JUSTICE AS RECOGNITION IN THE ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITY

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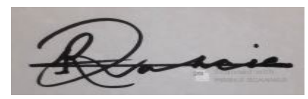
DECLARATION

I, ROMAIN FRANCIS, declare that the doctoral thesis that I herewith submit for the qualification of **Doctor of Philosophy in Political Studies** at the University of the Witwatersrand is my own work, is original, and I have not previously submitted it for a qualification at another institution of higher education.

Date: 30 June 2022 **Signature:** 

Wisdom is like a baobab tree; no one individual can embrace it

~African Proverb by the Akan and Ewe~

The winds that sometimes take something we love, are the same that bring us something we learn to love. Therefore, we should not cry about something that was taken from us, but, yes, love what we have been given. Because what is really ours is never gone forever

~Bob Marley~

Some rich man came and raped the land, nobody caught 'em
Put up a bunch of ugly boxes and, Jesus, people bought 'em
And they called it paradise, the place to be,…Who will provide the grand design, what is yours and what is mine? Cause there is no more new frontier, we have got to make it here
We satisfy our endless needs and justify our bloody deeds
In the name of destiny and in the name of God

~The Eagles, *The Last Resort* (song)~

If I'm laden at all
I'm laden with sadness
That everyone's heart
Isn't filled with the gladness
Of love for one another

~The Hollies, *He ain't heavy, he's my brother* (song)~

Shall I not have intelligence with earth? Am I not partly leaves and vegetable mould myself?

~Henry David Thoreau~

When a man moves away from nature, his heart becomes hard.

~Lakota Proverb~

You cannot know the good in yourself if you do not see it in others.

~Zulu Proverb~

DEDICATION

To the Glory of My Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The only true constant in life. Creator of All things beautiful and healer of all pain and suffering.

In Gratitude to the African ancestors and indigenous peoples of this land. The original custodians and shapers of this amazing ecology.

In Reverent Memory of my indentured foremothers and fathers. Cultivators of the earth and hard grafters that laid the foundations for future generations.

In Memory of my grandparents, Jayamony Savrimuthoo Francis, Lily Anthonyamal Francis, Perumal Pillay and Munniamma Pillay. Thank you for building a family and creating a new life for us amidst the individual turmoil and sense of alienation and abandonment you endured. I am forever in your debt.

In Loving Memory of my grandmother, Munniamma Pillay (Aaya). A barefooted market gardener, midwife, community caregiver, and lover of all creation. Whose educatedness and wisdom transcended the limits of her illiteracy. Thank you for instilling in a lost and lonely little boy, who was down on self-belief, that he was worth something.

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It has been a long and arduous journey to see this PhD through to its completion. There were moments when I felt like giving up. Self-doubt often crept in, and the pressures of life seemed overwhelming. If it were not for the undying love, support, and generosity of spirit of my family, friends and colleagues, I would not have reached this point. In fact, I was blessed to have key individuals through the course of my life's journey up to this moment that were beacons of light, guiding me through the sea of darkness. This work is the fruit of their love and humanity.

My heartfelt gratitude goes out to my supervisor Lawrence Hamilton. This PhD took three times longer than it should have. Given the high demand for his expertise, and the fact that there were many students who were able to complete their studies on time, sticking with someone like me required fortitude and trust in my abilities that I did not have in myself. He continued to support the ongoing requests to extend my studies when he could easily have chosen not to. I first encountered Lawrence eighteen years ago when I was a young undergraduate majoring in Political Sciences at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). He had just completed a PhD at Cambridge University, published a ground-breaking book, *The Political Philosophy of Needs*, and decided to come back home to share his knowledge and wisdom with his fellow South Africans. His passion as a teacher and political thinker, philosopher, and researcher was infectious, and it left an indelible mark on me. It is truly special when such moments come full circle. To you Lawrence, *Gratias tibi ago*!

Completing a PhD is a test of character and is a reflection and celebration of one's upbringing. I was blessed with amazing parents who happened to be even more special human beings – I am honoured to be your child and to call you my Mother and my Father. My mother, Mariamma Francis, devoted her life to creating a better life for me, despite the challenges that she had to endure. She instilled in me the value of discipline, hard work and perseverance. Her love for me is unbounding. It was my mother who was the bedrock on which my life was built. My father, Matthew Francis, introduced me to the world of books at a young age and nurtured my curiosity in making sense of my existential reality. As a true educator, he told me that getting good grades, acquiring a qualification, and receiving multiple accolades is not as important as what you learn. Through the course of my life's education, he has not only been a voice of reason and loving father, but also an intellectual sounding board and my most avid critic. It was my parents that taught me how to love and treat people, and to respect all life on earth. However, it was their commitment to justice that is the most endearing quality they passed on to me. This approach to life may have not made them popular amongst people, but everyone knew that, if you needed someone, they would always be there without fear, favour or prejudice. If it were not for their example, sacrifices and sound parenting, I would be less of a person.

My extended family have been pivotal to my development and this PhD belongs to them as much as it does me. I am a product of the joint family system, which is a triumph of the post-indentured Indian community in South Africa. My mother and I lived in the home of her sister, my late aunt, Devi, and her family, especially her daughter Isayvanie who was my "little mother", along with my grandmother and Aunty Sathie. Their care and support in my formative years of life gave me a sense of security. My beloved Aunty Kamala and her family, her husband Uncle Ajith (who is late), and her children, Girish Bhai, Adeshia, and Rosie gave me unconditional love throughout my life, especially through the most difficult times. I also remember with fondness and gratitude the love of my dearly departed family members who filled my life with joy and happiness and taught me valuable life lessons that I cherish: Big Amma (Aunty Molly), Uncle James, Uncle Earnest, Mummy Aka, Uncle Sam and Uncle Les. The rest of my extended family both on the paternal and maternal sides have all played some part in my intellectual and spiritual growth for which I am forever grateful.

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My entry into academia was tentative, and I was reluctant to embrace it as a career had it not been for the late Alexius Amtaika, Raphael de Kadt and Jeremy Grest. They literally forced me into becoming a tutor in the Department of Political Sciences at UKZN and entrusted me with responsibilities beyond what I thought I could do. If it were not for this initial push, I may have wallowed in this negative self-perception and would not have continued with my academic pursuits. However, my greatest influence within academe was my former Masters' supervisor, mentor and friend, Harald Witt. It was my introduction to him and the rest of the staff in the *Economic History and Development Studies* programme, including the late Bill Freund, David Moore, Blessing Karumbidza, and my faithful friend, Clive Greenstone, that gave me the affirmation that I had a place in academia. Clive convinced the programme that I was a worthy and capable academic, which opened the door for me to teach in *Economic History and Development Studies*. This was the impetus I needed to forge a life in academia. It was Harald Witt, however, who planted and nurtured the seed of critical consciousness. His postgraduate classes in *Agriculture and Rural Development*, and *Environmental History and Policy*, as well as his undergraduate classes that I tutored in, namely, *The Political Economy of Food in a Global Context* and *Political Ecology*, were spiritually and intellectually transformative. It was through his teaching and mentorship that I was able to reconcile my childhood passion for the natural world with a desire to contribute to social justice. His commitment to ecological justice (which brought together environmental concerns with the struggles of marginalised people) as a teacher, academic, and earth activist is unparalleled. Through my involvement in community outreach and joint learnership programmes that were his brainchild, I was able to see the interconnectedness of life in all its complexity with a degree of lucidness that was awe-inspiring. I fell in love with academia as an ethical and human-oriented project because of him. As a practitioner of decoloniality (long before the concept and school were formally introduced in South Africa), he lived the decolonial

motto of *I am where I think*. He, along with the rest of the individuals mentioned here, transcended social identity (and individual biography and geography of reasoning) and rose to the constitution of the true human. To decolonise, there needs to be more people like them!

My opportunity to become a fully-fledged academic was made possible by the University of South Africa (Unisa). Before I joined the institution, I was confronting an uncertain future within academia. I was without the financial means to support myself and desperately trying to further my studies. With the support of the visionary and strong leadership of Rosemary Moeketsi, the former Dean of the College of Human Sciences, I found my footing and discovered the school of decoloniality. She motivated me to attend the *Decoloniality Summer School* hosted in Barcelona in July 2013. This proved to be yet another turning point in my intellectual journey. Decoloniality shed insight and provided me with a clearer understanding of the source of social injustices and why academe needs to shift its focus to interhuman ethics in order to chart a new path for humanity. Unisa also afforded me a chance to meet new people and forge lifelong friendships that have become the mainstay of my tenure at the institution. Teboho Molete and Neo Masutha have been a source of relief from the mundane rigmarole of contemporary academic life and motivated me to reach this point in my studies. Teboho almost lost his life due to malaria whilst conducting fieldwork for his doctoral study and endured the worst pain of all, losing his son, yet despite these trials and tribulations, he managed to complete his studies. I drew inspiration from his experience. I would like to take this opportunity to also thank the Research Directorate of the University of South Africa, which provided me with the research leave and funding for me to work towards finishing this project.

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My wife also had to endure many years whilst working and being a mother to our young daughter. She suffered more than I, having to resign from work in early 2021, in order to dedicate all her efforts to completing her PhD. The fortitude, desire, and commitment she showed amid such adversity was inspirational – it motivated me to try harder. She is my best friend, confidante, cheerleader, soul mate and co-parent. Her personhood is second to none; she is honourable, intelligent and gentle. She always believed in me when I no longer had faith in myself. It was her love and devotion that kept me going. Mpumi, we finally made it!!! Last, and certainly not least, my beautiful daughter Maya Mnqobi, the ultimate love of my life and my greatest achievement. She suffered the most through this PhD, as I was an ‘absent-present’ father for much of her five-and-a-half years of life. Time lost can certainly not be made up, however, I hope that this sacrifice will inspire her to also pursue her life goals and to never give up or give in – to stay true to her name – no matter the circumstances.

Abstract

This thesis postulates that an alternate mode of recognition is required to develop an authentic conception of justice that reconciles the subaltern's desire for dignity with affording greater love, care, and respect for nature. Extant redistributive and recognitive justice frames within traditional western political theory and philosophy are strictly anthropocentric and restrict nature to a purely utilitarian function in the satisfaction of human needs. This maintains a moral hierarchy between humans and nature that perpetuates ecological injustice. Using decoloniality as both a method and critical analytical framework, this thesis develops and employs the coloniality of nature to illustrate that the continued destruction, exploitation, and disrespect for nature is fundamentally tied to the misrecognition of subaltern people. Misrecognition is a product of a deep-seated sociogenic problem of coloniality introduced during European colonisation, which consolidated the superior status of a hegemonic western subjectivity. Other experiences, knowledges, practices, and ways of articulating human-nature relations were rendered as non-scientific and superstitious and devoid of any value. The misrecognition of subaltern people denied humanity an opportunity to learn from other viewpoints and integrate them into an inclusive idea of justice where no single subjectivity assumes a dominant status. Centered on a decolonial love predicated on Fanon's idea of "building the world of the *You*", not the *I*, *Us* or *We*, this thesis draws on the principles of transculturalism and border thinking to promulgate a practical idea of justice as recognition in the context of an ecological community, that is more inclusive of other living and non-living entities. It advances a dialogical mode of recognition that attempts to achieve the following objectives: i) promote critical introspection amongst the subaltern to understand how their experience of (mis)recognition is connected to the destruction of nature, and how their attitudes towards nature were altered by the introduction of western modernity, capitalism and colonisation, ii) enable those social groups that are on the top of the ontological hierarchy to understand their role in such processes and how to address them, and iii) to demonstrate that increasing humanity's love, care, and respect for nature is not possible without first addressing misrecognition between people.

Keywords: recognition, subaltern, ecological injustice, misrecognition, coloniality of nature, coloniality, decoloniality, transculturalism, border thinking, ecological community

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Background and Rationale

This research asserts that an alternative mode of recognition is required to reconcile the desire of subaltern people for recognition (self-esteem and dignity) with a practical environmental ethic that affords greater love, care and respect for nature. Traditional recognitive modes of justice are predominantly needs- and rights-based and are strictly anthropocentric. Within these frames, nature only possesses instrumental value in the extension of recognition to marginalised people and remains on the periphery of our moral consciousness. Rationalising affording nature greater moral value is often restricted to a prudential utilitarian logic, which is reflected in the principle of intergenerational justice. This principle prescribes that human self-preservation is contingent on protecting and conserving the natural world. If future generations – whose interests, we have a moral duty and obligation to protect – are going to obtain self-actualisation, the necessary material conditions must be available. In this instance, material conditions refer to the abundant resources provided by nature in the form of plants, animals, ecosystems, and the natural climatic cycles and processes that produce and sustain them. The idea that non-humans, in and of themselves, are 'valueless' and assume real purpose and meaning only after being humanised, has its origins in western philosophical thought. Locke and Marx, for example, held the common view that nature only derives ultimate value as a resource in creative self-development (Gottlieb, 1997: xiii). Only after nature passes through human hands and becomes a product of our work (labour power) and part of our social reality, do humans see themselves in the world they have created. This conception of nature's value promulgated a Promethean ethic that normalised humans' mastery and control over nature, which has, ironically, perpetuated the misrecognition of marginalised people, and exacerbated environmental destruction: thus, maintaining the alienation of humanity's separation from the natural world. Western philosophical thought, therefore, simply reproduced the Judeo-Christian belief that humans have the God-given right to dominate the earth for their own interests. The possibility that other entities (both animate and inanimate) might have a destiny and purpose outside of human interests was incomprehensible (Næss, 1989).

Environmental philosophy emerged in response to the strict anthropocentrism endemic to western philosophical thought and political theory. Although there were different approaches within this unorthodox school of thought, they were predicated on a common "ideology of relatedness" that was designed to extend greater value to nature (Kirkman, 1997: 194). Rather than being apart from nature, environmental philosophy tried to relocate humans within an ecological community. In the ecological community, there is no hierarchy at the level of the ecosystem and there are no "kings of beasts or lowly ants" (Bookchin, 1980: 59). Humans constitute just another component of an interconnected dynamic nexus of life and are of equal value to all other entities. Widening the concept of community to include the green environment implied that other non-human entities possessed an intrinsic value and good in themselves and were, therefore, also worthy of moral recognition. This is consistent with an *Aristotelian teleological essentialism*, which espoused that each thing was designed to fulfil a specific purpose and function.

