

Acknowledgements

The seed for this book was planted in a confrontation between the ‘suits’ and the activists on a street outside the Cape Town Convention Centre, South Africa in February 2014. The international Mining Indaba was taking place at this venue, while the attendees of the ‘Alternative Mining Indaba’ had convened a short distance away. Taking part in the street march to the Convention Centre, I observed the reactions of both sets of protagonists: Fury, outrage, anger and frustration on the side of the activists, shouting and dancing in the street; indifference, irritation and bemused concern on the part of the mining executives and their supporters, as they watched impassively. The rift between the two sides seemed intractable. ‘How unproductive,’ I thought, ‘and how sad that we can’t find a common language.’ And so began a five-year journey into the languages we speak around mining, development and sustainability, and their translation into legal and economic concepts.

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