes the need to *listen*—to the land, the trees, and traditional environmental knowledge (TEKs), often neglected in the Euro-Western world. Using the case study of the Elliott State Forest in Oregon, this chapter succeeds in its purpose to amplify Indigenous approaches, overcome colonial cosmologies, and further the discussion on "listening otherwise" for an arboreal rhetoric, theorized as an "anti-colonial methodology to listen beyond the human, and to disrupt Euro-Western colonial knowledge production" (p. 69). Pflugfelder and Kelly construct a material, rhetorical methodology of listening in tandem with TEKs to nurture human-nature and nonhuman relations and allow humans to assume the role of nature's students rather than its masters.

Spotlighting the climate catastrophe, in "Smoke and Mirrors: Recreating Material Relation(ship)s through Mexica Story," Christina V. Cedillo presents the story of the Mexica (Aztec) trickster deity Tezcatlipoca or Smoking Mirror as an onto-rhetorical framework for knowing our relational place in the world. The author delves into the Deer Park, Texas, petrochemical plant explosion through the lens of Tezcatlipoca's narrative, which reveals the urgent need to reconsider human agency amid the unprecedented environmental crisis, all the more emphasizing our interconnectedness with the nonhuman world.

In another vein, A. I. Ramírez addresses the perpetual anxieties triggered by the imperialistic nature of the global border industrial complex (GBIC) among refugees, migrant mothers, and transwomen. To analyze GBIC border murals, Ramírez applies a novel and perhaps one of the most intriguing methodologies in this edited collection—"*facultades ser pentinas*, a pluriversatile theory informed by ancient Mexican/Mexica serpentine awareness, and Gloria Anzaldúa's theory of *la facultad*, which she describes as psychic reality" (p. 116; emphasis in original). Combined with auto-ethnographic observation methods, fieldwork, and sensory data, the author seeks to explain how border murals, as visual media, transmit what a border feels like. As a result, this project explores murals and public art as a

serpent-like symbol, embodying a complex plurality through a *facultades serpentinas* and *lecho de serpientes* (nest of serpents) heuristic. The latter examines the interplay of overlapping phenomena, including the history and emotional imprints of national borders and border wall murals, using layers of paint, sounds, and emotional residue as research data. By using the womb metaphor as a site of embodied intergenerational trauma, this text tenderly examines the vulnerability of migration, displacement, racialization, and effects of labor exploitation on marginalized groups.

Guided by the works of Jane Bennett's "thing power" and Kim TallBear's "indigenous metaphysics," activist-scholar Matthew Whitaker, in his chapter, "Corn, Oil, and Cultivating Dissent through 'Seeds of Resistance'": A Case Study on Rhetorics of Survivance and the Protest Assemblage," sheds light on the Cowboy Indian Alliance in Nebraska and its tribal Ponka corn-planting ceremonies as a form of advocacy. As a decolonial entity, the alliance takes up activities that obscure the boundary between performance and protest, and defy hegemonic structures of life and lifeways, serving as an intentional response to settler colonialism through a rhetoric that juxtaposes sacred corn and landscapes against oil and pipelines.

In the penultimate chapter, "Top Down, Bottom Up: Ecological Restoration, Rhetorical Resistance, and Decolonization," authors Judy Holiday and Elizabeth Lowry further add to the scholarship on new material, decolonial, and posthuman inquiry. Exemplifying two legal cases that granted "personhood" to nonhuman entities such as the Colorado and Whanganui Rivers, they discuss prospects of "ideal cohabitation" for sustainable human and nonhuman futures, based on Indigenous knowledges, egalitarianism, and reciprocity. Through a robust critique of colonial epistemologies that situate humans outside the natural world, Holiday and Lowry argue that "ecological thinking" (Code, 2006) and nature's personhood decenter humans within the world, and not *above* or *central* to it.

Finally, Andrea Riley Mukavetz and Malea Powell's "Becoming Relations: Braiding an Indigenous Manifesto" turns to braiding sweetgrass (see Kimmerer, 2013) as a means of Indigenous research methodology and "embodied collaborative practice" (p. 194), going beyond conventional modes of academic writing and inquiry. The process of "braiding" sweetgrass and teaching the braiding act is a lesson in reciprocity, collaboration, and mentorship. More notably, it evokes an understanding that land and plants produce knowledge—unbeknownst to humans. According to Mukavetz and Powell, "beadwork or quillwork making becomes an intersection of history and creation, a constellation of epistemology and existence" (p. 201). Malea rightly recalls the oft-repeated aversions that Euro-Western audiences have toward Indigenous theoretical and methodological frameworks at academic conferences, with constant struggles for the latter to justify their work in the language of the colonizer.

Encompassing both prominent and emerging voices, this book draws from posthumanist writings by scholars including Jane Bennet, Robin Wall Kimmerer, Donna Haraway, Rosi Braidotti, Elizabeth Grosz, and Karen Barad. A compelling read from start to finish—the collection is an excellent addition to a transdisciplinary canon that enriches the fields of postcolonialism, decolonial rhetoric, composition studies, indigenous studies, and feminist studies.

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