The more radical stream of deep ecology embarked on a grand project of deriving an environmental ethics from this Aristotelian premise. Deep ecologists, such as Peter Singer and Tom Reagan, attempted to develop a conceptual framework for affording value to *other* beings outside of rationality to accommodate non-humans (Simmons, 2009: 23). In his seminal work, *Animal Liberation: A New Ethics for Our Treatment of Animals,* Singer (1975) promulgated a rights-based argument justifying the protection of animals in order of sentience based on their experience of pain and suffering (Francione & Garner, 2010; Atkins-Sayre, 2010: 10). Paradoxically, this form of ethical reasoning relegated non-sentient creatures, and the biosphere which supports all life, to an inferior status within the ecological community.

Other approaches within environmental philosophy attempted to rescue the idea of an ecological community from the moral hierarchy espoused by the biocentrism of deep ecology. Centred on Aldo Leopold's (1949) *Land Ethic*, ecological communitarianism adopted a natural-systems-oriented (ecocentric) approach to determining the moral considerability of individual components in "ethical sequence". In other words, the respective value of an individual entity is based on the extent to which it encompasses all the other elements, thus contributing to the flourishing of the entire system. According to Leopold (1949: 224), a thing is therefore "right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community" and is wrong "when it tends otherwise". Whilst ecological communitarianism attempted to revive an egalitarian conception of "community" by recognising every member as a citizen, it could not escape the hierarchisation of value because one component will always contribute relatively more or less than another to the effective functioning of system. In fact, depending on the context and the natural process of evolution, a component may have been particularly useful at one point, but become extremely destructive at another. Not only does this make environmental conflict management difficult, but it is also heavily reliant on constant scientific monitoring and knowledge construction about niche ecosystems. The scientism of ecological communitarianism makes for an impractical environmental ethic because every biome is unique and in a state of continuous flux. It is impossible for every person and human community to gain full scientific knowledge of the natural (and the human-made) environment that they either live, work or play in.

From the preceding discussion, it is clear that environmental philosophy failed to generate an all-inclusive, non-hierarchal, and practicable environmental ethics. The main reason for the shortfall is that environmental philosophy turned a blind eye to a simple fact to which it ironically concedes; that humans and God are at the summit of the chain of being (Doppelt, 2002: 400; Hinchman & Hinchman, 1989: 217). This was not to affirm humans' dominion over nature. Instead, it pointed to the fact that, compared to other members in the ecological community, humans are cognitively, spiritually and morally superior. By implication, the fate of the entire ecosystem and well-being of individual components, ultimately rest with humans. In other words, we (humans) have the means to contemplate how all things fit together in this dynamic web of life. As a result, we have the power to find pathways, whether spiritualist (deep ecology) or empirical (ecological communitarianism) to connect with nature at an innermost level. Unfortunately, such reasoning is romantic and misanthropic.

In the case of deep ecology, it assumes that everyone can find a path to a form of self-enlightenment which sacralises nature: and thus, entertains the possibility of becoming a mass movement. This is extremely naïve because it underplays the extent to which a range of factors from our exposure to green environments, socialisation, immersion within a capitalist culture, and education determines our relative appreciation of nature. Deep ecology restricted humanity's spiritual connection to the ecological community to just non-human sentient beings. There are non-western cultures that view what is ordinarily classified as non-sentient, such as rivers and mountains, as 'living' forces because they embody and sustain other life forms, which include humans. For the majority of Southern African Bantu-speaking peoples, rivers and riparian systems, are responsible for maintaining the intricate balance between social, spiritual and physical worlds. Natural water bodies consist of spirits that are responsible for bringing healing, fertility and morality. Animals, such as snakes, frogs, crabs, and water birds, which inhabit these ecosystems, are emissaries of the water spirits. Any harm done to them is a sign of disrespect against the water spirit and warrants severe punishment. In fact, the water spirit on occasion manifests in human form to vent her anger and displeasure at human infractions against local ecosystems. Some communities have appropriated the idea of the water spirit to mount significant political opposition against ecologically destructive social, political, and economic development projects. The Ambuya Juliana movement in the 1990s, for example, emerged in response to severe droughts in southern Zimbabwe. The prophetess, Juliana, after whom the movement was named, claimed to be an emissary of the water spirit (*njuzu*). She came to inform people that the drought was punishment for the breakdown in respect for the Earth's resources and specifically lamented the construction of dams and drilling of boreholes, as the cause of the drought (Bernard, 2003: 151). She issued harsh taboos from banning dam constructions, bore-hole drilling, the killing of wild animals and plants, and immersion of metal and enamel plated pots in rivers. Adherence to these measures was necessary for the drought to be lifted, as it would encourage the return of the *njuzu,* who would regenerate natural hydrological systems (mountain springs, aquifers and rivers). A significant number of people heeded Juliana's call (ibid). By anthropomorphising nature, they were able to associate human virtues of empathy, reciprocity, and redemption with non-humans, which has the power to generate a practical environmental ethic, as reflected in the above example. However, it also creates a situation whereby we (humans) through close observance and appreciation of nature can draw moral and other life lessons from it. In other words, other sentient and non-sentient members of the ecological community are "teachers" from whom we (humans) can learn. This breaks from the belief that we (humans) are cognitively, morally, and spiritually superior. In fact, indigenous cosmographies illustrate the potential for an environmental ethic that is truly ecocentric and eliminates any appeal to a hierarchy of being. This marks a distinct departure from environmental philosophy's idea of an ecological community.

Ecological communitarianism's subscription to scientific principles governing natural ecosystems, such as homeostasis and the law of entropy to generate care and moral consideration for nature, was also flawed. Whilst the principles of modern science assumes the mantle of a universal episteme, it does not have the same resonance for people as other non-scientific epistemes that do not subscribe to a Cartesian dualism (separation of the spiritual from the physical world).

Irrespective of the differences in approach, the limitations and oversights of environmental philosophy illustrated above, exist because they are a product of the same geopolitics of knowledge. Environmental philosophy provided a radical critique of western philosophy and political theory from within a system of thought that was informed by a hegemonic western subjectivity. Other 'voices', insights, and experiences of human-nature relations were not an integral part of constructing a 'universal' environmental ethic. For an environmental ethic to work and be truly universal, it must not only accommodate, but involve and reflect, different cultures, spiritual belief systems, and nationalities. Put differently, an environmental ethic is ineffectual in the absence of a complementary inter-human ethic. To transform our attitude towards nature and resolve the ecological crisis, humans must first find a way of working together, which poses its own challenges. As the popular American scientist, Carl Sagan, stated towards the end of his testimony before the US Congress hearing on climate change in 1985, addressing the problem of climate change requires "a degree of amity between nations" that certainly "does not exist today".[1] Sagan's intuitive statement certainly rings true now as it did back then, as the Global North and Global South struggle to reach a consensus on a fair trade-off of environmental benefits and burdens to mitigate the effects of climate change. However, his sentiment does not only apply to the realm of global politics (inter-state relations), but also at the most fundamental level of intersubjectivity (between individuals and social groups). Everyone interacts with nature within their own local ecologies, which they share with other people. Those spaces reflect a common, but divided history that resulted in competing and conflicting ideas, experiences, and appreciation of nature due to political and sociological processes. Crucially, these processes were also responsible for emphasising difference by generating perceptions of people based on social markers (viz. race, culture, religion and nationality). In fact, these ideas were used to legitimise the conquest and control of specific social groups and their surrounding natural environments. Whilst this determined how the different social groups came to relate to nature, its most profound effect was that it negatively altered how we (humans) came to view and treat one another. It is the lingering pejorative perceptions of one another that pose the greatest obstacle to obtaining amity in our search for a common solution to the ecological crisis.

It follows that the pursuit of an authentic approach to ecological justice that embraces all members in the ecological community (living and non-living), depends on there being mutual recognition between people. Whilst mutual recognition is a major conceptual tool within the strictures of western philosophy and political theory, that has been used to develop ideas about social justice, its application in the context of ecological justice is restricted to enhancing the social and psychological well-being of marginalised groups. These approaches simply reify the conventional anthropocentric view of nature as possessing only instrumental value. Since nature does not possess the capacity for moral reasoning, which is a core requisite for being an agent of justice, it

[1] Sagan's recorded testimony is available on YouTube at the following URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wp-WiNXH6hI (Accessed: 26 December 2021).

does not fall within the ambit of mutual recognition. In other words, it is not a self-conscious being that can afford dignity and respect to a human or creature nor, for that matter, does it have any moral obligation to do so. For recognition to be mutual, it must be intersubjective. This implies that it requires two self-conscious beings (i.e., two humans). That said, there are instances where recognition is purely monologic; where one self-conscious being continues to afford certain values, namely, love and self-esteem to another human that is incapable of reason due to some severe disability (Ikäheimo & Laitinen, 2007: 46). In such a context it is problematic to assume that both individuals are self-conscious and that such a relation is based on mutual recognition. In fact, the only characteristic that renders the disabled person different from any other object in nature (i.e., non-humans) is that they are human in physical appearance and biological form. However, the severely disabled person and non-humans are *disabled* in a particularly important way vis-à-vis the process of mutual recognition in terms of the traditional Hegelian sensibility. Both do not possess the powers to apply to the material world to create a significant object which is a medium of intersubjective recognition serving as a material basis of mutuality. As a result, they are incapable of engaging in meaningful work giving creative expression and being involved in relative role playing across the different spheres of society. In spite of this reality, we continue to grant certain universal rights and freedoms to disabled persons on the basis of their being human and that they add a particular value to our lives or that we have certain obligations to them based on kinship relations or, in some instances, out of duty to preserve the life of another human being. It begs the question: If a self-conscious person can extend recognition to another person that is not self-conscious, why can't a similar logic be applied to formulate a conception of justice that is morally more inclusive of nature? This does not entail rationalising the extension of human-like rights to non-human nature. Instead, it simply calls for the liberation of non-human nature from the "status of human resource, human product and human caricature" (Rodman, 1977: 101). This requires a novel and effective approach to theorising. As Robyn Eckersley (1990: 752) states:

> … the ecological model of internal relations seeks to grasp the fundamental nature of ecological and social reality. It provides the grounding for an ecocentric perspective, but does not itself make any normative claims as to how we ought to orientate ourselves toward the world. It is the task of ethical and political theory to decide how we should live given the fact of our fundamental interconnectedness with other beings.

In concurrence with Eckersley's sentiment to re-politicise nature within "ethical and political theory", I propose that, in order to reconcile humans with nature, a closer examination and transformation of intersubjective relations between humans is first required. This does not constitute a return to a strict anthropocentrism that detracts from the question of how humans should extend recognition directly to nature. Rather, it points to the fundamental reality that, since humans are at the centre of fomenting ecological injustices, both the cause and solution are sociogenic.

The core premise of my thesis is that the main obstacle to such an ideal whereby humans can see themselves as part of the ecological community is misrecognition (the denial of respect and dignity) between humans. In fact, the Hegelian master-slave dialectic ostensibly succumbs to this problem. Firstly, the dominant self-consciousness (the 'master') only recognises the subordinate self-consciousness (the 'slave') insofar as it is in his/her best interests to do so through the application of her/his abilities, skills, and labour power. Recognition is afforded to the "slave" relative to the needs of the "master" and not in terms of the "slave's" own conception and actualisation of freedom (inner autonomy). This interpretation of the master-slave dialectic is often criticised for being "ideological" and guilty of committing the fallacy of anachronism (Honneth, 2007: 326). In other words, the master-slave dialectic was formulated by Hegel at the beginning of the nineteenth century as a response to slavery amidst the rise of abolitionism decades earlier. It was an attempt at providing a philosophical rationale for mutual recognition within an existing power asymmetry. Any application of the master-slave dialectic to rationalise experiences of misrecognition outside of that reality must be sensitive to the issue of time, space, and perspective. More crucially, critiquing the master-slave dialectic as a framework of recognition illustrating its limitations and how they are reproduced across the continuum of history is unwarranted, especially in the present reality, since human society is at a much more advanced stage of moral development. Slavery no longer exists as a formal system, and we find ourselves in a situation where rights and freedoms, and democracy, in general, are enjoyed by a significantly higher number of people compared to any other time in human history. Issues of recognition appealing to collective status in terms of race, class, culture, language, and material position must be understood within the parameters of this context. Therefore, exploring (mis)recognition as an abstraction from the established historical reality descends into a dangerous form of identity politics.

Using decoloniality as a frame of reference, I argue that the abovementioned claim not only places constraints on gaining a full understanding of misrecognition but perpetuates the phenomenon. Misrecognition is a product of a conception of superiority/inferiority configured around a racial hierarchy called coloniality. Coloniality emerged with the conquest of the Americas in 1492; however, it continues to manifest and determine intersubjective relations today. In other words, the power asymmetry of the master-slave dialectic lives on, and is, arguably, as relevant, applicable, and deserving of scrutiny and constructive criticism in the contemporary liberal democratic world order as under colonisation and subsequent political systems that institutionalised racial discrimination. Secondly, as highlighted earlier on, nature does not feature within this dialectic of recognition because it does not qualify as a self-conscious being. Other living and non-living components are simply material elements upon which we apply our powers to create significant objects that serve as a medium for expressing self-esteem from one self-conscious being to another (i.e., between humans). Both nature and the "slave" on an individual basis, and in relation to one another, are subjugated to the vision of "master". Therefore, subaltern people and natural things assume a subordinate status within recognitive frames of justice.

Limited attention is paid to the fact that nature has been a key component in the making of our sense of identity, developmental successes, languages, histories, cultures, as well as our oppression and liberation. It is especially the case for subaltern people, such as hunter-gatherer communities, and indigenous and women small-scale farmers, who frequently and directly interact with surrounding ecosystems for their livelihoods. Nature defines who they are and what their purpose is in life. Their social, material, and spiritual well-being literally depends on nature. This constitutes recognition towards nature that is not intersubjective (requiring reciprocation through communication between self-conscious beings) but evokes feelings of respect and self-worth that are directly contingent on their interactions with local ecologies. That said, it would be naïve to assume that the preferences of many of these communities have not been altered by modernity. Extending recognition in the form of cultural rights to indigenous groups to specific natural environments and resources that are sacred, does not guarantee that these communities are not willing to cede them to corporations involved in mining and other exploitative and ecologically destructive practices. At the same time, expecting that a massive project of planetary justice (that includes oppressed people, the natural environment, and climatic processes) will be addressed by fulfilling the cultural needs of such a small cohort of the subaltern, is parochial. It is important to note that all human communities can trace a fundamental connection to their local ecology (and the larger cosmos) that could serve as a trigger for recognising nature beyond its material use-value. However, how various social groups relate to the natural world cannot be understood and viewed independently of larger socio-political and economic processes, such as the onset of European colonisation and the spread of capitalist modernity that accompanied it.

Throughout the course of modern history, how we have come to *think about, use, and value* nature was determined by a dominant westernised viewpoint. Subaltern viewpoints influenced by different knowledges, histories, cultures, and belief systems were either undermined, distorted, exteriorised or erased. These marginalised groups need to rekindle their lost memories of nature and rediscover its centrality in terms of their struggle for recognition (desire for self-definition and liberation). Creating the conditions to afford recognition to these marginalised groups as producers of knowledge who possess their own conception of nature shaped by their unique experiences has a greater potential to positively transform our collective attitude towards the natural world.

To develop an authentic conception of justice, there must be an acknowledgment that (mis)recognition of people and nature is a dialectical process that is not only material, but also ontological. The extension of greater moral value to nature in respect of its significance in the construction of being is a neglected aspect in the subaltern's struggle for recognition. Nature played a far more prominent and animate role than simply serving as an instrument of self-actualisation. It was foundational to their sense of collective self-worth. As illustrated above, mainstream philosophical thought and environmental philosophy have not adequately explored this dimension of recognitive justice.

In light of the above, this thesis attempts to answer the following question:

What mode of recognition is required to advance an authentic conception of justice within the context of an ecological community?

In order to achieve this objective, the research will assume the following path:

i. Explore how and to what extent extant traditional frameworks of justice within western political theory and philosophy (mis)recognise nature and subaltern people.

ii. Explain why misrecognition is a product of the sociogenic phenomenon of coloniality that determines intersubjective relations and affects every facet of human existence from the most personal to the social. This includes negatively altering the subaltern's relationship with nature which, through the spread of modernity, reduced nature to a mere commodity. This action exacerbated humanity's alienation from the green environment by fomenting a destructive attitude that became an obstacle to extending moral consideration, love, and care to the natural world.

iii. Develop the coloniality of nature as the fourth pillar of the analytics of the colonial matrix of power and use it to provide a phenomenological account of why the dehumanisation of subaltern people is coterminous with the mastery, control, and destruction of nature.

iv. The next and most important phase of the research is to promulgate a conception of recognitive justice that is able to achieve the following:

   a) Propound a practical dialogical mode of recognition centred on a *decolonial love* that can be used to navigate antagonistic and differing viewpoints on nature that have been shaped by the *colonial difference*.

   b) Illustrate how nature can be authentically reinserted into the subaltern's *struggle for recognition*.

   c) Demonstrate why an ethical framework built on key principles of decoloniality has the potential to positively transform human attitudes towards the natural world.

Analytical Framework

Decoloniality provides the main analytical framework employed in this research. It identifies coloniality as the primary cause of global injustices towards people and nature. Coloniality is distinct as it survives the historical and political processes of colonisation and decolonisation. The colonial matrix of power that governs the production and dissemination of knowledge pertaining to culture, race, gender, and morality, is, in itself, a construct of a hegemonic western-centric viewpoint that is universalised and has become the major point of reference for how we (humans) relate to one another and nature. In other words, coloniality represents the darker underside of modernity, which, under the guise of civilisational development, justified prejudice, genocide, culturicide, and epistemicide, which resulted in ecocide. As Mignolo (2007: 162) purports, "while modernity is presented as a rhetoric of salvation, it hides coloniality, which is the logic of oppression and exploitation". Therefore, modernity, capitalism, and coloniality are aspects of the same package of control and domination over culture, knowledge, the economy, morality and nature.

In order to gain a total understanding of how we have come to (mis)recognise nature, it is necessary to reveal whose and what knowledge about our relationship with the natural world informs our thinking (Walsh, 2007). As its main point of departure, decoloniality calls for a shift in our geography and biography of reasoning. In other words, to be conscious of *"where we think from"* (geography) and *"whose subjectivity informs what and how we think about things"* (biography). For this research, it implies that one would need to move away from the dominant Euro-American viewpoint and explore other viewpoints that have been relegated to the margins of our epistemic orientation, moral consciousness, and lived realities on the question of recognition in terms of humanity's relationship with nature. Re-politicising, re-thinking, and re-assessing this relationship, requires a re-evaluation of history, geography and biology. Indeed, if one is to construct an idea of recognition towards nature, it is necessary to identify the source of ecological immorality. Decoloniality provides the analytical tools with which to decodify coloniality and reveal what constitutes an authentically just reality and the benefits of this for establishing an ecological community.

A variety of conceptual instruments from the decoloniality "tool kit" will be employed throughout this research. The first instrument is three main pillars of the analytics of coloniality/modernity: the coloniality of being, knowledge, and power. This analytic matrix will be defined and employed in Chapter Three to illustrate why misrecognition (the denial of respect and dignity) of the subaltern is a product of coloniality that maintains colonial patterns of power that are the source of social injustices and political conflict. This *lens* informed the approach adopted in Chapter Two to reveal why and how (mis)recognition of nature and subaltern people are endemic to distributive and recognitive frameworks of justice theory and philosophy.

The next instrument is the coloniality of nature, which is the fourth less developed arm of the analytics of coloniality/modernity. In Chapter Four, I attempt to develop the *coloniality of nature,* since its definition within the school of decoloniality restricts it to the commoditisation of nature and epistemicide (literally, the killing of knowledge systems) of non-western cosmographies (Escobar, 2007). The effect of colonisation, modernity, and capitalism was more nuanced when it came to the separation of subaltern people from surrounding natural environments (local ecologies). The purpose of developing this analytic pillar was, therefore, two-fold: i) to distinguish the *coloniality of nature* from extant critical frameworks used to articulate the commodification of nature and how it perpetuates ecological injustice, namely, ecological Marxism, and ii) to demonstrate the complexity of the coloniality of nature. At this point, it was subsequently applied to provide a phenomenological account of why the dehumanisation and, therefore, misrecognition of subaltern people, was tied to the destruction of nature and vice versa.

Finally, the decolonial ethical principles of transculturalism and border thinking will be further defined and then employed to develop an ethical framework for constructing an ecological pluriverse. An ecological pluriverse refers to a "space" in which a plurality of ecological viewpoints co-exist and collaborate to contribute to a universal conception of an ecological ethic without any single viewpoint being dominant. In other words, the subaltern should be free to identify, adopt, and employ elements from other knowledges and experiences they deem most relevant to their respective contexts. This does not equate to an essentialist multicultural approach to justice that negates universality. Instead, it emphasises that particularities should take from the universal what it considers most suitable to its reality, which subsequently contributes to a universality that is shaped by diverse perspectives without the risk of being appropriated into a dominant particularity. This ideal is consistent with the position of this research that is informed by the viewpoint of the subaltern (insignificant other), which posits that what is currently considered universal (i.e., dominant, divergent, and competing positions on addressing ecological problems) is informed by a hegemonic western-centric viewpoint that negates perspectives informed by other ways of knowing and being.

Transculturalism and border thinking constitute practical dialogical instruments that the subaltern can use to re-establish their connection to nature. In other words, recognising how they were estranged from the natural world and why their *struggle for recognition* (self-worth and dignity) is tied to nature. The objective is that this would increase the possibility of their forging a greater love, respect, and care for nature.

Research Methodology

This research explores the phenomenon of the (mis)recognition of people and nature from the standpoint of the oppressed and marginalised – what Fanon (2004) refers to as the *damnés de la terre* (the wretched of the earth). It employs the methodology of existential phenomenology from a decolonial perspective, which constitutes a critical reading and application in contradistinction to Martin Heidegger's original interpretation. In his seminal work, *Being and Time,* first published in 1927, Heidegger explored the question of what it means to exist. This was a deviation from earlier philosophical attempts in Cartesian metaphysics and later Husserlian transcendental phenomenology, which worked from the presumption that we (humans) already exist and tried to establish the ontological criteria for confirming the existence of the objective world relative to ourselves. He was concerned with the issue of fundamental ontology that explored how our interpretation and experiences of reality are shaped by an essence that all human beings share: *Being(ness). Beingness* is based on the idea of *Being* (*Dasein*), which refers to our presence (present-ness) in a certain space at a particular point in time (Richardson, 1986). To be present is to embody and be conscious of our social reality, which ultimately enables us to find meaning in our lives, as individuals and as collectives. The derivation of meaning is, therefore, not through a pre-theoretical factual knowledge about the physical world (that includes other beings) independent of our desire to have a deeper sense of purpose. In other words, it is *Being* that determines the *"what is"* and *"where to"* of beings (all entities). This implies that nature (biology) constitutes part of a specific space and time (regional ontology) that people interact with and that affirm their "presence" by giving meaning to their existence. It follows that different people who occupied different ecologies at different points in time attached specific ideas, values, and purposes to things. This is reflected by the differences in language, culture, and spirituality when articulating human-nature relations. With western imperialism came the imposition of a universal categorical order onto the physical world. Alternate interpretations of what it means to exist relative to the natural world (in terms of our social existence) were repudiated, denigrated, distorted, and replaced by a dominant western-centric viewpoint. More crucially, non-Europeans were rendered non-human and constituted just another entity belonging to the natural world. Non-Europeans were present as the rest of the physical entities but without "presence". In other words, in ontological terms, they were "absent" from local ecologies, which they dialectically shaped and that determined the trajectory of their lives. The alteration and destruction of nature and their dehumanisation eliminated the significance of nature in affirming their sense of self-worth and dignity. The separation of non-Europeans from nature is, therefore, an outcome of the denial of Being*,* thus, resulting in the coloniality of nature.

This research adopts a dual method that is both analytical and applied. In terms of the former, genealogy is the main method of analysis that is employed in this research to reveal the coloniality of nature and to illustrate how it reproduces ecological injustices. Genealogy is a dominant approach in mainstream ethics promulgated by Nietzsche (1887) in his work, *On the Genealogy of Morals,* and that was later further developed by Michel Foucault. Raymond Geuss (1999: 2-4) argues that genealogy as practiced by Nietzsche must be distinguished from what one may describe as "tracing of pedigree". This approach, arguably, reflects the process of knowledge production prior to enlightenment, which Foucault describes as natural history involving "theory, chimeras and superstition" where nature was valorised. According to Foucault (1970, cited in Mahon, 1992: 67), qualified scientific knowledge of nature emerged only in the eighteenth century with the onset of the scientific revolution. This period of modern biology is therefore identified by Foucault (1970) as the point of reference from where a genealogy of human interaction with nature should begin. However, it is crucial to note that shifting the point of origin to the pre-enlightenment period does not constitute a mere "tracing of pedigree". An analysis of early real-world experiences of the relationship between humans and the natural world is necessary in order to provide an illustrative account of the role that nature has played in both the material and ontological development of humans.

Furthermore, the Foucauldian interpretation of genealogy does not consider how the period leading up to the Age of Enlightenment, particularly from 1492 onwards, which marked the conquest of the "new world" and beginning of modernity, resulted in the European construction of "spaces" through the making of history, geography, culture, knowledge, and morals. According to Sylvia Wynter (1991: 258) the underside of modernity, accompanied by western scientific knowledge and rationality, was coloniality, that was defined by the dualistic process of the "othering" of nature and people that resided in those unique ecologies and are the origins of modern political ecological problems. This research will, therefore, employ genealogy through a decolonial analytical framework which subverts the traditional interpretation of it. As a work in critical political theory, this research will develop a conception of recognition that allows for the extension of deeper moral value and justice to nature and demonstrate why this is inextricably linked to justice towards people, especially those in the subaltern.

Within this genealogical framework, the research will attempt to provide an existential exposition of recognition derived from an analysis of humanity's relationship with nature. Friedrich Engels' work, *Dialectics of Nature,* which has its roots in Hegelian dialectics, is also of significance to this research (Foster, 2002: 74). This work, together with Marx's idea of "metabolic rift", illustrates humans' estrangement from nature due to modernity (Foster, 1999: 370). Capitalism and western modernity do not just alienate labour but alienate us (humans) from nature, which is the very source of our survival. To create a more authentically humanised and rational world we have to realise that the divide between the material and the rational is no longer possible in a world where both elements become increasingly combined (Dickens, 1996: 19). As this research will go on to explore, the misrecognition of nature stretches beyond material estrangement to include a deeper and wider analysis of alienation from a sense of being (one's own history, experience and culture). It is from this perspective of "oneness" that this research attempts to determine how a notion of recognition towards nature can be established. This constitutes the applied dimension of the research, where I propose a practical dialogical approach to addressing the problem of misrecognition of the subaltern, which translates into greater love, care, and respect for nature.

The design of the thesis is informed by a decolonial method that comprises of two parts. The first part entails revealing the manifestations of coloniality within existing epistemes and social discourse on various aspects of a particular problem/issue; in this instance, the misrecognition of subaltern people and nature, and how they are interrelated. The second part focuses on *how to decolonise;* in other words, to provide practical insights on how the problem of coloniality within a designated context can be addressed. For this research, this involves creating an ethical framework for intra- and inter-human dialogue as the basis for reconnecting the subaltern to nature within their local ecologies. This represents a bottom-up (or localised) approach to constructing an ecological pluriverse whereby we (humans) can generate greater love, care, and respect for the natural world. This two-stage method is governed by the axiom of "learning to unlearn in order to re-learn" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). I endeavoured to apply this logic in the structuring of my thesis. Chapters Two to Four focus on "learning to unlearn" using a decolonial lens. This implies constantly questioning and critically reflecting on whether existing epistemes used to make sense of misrecognition as a sociogenic phenomenon and in relation to nature contributes to solving the ecological problem or exacerbates it. Hence, the need to "learn to unlearn" requires that we "forget what we have been taught, to break free from the thinking programmes imposed on us by education, culture, and social environment, always marked by the Western imperial reason" (Tlostonova & Mignolo, 2012: 7). In Chapter Two, for example, I reveal that traditional recognitive frames of justice in political theory and philosophy perpetuate oppression of subaltern people whilst continuing to exclude nature from such deliberations by only affording it tokenistic consideration. In Chapter Three, I illustrate why the misrecognition of subaltern people is a product of a much deeper problem of coloniality that prevents an authentic extension of mutual recognition. Chapter Four develops the coloniality of nature as the fourth pillar of the coloniality of nature and uses it to demonstrate why discourses on nature led to the dehumanisation of people, and why and how it is coterminous with the mastery, control, and destruction of nature. Therefore, the dominant frames, such as western science, that is used to construct knowledge about nature in an objective sense, was associated with a colonial matrix of power. Chapter Five explores what it means to "relearn" by forging a pathway to making the decolonial turn. It proposes a new and different approach to reimagining our relationship with the natural world by focusing on constructing an ethical framework for an intra- and inter-human ethics that increases the possibility for developing a greater love, care, and respect for nature.

Delimitation of the Study

In attempting to afford value to nature, in terms of recognising its contribution to human development, the research does not advocate a materialist approach to recognition. Rather, it will account analytically for how nature was woven into this tapestry of capitalist, political, and social development revealing the (*mis*)recognition of people and nature through an alternative interpretative framework – that of the "other". It is also crucial that the proposed study, which provides an existential account of the recognition of nature by elucidating how it simultaneously became an important instrument in identity construction and an instrument of misappropriation through the course of western imperialism, not be reduced to an exercise in *identity politics*. A notable problem with resorting to identity politics as a viable critique of research, such as the one undertaken here, is its desensitised and somewhat frivolous approach to understanding the sociogenic manifestation of injustices. The trend is to dismiss arguments presented outside the realm of traditional distributive frameworks of justice theory that assumes the "positionality" of an individual and/or collective relative to broader society as its basis, as constituting a dangerous form of theorising. Subscribing to such a critique represents a form of *intellectual blindness*. Indeed, Amartya Sen (2010), in his classic work entitled, *The Idea of Justice,* alludes to the fact that the task of political theory is to engage social reality and that it is of paramount importance not to ignore emotions and feelings of rage that undergird justice claims. Instead, our duty is to provide reasoned accounts for what created such feelings and how they manifested and can be addressed. This is pertinent since reasoning is not independent of our experiences. The purpose of making this point is not to dismiss the importance of institutional and procedural interventions to achieve justice, but to illustrate the importance of human agency and critically engaging with historically embedded structural dimensions of power that shape ways of being and knowing when dealing with the issue of justice in the current context. Unlike the approach towards "*public reasoning*" that Sen advances, which emphasises impartiality and objective positionality in arriving at reasoned judgements, this research argues that referring to notions of impartiality conceals and ironically reproduces a hegemonic partiality in dealing with the matter of ecological injustice. The study, therefore, postulates that, only once misrecognition of people and nature are revealed within epistemic, political and social discourses, can an authentic, just conception of recognition be developed.

CHAPTER TWO

Tracing the Origins of the (Mis)Recognition of the Subaltern and Nature in Justice Theory

Climate change and the imminent ecological crisis that it threatens to precipitate have prompted us to rethink and re-evaluate the relations between humans and nature and the value that should be afforded to the natural world. Existing popular discourses of justice in relation to nature, sustainable development in particular, which emerged towards the end of the twentieth century, have attempted to incorporate nature into mainstream economic and political discourse (Palmer in Palmer et al.*,* 2001: 274). Efforts to extend greater moral value to nature were therefore articulated within a neoliberal democratic context that influenced environmental policy frameworks amidst a plethora of political actors, ranging from powerful states and supranational organisations to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (Hajer, 1997; Kovel, 2007).

Sustainable development is predicated on the liberal Rawlsian principle of intergenerational justice that advocated a prudential utilitarian conception of the moral consideration that we (humans) should extend to the environment (natural world). The principle of intergenerational justice is strictly anthropocentric and identifies the environment as a social good (commons) which must be used conservatively to ensure humanity's survival. In *Our Common Future* (Brundlandt, 1987) that was published by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), sustainable development was defined as, "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Carter, 2003: 195). The objective of this approach was to alleviate the tension between economic growth and environmental protection proving that expansionary capitalist development was possible without perpetuating social and economic inequality and environmental degradation. In fact, advocates claimed that sustainable development would reconcile this dichotomy by promoting a less energy-intensive ecologically friendly form of economic development providing practical solutions to the impending ecological crisis within the dominant liberal democratic and capitalist structures (Hajer, 1997).

Technocratic and market-based solutions, including ecological modernisation, privatisation of the commons and carbon-trading, were widely promoted within the parlance of sustainable development as a strategy to mitigate climate change and meet the demands of equal development and a growing population. Paradoxically, these solutions have exacerbated existing inequalities and, more crucially, worsened environmental degradation resulting in increased species extinction, loss of biodiversity, and destruction of sensitive ecosystems on which we depend for our survival (Shiva, 2009: 17). The pejorative effects of sustainable development policies and strategies on the livelihoods of marginalised social groupings triggered environmental protests throughout the developing world in the last decade (Bond, 2012). Indigenous small-scale farmers, communities of colour living in close proximity to toxic waste dumps and factories, and environmental activists are amongst the myriad of actors that have joined the chorus for climate justice, acknowledging that the destruction of the natural environment is both the cause of social injustice and an outcome of it.

Besides climate justice protests, there has also been an upsurge in social justice protests carried out by blacks, indigenous communities, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex rights (LGBTQI) movement, immigrant communities, secessionist movements, anti-war activists, and socialist organisations that have swept across both the developed and developing world in the last two decades. Whilst climate justice and social justice protests are mutually exclusive and articulate multifarious issues, there is a common motivation – an expressed desire by oppressed and marginalised social groupings to be treated with dignity and respect (Shiva, 2019: 8). The failure of sustainable development to effectively incorporate marginalised people and the environment into market-based and legal schemes of redistributive justice points to an intellectual blindness that downplays the significance of power relations, identity, psychological phenomena, and social status in determining ecologically just outcomes. It has become clear that articulating and resolving social inequality and environmental degradation through a framework of redistributive justice has not determined causes of maldistribution but is preoccupied with devising political and economic models of distribution that manage its effects (equally distributing political and economic unfreedoms) (Klein, 2014). Mainstream western philosophers responsible for promulgating innovative ideas and strategies on justice that would address the combined problem of underdevelopment and environmental degradation have failed to identify the epistemic, historical, and sociological origins of humans' separation from the natural world. Their ideas have increased the ontological distance between humanity and nature. Although radical environmental philosophers have made a more concerted attempt to integrate nature into a framework of justice, their efforts have not gone beyond spawning environmental movements and conscientising a sprinkling of environmental activists across the developed world.

Despite making an attempt to "create a space" for struggles in the developing world to find a "voice" through established global environmental movements, marginalised peoples from the subaltern have not been able to "speak" from where they are (Spivak, 1988). In other words, their knowledge and experiences have been filtered through the global environmental agenda established by the experiences and logic of the developed world. A universal effort to accommodate a pluralistic discourse and experiences of nature has failed to establish global solidarity where all peoples feel that they are truly fighting for a common cause. Indeed, the struggle for recognition across all social groupings and within them has become fractured (Bond, 2012). Whilst this has prompted environmental thinkers to dismiss the possibility and commensurability of establishing a global environmental movement, it has failed to adequately paint a complete picture of the origin, form, and evolution of human-nature relations. This has prevented us (humans) from formulating a universal conception of recognition towards nature that integrates and accommodates various knowledges and experiences of nature, which requires an authentic recognition of nature. Before this can be achieved, however, one needs to account for how we (humans) have come to (*mis*)recognise nature and why this is linked to the misrecognition of one another. Whilst this aspect will be dealt with in subsequent chapters (mainly Chapter Four), in this chapter, I explore how the idea of recognition is applied to include subaltern people and the natural environment within mainstream epistemic frameworks of justice. In the discussion that follows, I argue that misrecognition of subaltern people and nature is endemic to western political theory and philosophy. Therefore, efforts to rationalise the extension of recognition towards subaltern people and nature paradoxically reproduces the problem of misrecognition.

Behind the "Veil" of Justice: Misrecognition in Recognition Theory

The current global political milieu has prompted a shift in normative orientation from redistribution to recognition as the dominant discourse of justice. Nancy Fraser (2009: 144) argues that the contemporary idea of justice is not about achieving social equality through the equal distribution of social and natural goods guaranteeing liberty, but to ensure the dignity of all individuals in society. At its core, a recognitive approach to justice emphasises an avoidance of humiliation and not an elimination of inequality traditionally espoused by a redistributive intuition. In other words, humiliation can be avoided through an extension of respect and dignity, which are indivisible goods that exclude distribution as the basis of equal consideration. Put differently, "recognition is not just a 'thing' to be distributed, but a relationship, a social norm embedded in social practice" (Schlosberg, 2007: 23). It is therefore a *societal precondition* for a just distribution rather than an objective means or outcome of redistribution.

This notion of recognition is not contingent on procedural and institutional capabilities of the state to distribute social liberties for establishing the ideal conditions to avoid humiliation or disrespect, but depends on social interactions between individuals. It represents a moral sensibility or ethical commitment of society to react to cultural degradation and disrespect which is the cause of maldistribution or social inequality. Since recognition is a social norm, subterraneous processes of moral socialisation and integration of individuals into society must be explored in order to understand and assess social interactions and their role in individual and collective identity formation. This sheds insight into how the socio-ontological and psychological settings which perpetuate misrecognition of certain groups are created and can be resolved. Contrary to normative frameworks of redistributive justice that develop an idea of a just society from a hypothetical, morally desensitised, and rational position, which is apolitical and ahistorical, normative conceptions of recognition are phenomenological and grounded in real experiences and relations within a particular spatial and temporal context (Piromalli, 2012: 251). In lieu of the current reality, where the distribution of social liberties within a democratic constitutional dispensation has not changed or muted feelings of disrespect and humiliation of specific social groupings, the frontier of social justice has changed from a struggle for equal and just distribution of rights and freedoms to one of recognition.

Recent developments in justice theory postulate that it should not be a matter of contention that recognition trumps redistribution as a dominant paradigm of justice or vice versa. Iris Young (1990) argues that this represents a "false dichotomy", and that both recognition and redistribution are mutually inclusive. In most instances, collectives are differentiated by both their economic structure and status order in society (Schlosberg, 2007: 26). The social and cultural identities of individuals and collectives often overlap and intersect with their position on the scale of economic inequality. In other words, individuals and collectives who experience cultural denigration in society are also victims of economic inequality and have unequal access to basic social and natural goods preventing them from actualising their rights and freedoms. This social-theoretical rejection of the default position of the recognition-theoretical programme, that all justice-theoretical issues can be traced back to recognition, is also shared by scholars with normative objections. For example, although Nancy Fraser (2008: 17) believes that only a combination of economic and cultural justice can guarantee participatory equality as a central goal of social justice, she justifies the division between redistribution and recognition as two separate conceptual totalities which deal with two very different species of injustices. These two species of injustices are autonomous and talk to redistribution and recognition as distinct spheres of justice. On the one hand, there are economic structures that deny individuals and communities access to resources that impede them from participating fully with other more privileged members of society as peers. On the other hand, there is a hierarchy of cultural value, where some cultural groupings are misrecognised, as they subsist in the lower echelons of the status order of society.

Contrary to Young (1990), who emphasises the intersection between class structure and social status order, Fraser (2008) argues that, in the modern capitalist society, they do not neatly mirror each other, although the relationship is causal. She warns against reductionism on both fronts where misrecognition cannot be collapsed into maldistribution as articulated by redistributive schemes of justice, nor can maldistribution be construed as an epiphenomenal expression of misrecognition, which is postulated by cultural theories of recognition. Therefore, neither redistribution nor recognition affords an exclusive understanding of justice in a modern capitalist society, only a two-dimensional theory and approach can provide the necessary insight into the social-theoretical complexity required to establish a moral philosophical framework to ensure societal equity in participation. Axel Honneth (2004: 354) criticises Fraser's view that stresses the two-pronged avoidance of cultural humiliation and elimination of inequality as the primary conditions for ensuring entitled equal participation in public life without considering the significance of the intersubjective psychological dimension influencing participatory equality. For example, Fraser ignores how the self-respect of an individual in terms of their strength of ego and their individual achievements is shaped by and acquired through socialisation. Furthermore, she does not explore how law influences societal interaction and the implications thereof for societal participation.

Honneth (2004) develops a pluralistic normative conception of social recognition that addresses the lacuna in Fraser's work. His normative theory of recognition is built on three equally important principles of social justice namely, love, equal treatment in law, and social esteem. These principles undergird a societal morality that is expressed in social relations of recognition where an individual subject's conception of self or identity formation is determined through his/her interaction. Honneth (2005: 46) argues that social recognition is disseminated between three distinct moral spheres of family, state and civil society. The family prioritises the needs of an individual as an extension of love; the state gives equal consideration to all persons in law, and civil society affords meritocratic acknowledgment of individual achievements. This conception of recognition focuses on establishing principles for ethical social interactions eschewing social injustices produced by political, economic, social and cultural difference. The objective of this ethical approach is to dismantle social exclusion and invoke a moral sensibility that is universally practicable. Principles of love, equality in law and social esteem constitute an "emancipatory transcendent interest" – a purportedly just and inclusive humanism (Honneth, 2004: 352). In Hegelian terms, it aims not to subordinate individual freedom to a broader social purpose, but to "spell out the social conditions under which individual freedom can be secured: on this account, individuality and social integration can be understood as mutually sustaining, not irreconcilably conflicting, values" (Markell, 2007: 108).

However, this conception of recognition, along with other normative frameworks, appears to direct significant attention to finding solutions on how humiliation can be avoided instead of adequately exploring the subliminal question of *why* and *how* respect and dignity came to be withheld from certain individuals and collectives deemed to be legitimate and deserving (i.e., misrecognition), in the first place. The closest recognition theorists have come to addressing this fundamental question has been through an engagement of intersubjective models, inter alia, describing the relationship between the "I" and "me" as two facets of the individual self-consciousness reflecting a transcendental conception of recognition, and the master-slave dialectic which provides an analytical historicist account of the nature and dynamics of domination and oppression. Whilst the former accounts for individual identity formation where the creative "I" reacts to others' perception of him/herself constituting the "community" in "self" or the "me", in the latter, depicts the historical "development" of struggles for recognition contingent on moral and political changes across space and time (Wood, 1990: 84; Markell, 2007: 110). There are specific shortcomings with each model, and those that are common to both. The dialogic of the "self" (i.e., "I" and "me") or inner conscience is atomistic and ahistorical, giving minimal purchase to how collective group characteristics and stereotypes manifest and are expressed in individual as well as societal interactions, that, in turn, are shaped by historical changes in norms and values. Furthermore, the domain of the inner conscience (rational) is cognitively inaccessible and a matter of conjecture unlike observable social relations (reality) (Clarke, 2009: 366).

On the contrary, the master-slave dialectic is empirically grounded and fills this void by articulating the struggle for recognition in terms of the evolution of material development. This approach to understanding the genealogy from misrecognition to recognition reveals how, with the emergence and subsequent expansion of capitalism, certain social groups came to be humiliated through the exploitation of their labour power, which precipitated political, social and moral revolutions in "human history" (Smith, 1989: 10). Transformation in economic relations (i.e., between capital and labour) and material conditions, therefore, constituted a key term of reference to conceptualise state formation and social ordering as part of the broader project of political development and social justice: with needs claims serving as the fulcrum for exploring the ontological dimensions of intersubjective recognition. In his work, *The Political Philosophy of Needs,* Lawrence Hamilton (2003: 38) ascribes, at an abstract level, to the view that recognition is a developmental process. He expounds on the materialist basis of intersubjective recognition as an agency need. Hamilton argues that in order for an individual (x) to afford esteem (recognition) to another (y) via the medium of a significant object produced by y, certain social conditions and complimentary institutional arrangements that ensure "meaningful work" must be obtained. The significance of the created object is determined by two defining characteristics construing meaningful work. Firstly, there must be room for creative expression where the producer is able to externalise his/her human powers (skills and intellect) to the material world in the creation of the object, and secondly, the indispensable role of the producer relative to the combined effort of others, who contribute to the satisfaction of human needs, must also be acknowledged. However, this is contingent on constraining increasing material disparities within a specified threshold and ensuring parity in the type and distribution of roles across the different spheres of family, civil society and work. As Honneth purports, across these respective spheres, recognition assumes three distinct forms, namely, love, equal treatment in law and social esteem. Each form has a parallel mode of recognition, such as emotional support, rights and solidarity, which constitute significant initiating agency needs. According to Hamilton, these modes of recognition independent of *vita* needs (food, shelter, security, sufficient clothing and basic services) and other agency needs (autonomy or self-determination and creative expression), are grossly insufficient. Instead of guaranteeing intersubjective recognition, they can lead to a distortion of recognition (ibid: 40). For instance, in the absence of vita and other agency needs, an individual may seek recourse and subsequently experience significant *agency* (self-worth and respect) within a particular group that celebrates national or racial identity and supremacy. This represents an incomplete and warped sense of intersubjective recognition that Hamilton postulates is reflective of a conservative communitarian discourse that deems culture to be sacrosanct, which results in a dangerous theoretical move reducing individual needs and wants to the cement of culture (ibid: 42). In the context of intersubjective recognition, it presents a situation whereby agency manifests in a feeling of self-worth and respect that is fueled by a non- or misrecognition of the other (individuals outside his/her class, race, sex, gender, ethnic or social group). A practical example of this is the rapid and ubiquitous resurgence of white conservative nationalist and religious movements in Europe, Australia and the USA in the last decade. This was a reaction to the perceived threat that the influx of foreign migrants, particularly people of non-European descent, pose to their employment and business opportunities (the means to attaining vita needs) and personal security in lieu of the rise of terrorism and survival of a Euro-Christian and Euro-secular culture and tradition (i.e., self-determination). Many of these movements propagate anti-immigrant and Islamophobic sentiments, ideologically mobilising both civil society and mainstream political interests around cultural, racial and religious stereotypes. This form of nationalism stigmatises and vilifies citizens that fit a generic profile of a larger social group (irrespective of to which generation of migrants an individual belongs) in terms of cultural, racial and religious association. As a result, they become stereotypically synonymous with acts of terrorism, drug trafficking, incompetence and social backwardness. Unfortunately, the outcome is that individuals belonging to these social groups have experiences through their day-to-day intersubjective encounters that diminish self-worth and respect. Consequently, intersubjective recognition is, therefore, transformed into the politics of *identity* and *difference*. In other words, intersubjective recognition is restricted to a particular social group and not to the wider society. The problem with interpreting intersubjective recognition in terms of identity is that it emphasises an overly subjectivised position that could become erroneously interpreted as theoretically sufficient conditions for *agency* (ibid: 42).[2] This

[2] As in this instance, whilst it is important to acknowledge a structuralist critique of an overly subjectivised approach to recognition, it also has its theoretical limitations. Structuralists posit that, since intersubjective recognition is a developmental process on the continuum of an evolutionary history, it is an agency need that is dependent on other vita and agency needs. A shift towards democratisation and constant reform of state institutions constitute sufficient means for addressing present socio-economic and political injustices or those inherited from the past. From this

means that social identity becomes the exclusive marker for rationalising misrecognition and articulating justice struggles. For Hamilton, this undermines the essence of intersubjective recognition as an agency need since we fundamentally interact with, and are interdependent on, others irrespective of their identity for our individual and collective well-being. The purpose of political institutions is to ensure that the social conditions for intersubjective recognition are present to prevent a distortion of recognition. The fair and just treatment and protection of all people before the law and access to basic material needs avoid a situation where people wrongfully highlight their social identity as the major reason for their experience of misrecognition.

In Hamilton's reading, it is the failure of the state to provide vita and agency needs that ultimately leads to a dangerous identity politics, which threatens to destabilise society, and unnecessarily foment hatred and conflict. However, he warns that institutions can also perpetuate misrecognition whilst claiming to create the social conditions for the satisfaction of agency needs. There are

perspective, in a contemporary democratic context, "real" feelings of self-worth and esteem are institutionally produced. An extension of a universal basket of rights and equal citizenship status that emanates from a constitutional democratic system establishes the empirical conditions for recognition. Therefore, an individual's experience of misrecognition cannot be reduced to his/her collective identity – for example, arguing that his/her struggle is due to him/her being black, especially in a post-colonial democratic political order – this is a matter of institutional reform (overhauling or improving processes and systems), and not racism. This points to a major theoretical limitation with the structural approach. The dimension of power is excluded from an analytical account of the context within which political and economic structures were created and evolved and how "feelings" of misrecognition continue to be experienced under conditions of "progressive" institutional reform. It, therefore, follows that, when affording agency to subjects who make claims of misrecognition within an evolutionary developmental process, one runs the risk of straitjacketing an analytical historicist account of recognitive experiences within the iron law of structuralism. Misrecognition is subsequently understood and articulated exclusively in terms of material underdevelopment and inequality that are not unique to specific regions or groups but are the consequences of the global ubiquitous processes of modern imperialism and capitalist accumulation. Crucially, experiences are measured in terms of binaries within a unilinear historical discourse (Mamdani, 1996: 9). In other words, the experiences of the non-European are residual and pathological and gain analytical relevance only when understood and expressed against the *universal referent* (Euro-American history). Real performances are measured not by what they are, but according to what they are not.

On the other hand, post-structuralist approaches to history in remedying the parochialism of structuralism by salvaging agency through a removal of historical constraints, leads to a generalisation that conceals the experiences of non-Europeans even further (Mamdani, 1996: 10). In fact, it borders on a form of patronage and an anti-human humanism. It postulates that the flow of events in Africa (and other non-European former colonies) are not exceptional to the general flow of world history but are routinely dissolved into it. Whilst this process confirms the "humanity" of the African people, it ostensibly leads to a distorted representation of the agency of colonised people that explains away their historical experiences of misrecognition and implicates them in their own oppression on three counts: (i) that non-European experiences of inequality and injustice (misrecognition) are banal and no different to that of all oppressed people throughout the course of human history, (ii) arguing that the cultures and traditions of enslaved and colonised peoples were never destroyed or lost but were rather adapted and reproduced in the diasporas, and (iii) pointing out the duplicity of native peoples and institutions in processes of colonisation and slavery. By subscribing to a generalised approach to historical analysis, the specificity of the historical experience of the African at the onset of the European encounter is evaded and considered a "deviation" from world history ─ Africans and Africa lack an original history/ies outside the ambit of extant historical frameworks of analysis. Therefore, both traditional and post-structuralist approaches to analysing the evolution of the struggle for recognition of non-European societies are ahistorical. A call for recognition beyond needs claims for recognition represents a prodigious shift away from the theoretical limitations of the variety of structuralisms to articulate historical and contemporary experiences of misrecognition.

instances where institutions extend respect to a social group that generates feelings of self-worth and self-esteem without recognising their powers and products.

This is depicted through historical examples, such as the state-led initiative by the colonial British administration subsequently followed by the apartheid regime to form the homelands or Bantustans for Africans in South Africa. The Bantustans constituted a form of racial segregation (territorial) that was complemented by institutional segregation where powers were delegated to tribal authorities. This policy was rationalised by the colonial administration on the grounds that it was an effective measure to preserve the "desirable features" of African culture and mode of living and to 'protect' and 'save' traditional African societies from the derisory effects of western modernity and industrialisation. However, the proclaimed admiration of African institutions and culture was ostensibly motivated by a desire to deal with a more serious practical problem confronting the colonial administration: how to meet the growing labour demands of an expanding industrial economy, whilst maintaining strict control over the movement and migration of Africans from rural villages into urban centres predominantly occupied by whites? The preservation of the native home was identified as the solution to this problem since it served as a site for the reproduction and recruitment of migrant labour and kept women and children grounded in the rural homeland. This could only, however, be achieved with the aid of native institutions which were traditional structures of authority that were socially acceptable and legitimate in the eyes of Africans.

The policy of institutional segregation paradoxically served as a form of legitimate recognition of the autonomy and self-determination (agency needs) of native institutions, whilst functioning under a fundamentally racist political system that enforced discriminatory laws and policies denying Africans equal citizenship status relative to whites and integrated them within the lowest ranks of a hierarchized racial division of labour (Mamdani, 1996). Furthermore, institutional segregation resulted in what Mahmood Mamdani (1996) defined as a "decentralised despotism" that emphasised ethnic pluralism and fomented political tension and division amongst the majority African population. The nature of institutions and actions associated with indirect colonial rule therefore constituted a distortion of recognition since it was informed by an intrinsically racist patronising conception of other. Colonial logic portrayed Africans as "perpetual children" who were incapable of making a decision or acting in their own "best" interests in the absence of colonial intervention. The colonial administration exploited this patronising conception of African society to legitimate its policy of separate development in South Africa, which prevented upward mobility of African labour in a modernising industrial economy, whilst vindicating and valorising its actions on behalf of them as crucial to their future survival and success. Africans were seen as inherently immature and underdeveloped. In other words, they lacked the skills and intellect needed to express themselves in the creation of meaningful products.

In terms of Hamilton's social preconditions for intersubjective recognition, there was not only no room for Africans to engage in meaningful work as a result of apartheid policy, which restricted them to menial labour, they were incapable of creative expression. As a result, Africans were denied the ontological prerequisites for intersubjective recognition. This created a situation where, despite the significant contribution African labour made to the capitalist development and modernisation of South Africa's economy, the products of their labour were rendered *insignificant,* which is the material medium for intersubjective recognition. Whilst institutional arrangements and actions are empirical manifestations of the paradoxical and distorted conception of recognition, the actual source of this distortion lies in an underlying "racist logic".[3]

Drawing from the preceding examples, Hamilton's materialist developmental approach to recognition infers that a complete and rational conception of intersubjective recognition is, therefore, one whose meaning – and function – is commensurate with the right empirical conditions. The established political order must affirm, not distort, the actual experience and practice of recognition between self and *other*. This approach extends beyond pure empiricism which relies exclusively on observing social conditions in the "real" external world as the foundation of knowledge about the history of recognition and misrecognition that is logical and, therefore, scientifically valid. In other words, the master-slave dialectic is defined by a method integrative of both the real (empirical) and the inner conscience (rational) – it assumes as its default position that even though knowledge about the other is not discovered independently of reality, through reason alone, it is produced within the realm of thought. However, this method does not consider how the experience (*ontos*) and viewpoint of the knowledge producer determines the knowledge that is produced about reality. Knowledge produced about the history of the struggle for recognition is seen to be objective, true and universally applicable. Most pertinently, the knowledge that is produced (epistemology) about recognition is portrayed as being mutually exclusive from the producer (ontology). Therefore, morally progressive ideas and norms that have resulted in the democratisation of state institutions advancing the principle of redistributive justice through the creation of "equal" opportunities for economic development and extending universal franchise to all citizens, appear to have immunity from the experience and viewpoint of the knowledge producer and is sanitised of their prejudicial assumptions and biases. Although knowledge produced about the history of recognition using a materialist developmental framework (method) assumes an "iron walled" position of absolutism through the unitisation of the *real* with the rational, it renders actual feelings of misrecognition experienced and adamantly broached by individuals belonging to specific social groups (content) in practical relations of intersubjective recognition, conspiratorial. Ironically, in emphasising *method* over *content*, such an approach overlooks the epistemic ruptures, omissions, challenges and contradictions in the historical narrative of (mis)recognition, conflating particularities of experiences of intersubjective recognition into a homologous conception of *reality*: representing what Walter Mignolo (2011) refers to as "truth without parenthesis".

To this end, knowledge is neutralised from the dynamic and underlying configuration and order of power. In other words, once knowledge is actualised in "positive" moral changes that have become institutionalised and where recognition is extended to disenfranchised social groups, the general notion is that intersubjective relations will be mutual and equal. The fact that the knowledge justifying and advocating oppression as well as reformation is the privileged product of the

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[3] Apart from Walter Rodney's (1972), *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* and Eric Williams' (1944), *Capitalism and Slavery*, few texts have "told" the story of historical material development from the perspective of the oppressed, emphasising the immense contribution of non-European labour in the construction of a modern global industrial economy, and the social, political and economic costs shouldered by these societies in the wake of European conquest.

dominant social group, and the victims of the oppression are mere beneficiaries of an emancipatory discourse, is not on the theoretical and moral compass of the master-slave dialectic. Recognition is, therefore, an inauthentic outcome of self-determination where the oppressed defines herself/himself and struggle through the lenses of the oppressor rather than her/his own view of self and experience of reality (Changfoot, 2003: 9). Moral changes reflected in reality do not imply that cultural derision and stereotypes that manifest in previously acceptable social practice are mitigated and replaced by a social order that embraces difference within a liberal universal humanism. In other words, such changes do not necessarily translate into a real change in individual and collective perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of self and other. Despite historical analysis depicting moral development as the main feature of modernity that is linear and progressive, constituting real and universal change engaged in a perpetual struggle for recognition, it fails to explore how the *ontology of power* can conceal misrecognition under the guise of a hierarchical recognitive epistemic, social and political order.[4]

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[4] These limitations are not only endemic to structuralism as a theoretical framework, but to knowledge, in general, that is produced within the ambit of western philosophy and science. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014) argues in his piece, "A Critique of Lazy Reason: Against the Waste of Experience and Toward the Sociology of Absences and the Sociology of Emergences", that metonymic and proleptic reasoning, which undergird hegemonic modern western thought in the production and configuration of knowledge, peripheralises non-western experiences and alternate knowledge and practice through the homogenisation of space and contraction of time. His criticism of metonymic reasoning is centred on its obsession with totality emphasising the pre-eminence of the whole over the sum of its parts. In other words, there can be no viable understanding or credible action within and between the parts without reference to the whole. Therefore, deviations in the parts or particularities are ineffectual against the whole. Whilst metonymic reasoning identifies dichotomy as the most complete form of reasoning because it reconciles symmetry and hierarchy, de Sousa Santos postulates that the perceived horizontal relations it depicts conceal an inherent hierarchy. For example, the South is not intelligible independently of its relations with the North or traditional knowledge is not intelligible outside scientific knowledge. This method of reasoning was forcibly imposed at the onset of colonisation and constituted the logical foundation of a hegemonic western philosophical and scientific episteme. As a result, knowledge produced outside the Occident that was non-dichotomous and could not fit into the experiential and imaginary framework of the coloniser (i.e., informed by Euro-American socio-historical development, capitalist transformation, perception of other (non-European) and conception of political order and moral exceptionalism), was therefore unintelligible, illegitimate and non-existent. On the flipside, since metonymic reasoning advocates that nothing deservedly intelligible exists outside this totality, it makes claims to being exclusive, complete and universal (de Sousa Santos, 2014: 8). In fact, these claims are often levelled within the social sciences against scholarly research that explores other forms of reasoning or totalities. The outcome of this is that there is a tendency to homogenise space – where the experiences and imagination of other particularities born out of different spaces has no epistemic worth if it cannot be understood and analysed through the experiential and imaginary frameworks shaped by the dominant spaces of Europe and America.

Proleptic reasoning subscribes to the notion that time is linear and that the future is automatic. In other words, the present is a culmination of socio-political and economic progression marked on the continuum of history by revolutionary events and capitalist transformation. This logic eliminates the significance of *dominant agency* where the present is seen as a construct of the imaginary gaze of the coloniser. The present, and the future for that matter, is reduced to the fatalism of proleptic reasoning. Any form of critical reflection and deconstruction of history in order to understand and analyse the genealogy of present experiences of misrecognition, are, therefore, deemed temporally illogical. For example, in post-apartheid South Africa, claims that current experiences of misrecognition (racism, xenophobia, homophobia) in the present context of non-racialism as constituting a perpetuation of colonial discourses of power, are considered anachronistic, divisive, moralistic and not being academically en vogue. In fact, such theses are labelled as essentialist and are aimed at identifying the colonist – dedicated to the hateful project of "naming, blaming and shaming". The default position is, since colonisation and apartheid have ended, let us focus on the present. This view is extremely limited and borders on a naiveté. It wilfully ignores how our present reality is very much a

The common limitation of both intersubjective models is that, whilst respectively trying to establish a transcendental and historical conception of recognition, they ostensibly reify and legitimise misrecognition at the same time. Whilst recognition is reciprocal it is also asymmetrical since the expectations that individual selves have of one another is not an "attestation of self, that is, it enables me to affirm my existence as I take myself to be" (Hutchens, 2008: 158). In other words, if an individual wants to behave or perceive herself/himself in a certain way, it is not through her/his own choice since s/he comes to identify herself/himself according to the expectations of others. Social expectations can, therefore, be either positive (recognition) or negative (misrecognition), affirming or negating one's self-image. An individual can either affirm or negate the negative image that another has of self; however, this is not only contingent on the individual's strength of character or will, but also on his/her identity and the status of the social group to which s/he belongs in society (James, 2012: 44). The current expectations that we have of one another are based on an image of other informed by the relative historical position of subordination and domination of her/his social group. As a result, stereotypes of social identities born out of relative suffering and privilege are intrinsic to social expectations and are passed on from one generation to the next.

Misrecognition is, therefore, a sociogenic phenomenon that is socially and culturally embedded and cannot be addressed exclusively through political reforms masquerading as positive moral change. Although recognition is dispensed institutionally to formerly disenfranchised groups and there are efforts to propagate a common identity in the public sphere, this does not guarantee the retraction or elimination of cultural and social stereotypes. Intersubjective relations are still determined by stereotypic perceptions of superiority and inferiority of respective social groupings. A subordinate social group is likely to conceal the veridical conception of self and concede to a negative view of itself seen through the lenses of the privileged group in order to ensure its self-preservation (Mills, 2007: 18). This reinforces the ignorance of the privileged over the subordinate group and tends to produce self-deception, bad faith, misrepresentation and evasion between the groups. Furthermore, individuals and social groups would be less likely to openly renege on their support or violate a normative imperative, if it is in their self-interest. Drawing from Zizek's critique of Levinas' understanding of intersubjective relations as constituting an ethics of responsibility to other, Hutchens (2008: 161) illustrates that:

> [r]esponsibility may be normatively indeclinable, but not every relation between a self and an other is one of responsibility. The self might get what it wants by pretending to respond in a certain way, thereby also concealing its self-interest. The indeclinability of responsibility itself is something one might or might not decline.

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product of unequal relations of power as a legacy of colonisation that is pervasively embedded in knowledge systems, political and economic structures, and social discourse stretching across time and space. Furthermore, within the limits of proleptic reasoning, recourse to the past as a referent to gain an understanding of the present, is only legitimate if analysed relative to Euro-American history. In other words, in order to understand the process of national liberation or political development, it must be analysed using epistemic frameworks directly influenced by the historical experiences of European and American society – the present in Africa is measured, interpreted, and gains meaning through Europe's past. Time outside the Occident is therefore contracted instead of expanded, dismissing alternate experiences and understanding of time and space.

For example, it is highly improbable that a social group that were primary beneficiaries of a discriminatory and oppressive political system would not subscribe to a common identity and ideal, provided it preserves individual and private property rights and does not infringe on the collective right to self-determination, enabling them to flourish. In other words, the commitment to other collectives is incomplete and borders on disingenuousness leaving room for the perpetuation of misrecognition. Their support for a common ideal may conceal their true feelings and perceptions of those individuals outside their social group. In fact, social and cultural stereotypes of one another may be expressed through subtle gestures not only during informal, but also formal social interactions that demand a procedural acknowledgement and application of recognition. The key challenge raised by recognition theorists is affirming something spoken or done in jest to another that cannot be definitively proven to be discriminative or devaluing within the ambit of a legal or moral convention. Honneth (2007: 327) emphasises that "as long as we have no empirical evidence that the concerned parties themselves experience particular practices of recognition as being repressive, constricting or as fostering stereotypes, it is extremely difficult to distinguish between ideological and justified forms of recognition in a reasonable way". Ironically, recognition theorists have overlooked a plethora of hermeneutical works produced by authors whose writings were informed by *viewpoints* comprising their biography (identity) and geography (social and political location) of reasoning. Most notable amongst them is Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, which articulated his experience of particular practices of recognition that were repressive and reinforced stereotypes.

In this seminal text Fanon draws on his experience of being black in a white-dominated European society in a context of colonisation and decolonisation, providing an insight into the intersubjective relations between white as dominant, superior beings, and black as a dominated and oppressed social group. Indeed, for Fanon, the one moment that revealed his eternal nothingness and inspired him to critically reflect and write about the "experience of being black from the perspective of a black man", which he captured so poignantly and contemplatively in *Black Skin, White Masks*, was during his time in France when a little white boy pointed at him and said to his mother, "Mamma, look a Negro." Fanon's meditation represents a subliminal viewpoint of marginalised people for whom the story, experience, and knowledge of recognition is very different to the nature and dynamic of intersubjective relations discussed in mainstream recognition theory. However, by endorsing subdominant, oppressed and marginalised viewpoints within the theoretical framework of recognition, does not infer that specific social groups have an *essentialist automatic epistemic privilege* in defining and realising the terms of social justice. Individuals belonging to a social group cannot claim to know more or better about being misrecognised because of bio-genetic identity, psychoanalytic proximity, and social and political location (Wylie, 2003: 29).[5]

[5] For instance, an African-American feminist may claim to understand the experiences of black women in Africa, and therefore justify making value judgements based on their common bio-genetic identity. This can be highly problematic. For example, whilst a black feminist in Africa may consider the practice of *lobolo* (bride price) a key feature of her cultural identity that affirms the significant social worth of women in African society, an African-American feminist may perceive such a practice as disempowering because it commoditises a woman's reproductive and labour power. The normative (epistemic and moral) and experiential frameworks governing the African-American feminist is different to that of the African feminist. This is reflective of a dangerous trend where misrecognised social groups in Europe and America assume an *automatic epistemic privilege* in defining the social struggles of subaltern

This theoretical and methodological caveat should not be construed as contradictorily advancing an antithetical discourse, downplaying the significance of subaltern viewpoints. On the contrary, in highlighting the potential shortcoming of assuming essentialist conceptions of the significance of viewpoint, it forewarns against descending into the inimical reductive realm of identity politics, resulting in meek generalisations. For example, it is problematic to assume that those who share identities share points of view, and that rational deliberation contemplating the public good would be replaced by identity-based decision making that borders on political lobbying on behalf of social group interests. Crucially, this enlightened forewarning does not warrant either dismissing alternative viewpoints altogether or using this idea as an excuse or justification to purposely ignore and exteriorise them from a critical analysis of existing paradigms of recognition. Before issuing a critique of viewpoint by advocating epistemic transcendence – the importance of looking beyond knowledge based on identity – scholars should introspect and examine how automatic epistemic privilege came to be endemic to recognition theory. In other words, explanations and critical reflections within theoretical frameworks of recognition are the product of a Euro-American point of view based on the historical developments of those societies and their subjects, which now advocates "objectivity" within the epistemic community, as well as the public sphere, when passing judgement on others.

Apart from qualitative examples of misrecognition revealed through hermeneutic academic works, there is also empirical evidence available through research conducted in the field of social psychology and events in the "public sphere" that expose prejudicial stereotypic attitudes attached to viewpoints, which open the "locked" unconsciousness to critical inspection. Whilst there has been prior research attempting to find a cognitive pattern of conscious deliberation to explain the motivations within unconsciousness manifest in social relations, it is not beyond reproach. This early and popular research investigated the phenomenon of rapid cognition employing the concept

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communities outside the Occident by their association to more advanced spaces of knowledge production. Ironically, this reproduces the patronising behaviour synonymous with supremacist attitudes in the Occident, which led to them (subaltern groups in the Occident) being misrecognised in the first place. In terms of psychoanalytic proximity, there are cases where an individual, who belongs to a different social (race) group, may have an affinity to the culture and identify with the struggles of another group, which could lead to a distortion of intersubjective recognition. A classic example of such a scenario involved the former Spokane NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People) president, Rachel Dolezal, who resigned from her post in June 2015 when it was discovered that she was actually white, whilst claiming to be black (Keneally, 2015). The main criticism levelled against Dolezal was not that she was white and that a white woman could not belong to an organisation dealing with social justice concerns affecting people of colour. Instead, the concern was that, in altering her physical appearance and social behaviour, Dolezal actually reinforced stereotypical notions of "blackness'' without having the lived experiences of being a black woman in a white dominated society. The point made here was that black cannot be separated from blackness. By retaining her own identity without searching for recognition by abandoning it, whilst critically reflecting on the issue of race from her privileged position as a white person ("whiteness") and attempting to understand the experiences of black people as they articulate, and from where they are, Dolezal's involvement would have been authentic. Making exclusive and absolute claims to understanding misrecognition based on one's social and political location is also flawed. For example, an academic belonging to a social justice movement (political location) dealing with issues of poverty cannot claim to know what the experiences of poor people are by virtue of having specialised knowledge on poverty. Although the academic is an expert, his/her function is not to situate the experiences of people within epistemic frameworks, but to use that knowledge to assist the interested and affected parties to articulate their own struggles without speaking on their behalf. The opposite is also worth critical reflection: a poor person cannot claim to possess comprehensive knowledge of poverty as a political, social and economic construct, and the various strategies that can be employed to ameliorate it because s/he belongs to a community of poor people.

of "thin-slicing" – "the idea that people make intuitive rapid judgements that short-circuit the normal time requirements of rational deliberation by filtering a small number of relevant factors from a large number of variables" (Alcoff, 2010: 27). Examples were identified to depict thin-slicing in operations ranging from the ability of poultry workers making snap decisions to determine the sex of chickens to art historians intuitively identifying the authenticity of a painting without any of them being able to recall the sequence of thought or criteria used to arrive at that rapid judgement. In both instances, the level of accuracy of their judgements could posthumously be determined. Although the accuracy or inaccuracy in these cases was measurable, the researchers argued that there are cases where it is immeasurable – determining whether a particular action reveals a stereotypic attitude being a case in point. On this count, researchers claimed that conscious deliberation cannot be susceptibly unpacked and explained and is therefore exempt from accountability and improvement.

Linda Martín Alcoff (2010: 29) challenges this hypothesis, referring to recent studies at Harvard and Stanford University that have respectively employed the Implicit Association Test (IAT), showing that people make associations without a conscious awareness. In one of these experiments attempting to evaluate cross-racial interactions, two white undergraduate students were asked to participate in a study where they were expected to have a discussion with a third person whom they did not know, on either the topic of love or race. After casually flipping a chart revealing the identity of the third person, the researcher purposely left the room and observed their behaviour through a two-way mirror. When it was revealed that the third person was black, the two participants arranged the chairs in the room in such a way that they placed the third chair on the extremity of the room's floor space. Alternatively, when the discussion was on race, and the third person was revealed to be white, the chairs were placed as close together as possible.

Yet another research carried out at Stanford University, tested the hypothesis that white people become mentally fatigued, as they work harder to appear unprejudiced when engaging a black person with whom they are not familiar. The test proved that, after white people interact with other whites and they are then put through a normal cognitive test identifying colours to determine mental acuity, they made far fewer mistakes than when they interacted with black people. The issue here is that our unconscious attitudes affect how we interact with one another: when a person frowns in response to a greeting or chooses not to maintain eye contact during a conversation or appears awkward rather than relaxed. Inter alia to these experiments, there was also another experiment drawing from free market research on how people react to the packaging of a product. It postulated that the preference people have for a product is determined by its packaging. After they purchase the product, they associate certain ideals that are associated with the packaging and not the product itself. The tests proved that the packaging does not only affect whether we purchase the product or not, but it has phenomenological impact, affecting our actual experience of the product. For example, a cheap brandy improved in flavour when it was packaged in a smoke-coloured decanter. This phenomenon is called sensation-transfer. The "packaging" of a person also impacts how we judge one another in social relations. We arrive at ontological conclusions of one another based on appearances. In many instances, these judgements reify existing stereotypes resulting in misrecognition.

A number of unrelated events in the United States of America in recent years illustrate how packaging informed by stereotypic attitudes led to acts of violence perpetrated by law enforcers on innocent people. In two separate incidents between 17 February 2012 and 09 August 2014, two black teenagers were killed because they "looked suspicious". The first incident that took place in Sanford, Florida involved a seventeen-year-old black teenager, Trayvon Martin. As Martin was walking home in the evening after purchasing a few items from a convenience store, he was approached by George Zimmermann, a community watch patrol officer, who immediately radioed in to the central patrol office claiming that Martin was "behaving suspiciously" (Alvarez & Buckley, 2013). At the time, Martin was dressed in a black hoody, which is popular attire for young black men. Since this age cohort amongst blacks was involved with drug trafficking, gang violence and other criminal activity, Zimmerman made an "associative assumption" that Martin must be "suspicious" on the basis of racial profiling – his dress code and demeanour – how Martin was "packaged". His "packaging" led to Zimmerman's subsequent response when he shot and killed Martin who vehemently resisted and negated his claims of criminal suspicion. In another incident similar to the first, Michael Brown, another young black male, was shot six times and killed by a police officer, Darren Wilson, in Ferguson, Missouri. The killers in both instances were white and the victims, black. Zimmerman was acquitted by a grand jury on charges of second-degree murder despite the fact that Martin had not committed any crime, did not wield a weapon, and posed no threat to Zimmerman's life. These incidents sparked a mass outcry amongst the black community. In a speech delivered by President Barack Obama at the White House on 19 July 2013 following Martin's death, he drew on his own experiences of being African American and pointed out racial disparities in how the law is applied to them. Obama stated:

> There are very few African American men in this country who haven't had the experience of being followed when they were shopping in a department store. That includes me. There are very few African American men who haven't had the experience of walking across the street and hearing the locks click on the doors of cars. That happens to me – at least before I was a Senator. There are very few African Americans who haven't had the experience of getting on an elevator and a woman clutching her purse nervously and holding her breath until she had a chance to get off. That happens often.[6]

In such a context, where the "equal treatment in law" is enshrined in the American constitution, with institutionalised racism being abolished in the 1960s, stereotypic attitudes of law enforcers can distort the ends of justice. This constitutes what Giorgio Agamben (2005) refers to as a "state of exception" where laws can be suspended or superseded by authority. In spite of him positing that a state of exception is primarily a feature of autocratic regime types, it is not necessarily confined to them. A state of exception can also be created and perpetuated within modern liberal democracies. Charles Taylor alludes to a *"difference-blindness"* that is endemic to the procedural liberalist approach in modern liberal democracies and that institutionally reproduces misrecognition (Smith, 2002: 155). Although the objective of a liberal democracy is to ensure that citizens are treated equally before the law and that there is equal dignity through the extension of a basket of universal rights, this does not imply that the particular rights of minority and

[6] https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/07/19/remarks-president-trayvon-martin (Accessed: 20 September 2015).

marginalised groups will be upheld. Taylor argues that there is a trend in liberal democratic states to implement policies advancing the protection of fundamental liberties as an expression of recognition at the expense of basic freedoms that is not liberal. By focusing on expanding and improving basic rights, liberal democracies create a facade of impartiality and neutrality towards the right for the purpose of the "common good", which is *exclusive* rather than *inclusive* – a process that Charles Mills refers to as "liberalising illiberal liberalism". Hence, a liberal state is purposefully blind to difference, using the common good as an instrument to avoid the recognition of particularities. For example, efforts to militarise the police force, equipping it with more sophisticated high-powered weaponry and extending greater authority in order to enhance security for the common good of society, increases the risk of police brutality and state repression, especially towards weak and vulnerable social groups. The rhetorical and disingenuous use of a shared interest, common ideal or good by the state to circumvent an acceptance and affirmation of political difference, reifies misrecognition. Ironically, a situation is created where marginalised groups end up showing allegiance to an inherently oppressive liberal democratic system that undermines their self-definition and self-determination.

However, the power to act is not just vested exclusively within legal and political structures, it is manifest in individuals and collectives who are functionaries in the system. Therefore, individual and collective identity determine how members of society interpret the law or practical rules, adjudicate others and put recognition into action. As illustrated in the incidents of police brutality involving Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown, a black person by virtue of his/her profile is always guilty until proven innocent, which is antithetical to the principle of equal treatment in law where a person is innocent until proven guilty. How we evaluate one another is contingent not on social status as stipulated in law but filtered through multi-layered identity profiles that we create of one another. Multi-layered identity profiles are shaped by a mosaic of individual character traits: notably, attitude, demeanour and appearance measured against societal norms, and collective stereotypic features related to race, class, gender, sexual orientation, regional affiliation and cultural disposition.

Whilst personal character traits, especially those that are more visible, such as appearance and behaviour, influence social relations, it is the social group identity manifest in the individual that forms the prejudicative conceptual framework used to evaluate the self-worth of an individual. This is particularly the case during initial non-associative encounters with individuals and collectives outside kinship relations. Pejorative preconceptions or a *negation* of another (misrecognition) are a composite and unavoidable feature of recognition (Wynter, 2003: 266). Conscious or unconscious resistance to one's negation of another, may lead to a judgement that either under- or overcompensates for the negation compromising the authenticity of an expression of recognition. For example, even though a judge is called to be objective in her/his interpretation and execution of the law, s/he is influenced by her/his positionality relative to the accused. A black female judge presiding over given cases, where the facts are *ceteris paribus* apart from the identity of the accused being different, will arrive at different verdicts. If the accused is a white male, she may be more lenient, fearing a reprisal from the white community, especially in a society where there is a history of racial discrimination. Issuing a harsh punishment that she sees as fitting for the crime committed, means she may be viewed as using her authority to seek revenge, defying the ends of justice. On the contrary, if the accused is a black male, she may be likely to issue an even harsher sentence than expected because if she did not, it could be viewed as race biased. The point is that, even though the judge is called to ethically and consciously ignore public opinion, her own position in society will inevitably impact her decision-making and critical self-reflection. As a member of society, she is shaped by personal circumstance, experience and, most crucially, social identity. Mohanty (1997: 35) elucidates this point stating that people's "experiences do not have self-evident meanings, for they are in part theoretical affairs, and our access to our remotest personal feelings is dependent on social narratives, paradigms, and even ideologies". Interpretation, adjudication and execution of law, or practical rules governing recognition, are, therefore, inevitably determined by a partiality or subjective-objectivity, ostensibly *rationalised* and vindicated within the parameters of law. The subjective certainty (*Gewissheit*) of the judge is transformed into an objective truth (*Wahrheit*).

This is a noteworthy deviation from an Althusserian conception of recognition that views law and practical rules as an objective expression of social status. Such a conception of recognition does not concern itself with determining the "correctness or incorrectness" of an expression of recognition unless misrecognition can be proven through the prism of legal social status (Honneth, 2007: 328). Negation of another or misrecognition constituting a total conception of recognition is concealed and subsequently pushed to the margins of any critical evaluation of social relations. Proceduralist and structural conceptions of recognition avoid the fact that it is people who give *moral agency* to recognition and not institutions or "progressive changes" in social conditions (Wylie, 2003). Stereotypic notions of individuals and social groups, particularly of the latter, are a substrate of any *mode* of recognition. An important element to negation that luminaries of recognition fail to include in their ethical and analytical framework is whether there is a hierarchized scale of (*mis*)recognition against which the ontological value of social groups and individuals is measured. Biographies of misrecognition, in particular Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, identify "whiteness" – the associative features of a white European male, inter alia, his experiences, knowledge, culture, language and perspective of reality, and what it ought to be – as the normative benchmark against which all social groups view and evaluate themselves. In the penultimate chapter of *Black Skins, White Masks* entitled, "The Negro and Recognition", Fanon (2008: 167) writes:

> The Martinican does not compare himself with the white man *qua* father, leader, God; he compares himself with his fellow against the pattern of the white man.

Following from this point, the most significant omission within these models of intersubjective recognition, which will be revealed throughout this chapter and the thesis, is the failure to acknowledge and explain how *reality* and *rationality* is a construct of a dominant Euro-American viewpoint shaped by one particular experience of the world that is now universal. What we come to accept and understand as knowledge about human history has been produced, interpreted and critiqued through one lens. Critically, the struggle for recognition is *his*tory told by oppressors instead of the oppressed – creating a paradox of oppression – particularism as universality. This represents a peculiarity in that those who are misrecognised become "beneficiaries of humanism", inheritors of *a* history and consumers of knowledge produced about themselves and a world in which they did not have a direct stake and voice in articulating.

A gross outcome of this, is that the prejudices and premonitions of the dominant viewpoint endemic to mainstream philosophical imperatives, social psychological discourses and institutions, informs the knowledge that individuals have of self, others, and the larger world. Therefore, before we ask the question of why respect and dignity are withheld from certain people without just reason, we need to first ask, "Who produces critical knowledge, for what purposes, and with what recognition? Asked differently: Whose critical knowledge? For whom? Why and for what uses? And, what in fact is meant by 'critical'?" (Walsh, 2007: 227). Addressing these fundamental questions pertaining to recognition between people also has a direct bearing on how we (humans) have come to recognise nature. The knowledge that people on the exteriority of the Occident (Europe and America) had of nature shaped by their ontological connections with surrounding ecosystems, and its significance in the formation of social and cultural identities, has largely been excluded from mainstream western philosophical thought and radical environmental philosophy. As will be argued later in this chapter and in subsequent chapters, the universal conception of human-human and human-nature relations is the product of a dominant Euro-American viewpoint that hides behind a "veil of justice" concealing a misrecognition of subaltern peoples and nature inherent to recognition theory and underpinning philosophical traditions.

Reproducing Misrecognition: Nature in Recognition Theory

Environmental justice theorists, such as David Schlosberg (2007), have attempted to illustrate how the environment (natural world) is incorporated into the theoretical framework of recognition. This theoretical framework is constitutive of the psychological and structural, as the two core approaches to recognition. The psychological approach espoused by Axel Honneth and Charles Taylor emphasise self-realisation as a key component of recognition. According to Honneth (2005), misrecognition is contingent on the perception that an individual has of others (society's) distorted or misrepresented image of him/her leading to the denigration and devaluation of his/her personal identity and culture by another. He postulates that misrecognition occurs in three forms; (i) denial of another's rights, (ii) physical harm (torture) purposively inflicted by one on another, and (iii) denigration of ways of life (Honneth, 2005: 50; Bader, 2007). Schlosberg (2007: 60) purports that the psychological dimension does, to a certain extent, accommodate the environment within Honneth's conception of misrecognition. Considering that environment is defined by environmental justice scholars, Getches and Pellow (2002: 14), as "where we (humans) live, work and play", damage caused by pollution to the "spaces" occupied by certain communities is also synonymous with a physical injury (torture), as it can be detrimental to health and livelihoods. The psychological approach is, however, limited to a prudential materialist notion of the value of nature. Recognition of nature is justified only insofar as it guarantees economic self-preservation – the protection of an individual or community's material existence. Such a justification for incorporating nature into a broader conception of recognition is also reductionist and restricted to specific spatial and developmental contexts. In other words, in an urban setting where toxic pollutants released by industry, motor vehicles and excessive waste production have an impact on natural biospheres of air, water and soil, they also increase the risk posed to the health and well-being of surrounding communities. Concern for the natural environment in an urban context is, therefore, driven by the immediate need to be "free" of environmental burdens – notably pollution

– and to have access to environmental benefits or goods, such as living in a clean and healthy environment. Nature is perceived as a container through which political, social and economic processes occur rather than something that we interact with and which is endemic to our ontological development (Rangan & Kull, 2009: 32; Bryner, 2002: 40). Therefore, recognition of nature does not extend beyond concern for immediate environments, apart from a few exceptions.

Subscribing to a post-materialist perspective, Ronald Inglehart (1981) argues that the degree of environmental concern or recognition of the natural green environment beyond the environment where we live, work, and play is determined by our level of socio-economic development. Developing societies that have attained a high level of economic and industrial development and experience a high standard of living, shift their interests from basic human needs to less esoteric luxury concerns, such as conservation and preservation (Inglehart, 1981: 895; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). This accounts for why developed societies in the Global North, especially Europe and North America are the "origins" of the environmental movement and global environmental non-governmental organisations (eNGOs). However, within these societies and in the Global South, where there are white European settler communities, conservationist and preservationist thinking and practices are the exclusive domain of a white middle to upper class (Sprout, 1974: 164; Martinez-Allier, 2002: 209; Mitchell et al*.,* 1992: 16).

In fact, the environmental justice movement that was formed in the early 1980s accused the mainstream environmental movement of being misanthropic, placing greater value on "saving the rainforest" than improving the living conditions of communities of colour (Martinez-Allier, 2002: 170). The environmental justice movement was, therefore, an offshoot of the civil rights movement instead of the mainstream environmental movement, which was formed in the 1970s and responsible for initiating the mass Earth Day protest that took place on 22 April 1970 in the USA. It was born out of events that took place in 1982 in Warren County, North Carolina, where predominantly low-income African American communities participated in mass protests against the development of a landfill used for the dumping of highly toxic polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in their communities (Chavis, 1993: 3; Pinderhughes, 1996: 240). The main objective of the protest action was to emphasise the relationship between the unjust distribution of toxic pollution (environmental burdens) and race. The movement was, therefore, created in response to environmental racism claiming that communities of colour were intentional targets of toxic industries and waste facilities. The Environmental Protection Agency employed the General Accounting Office (GAO) to test this claim, verifying that three out of four toxic waste facilities in a specific EPA region of study were all located in communities of colour (Bullard & Wright, 1986: 77; Getches & Pellow, 2002: 8; Lee, 1993: 42). A book later published by Robert D Bullard in 1990 entitled, *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class and Environmental Quality,* that is a seminal text on environmental racism, illustrated how the siting of toxic polluting industries and waste facilities were congruent with historical patterns of racial segregation. Crucially, this was also one of the first studies to analyse how social and psychological effects of racism shape community responses to environmental justice. The former president of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP), Reverend Benjamin Chavis (1993: 3), defined environmental racism as follows:

> Environmental racism is discrimination in environmental policy-making. It is racial discrimination in the enforcement of regulations and laws. It is racial discrimination in the deliberate targeting of communities of colour for toxic waste disposal and siting of polluting industries. It is racial discrimination in the official sanctioning of the life threatening poisons and pollutants in the communities of colour. And it is racial discrimination in the history of excluding "people of colour" from mainstream environmental groups, decision-making boards, commissions and regulatory boards.[7]

This definition focuses on the structural, and, to a more limited extent, social status dimensions of misrecognition. It alludes to how racial discriminatory political systems led to the deliberate targeting of communities of colour as locations for toxic facilities and the relevance of racial identity as the basis for excluding people of colour from participating in environmental decision-making. However, there is a significant limitation in this definition in that it does not make any inference to how discriminatory political processes, dominant scientific knowledge systems, and modern development practices affected how we (humans) interact with other creatures in the biosphere and how and why we have come to misrecognise nature. Simply put, how has modernity through the course of history altered how we perceive nature and the moral value we afford to it? The existing definition of environmental racism does not explore the full extent of the psychological dimension of why white people are protectors of nature and black people are hostile towards it. Furthermore, it fails to provide a rationale for why the destruction of nature is part of a broader dehumanisation process.

Later improvements in defining environmental racism in the 1990s were to address specific shortcomings within the theoretical and social framework of environmental justice. Amongst the most significant shortcomings, was its bias towards urban environmental conflicts and homogeneity, emphasising race as the primary variable for the unequal distribution of environmental burdens, omitting class, gender, and ethnicity. Environmental justice scholars such as Joan Martinez-Allier (1997: 2002) called for a redefinition of struggle from environmental

[7] In her article, "Rethinking Environmental Racism: White Privilege and Urban Development in Southern California", Laura Pulido (2000) moves away from the traditional materialist understanding and definition of environmental racism and points to the discursiveness of racism and how it manifests in our language, psyche, and social structures. Racial meanings cannot be erased from social practices and structures through political, institutional, and material reform. She argues that the insidious hegemonic dimension of racism does not have to express itself through an explicitly discriminatory act to qualify as a form of misrecognition. Consider the existence of racially segregated residential urban spaces within a democratic context of the freedom to private property ownership. *Intentionality* does not have to be empirically proven on the part of white property owners and renters who overtly deny blacks an opportunity to either purchase or rent their property, citing the racial identity of the potential buyer or lessee as the reason for deflecting their overtures. As Ian Haney López (2014) elucidates in his recent book, *Dog Whistle Politics*, racism is a "silent code", one that is encrypted in politics, society, and our economic order. It sheds insight into questions of: why do white people respond by flight when a black person moves into a predominantly white community, irrespective of the class stratification of the neighbourhood? Are a black and white person, who both own private property in the same area, treated with the same degree of worth and esteem (recognition) by members of the community? Can a black person ever be seen and respected as an owner of property? Is one's material worth in terms of being afforded recognition directly influenced by his/her ontological worth? In other words, a materialist dimension of recognition has to be contingent on an existential notion of intersubjective recognition to have any meaning to lived experiences.

racism to a more inclusive "environmentalism of the poor" – representing a paradigmatic shift from a parochial environmental justice to an extensive ecological justice.

Ecological justice incorporated the struggles of marginalised communities including women, children and indigenous and ethnic minorities that depend directly on a particular ecosystem for their livelihoods, especially those that are rurally based and are engaged in small-scale agricultural production, hunter gathering, local arts and crafts or subsistence fishing (Sachs, 1995: 7). It reconciles "brown issues" or struggles for social justice demanding equal access to environmental benefits or goods with "green issues" that advocate the conservative use and preservation of nature (Harvey, 1998: 346). Therefore, an inimical impact on their respective environments is directly proportionate to depreciating quality of life. The problem with this approach is it, firstly, fails to consider the significant role that nature plays in identity formation, which extends beyond its commercial or material value. Nature is reduced to an environmental benefit or good (natural resource) that should be accessible and equally distributed to marginalised people ensuring equal dignity, as the most relevant form of recognition. The natural world is simply an instrument to afford recognition to marginalised people rather than an intrinsic feature of their cultural, social and political identities. This reifies the utilitarian conception of the value of nature reflected in distributive schemes of justice that recognition theorists ironically criticise and dismiss for dealing with the symptoms and not the cause or source of injustice.

Secondly, struggles for recognition are confined to specific spaces, leading to what environmental justice scholars refer to as "not in my backyard" (NIMBY). This local aggrandised approach to recognising immediate environmental conflict of interests' compromises establishing a universal struggle for recognition. Elite industrial and capitalist interests inevitably end up shifting their exploitative operations from politically robust communities to weaker and relatively more vulnerable communities, destroying and minimising access to environments on which they depend for their survival (Ruiters, 2002: 115). Marginalised communities should, therefore, subscribe to, and mobilise around the principle of "not in anyone's backyard" (NIABY). This critique articulates the tension between committing to a universal struggle for recognition, absorbing various community struggles under one banner, and a more pluralist atomistic account of recognition (Schlosberg, 1997). The latter infers that communities should articulate their own struggles independently without being required to subscribe to a universal set of principles defining their relations to nature that does not fully and accurately capture how they perceive and value the natural world.

Schlosberg's (2007: 17) account of Taylor's view that political difference is the most relevant form of recognition is empathetic to a pluralistic notion of recognition that affords greater value to nature through the conventional psychological approach. It advances the idea that each group has a distinct uniqueness for which it must be recognised. Unfortunately, this makes it impossible to arrive at a universal conception of the recognition that should be extended to nature. Although it appears to advocate a weak multiculturalism which Taylor does not fully subscribe to, as he argues that multiculturalism is an intrinsic feature of modern liberal society that cannot be avoided.

Therefore, recognising difference in terms of the unique relations that cultural groupings have with nature is an effective modality to establish the conditions for self-determination. Furthermore, in modern liberal society individuals have multi-layered identities and there are instances where a person belonging to a specific cultural grouping that slaughters seals and other wild animals for their fur, may be an animal rights activist that supports PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), and therefore vehemently denounces this particular aspect of her/his culture. Therefore, for Taylor, it is reductionist to emphasise collective cultural identity ahead of individual identity (Smith, 2002: 145). As a countenance and critique of this idea in reference to the aforementioned example, the question one should ask is: According to whose moral standard and viewpoint is seal hunting a destructive practice and to what extent is the hunting of seals for subsistence and cultural rites of passage impacting on overall seal populations relative to commercial hunting? Even though the activist possesses individual will and, therefore, decides to condemn seal hunting, to what extent is her/his notion of conservation shaped by a dominant environmental discourse? Why and how is this conservationist discourse the product of cultural domination? Does subscribing to this dominant discourse not wrongfully misrepresent and vilify her/his culture due to societal ignorance? These critical reflections are not considered. Therefore, a major shortcoming of Taylor's conception of recognition as political difference, is the fact that it works on the pretext that an ascription to difference will circumvent relations of power (Changfoot, 2003: 25). The main problem with Taylor's conception of recognition is that it deflects any discussion pointing to the role that cultural hegemony plays in denigrating, misinterpreting, misrepresenting, and, in most instances, ignoring marginalised social group identities and cultures and their interactions and knowledge of nature. Taylor does not adequately explore how misrecognition of nature and people is institutionalised and historically produced.

The second approach is encapsulated in the work of Nancy Fraser, especially in *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World* (2008), who negates the psychological dimension of recognition and emphasises the influence that structural factors, especially social status has in producing misrecognition. Her main contention is that the psychological approach analyses recognition through individual perceptions of a "status injury" rather than actual social relations. Fraser argues that the institutionalisation of three processes based on status, namely, (i) cultural domination, (ii) invisibility of patterns of non-recognition, and (iii) disrespect involving being disparaged through stereotypic public and cultural representation, provides a substantial account of misrecognition (Schlosberg, 2007: 18). The structural approach that Fraser advocates appears to be more amenable in application to nature and addresses the criticisms levelled against the psychological approach to recognition. For example, if a sacrosanct biophysical space was radically transformed because exclusive rights to it were given to a multinational mining corporation or other private enterprise that failed to recognise its significance in the formation of the identity and culture of a particular social grouping, it represents cultural genocide. Applying the structural approach to this hypothetical scenario, the core assumption is that granting the affected community exclusive cultural rights to that environment, would compel all actors in society to recognise the community's cultural way of life relative to the environment. By default, institutional restoration of the social status of the community would therefore inevitably lead to respect for that biophysical space. Besides being overly simplistic, subscription to such an approach, risks dissolving the politics of recognition into "cultural reductionism" that could dangerously lead to ecofascism. For example, cultural and social groups may lodge claims proposing an organic link between themselves and the natural environment they occupy, validating exclusivity and the elimination of other humans that are not endemic to such spaces (Deluca, 2005: 72). In addition to this point, it would be naïve to romanticise the relationship that a particular social grouping (mainly an indigenous or rural community) has with a specific biophysical space (Beinhart & Coates, 1995: 3). Whilst they attach symbolic values to nature, affording it cultural significance, one cannot presume that modernity has not altered their preferences and tastes for industrial commodities, which inevitably have negative implications for conservation and preservation of nature. Furthermore, the proportion of isolated indigenous communities and individuals that live in harmony with nature and depend directly on it for their livelihoods is relatively negligible compared to the majority of communities that function within an industrial complex. Hence, the mere extension of cultural rights to specific natural spaces that are deemed sacrosanct to certain cultural and social groups, does not shed light on how wider society ought to recognise one another in relation to nature. The main limitation with the structural approach, however, is that it works on the premise that, once social status of a marginalised social grouping is institutionalised, disparagement through stereotypic public and cultural representation will be eliminated (Changfoot, 2003: 15). In other words, if that cultural grouping is still perceived through a stereotypic lens and considered inferior according to normative cultural and social standards, it is highly probable that their culture and the cultural significance of the biophysical space will continue to be disrespected. Therefore, recognition dispensed through legal convention does not imply a change in moral consideration and ethical practice. Another concern is the belief that institutional political reform can undo or emasculate the psycho-social effects and broader matrices of power that are core features of cultural domination. It fails to consider the extent to which cultural domination has estranged people from nature and themselves.

Interestingly, the most significant shortcomings are generic and common to both approaches to recognition that paradoxically perpetuates misrecognition towards nature and people. Firstly, both approaches fail to provide an explanation of how modernity, informed by a particular Euro-American experience and viewpoint, came to shape how we define, think about, and interact with the natural world. Secondly, their investigation into the realm of domination and oppression does not adequately explore and account for how the oppression of nature is coterminous with the oppression of marginalised people and vice versa.

The Origins of the (Mis)recognition of Nature and Subaltern Peoples in Western Philosophical Thought

The limitations of recognition theory, in providing a clear and holistic picture of why certain social groups and the natural world are on the periphery of moral thought and action, have their origins in the three main currents of western philosophical thought, namely, Cartesian logic, Hegelian phenomenology and existential phenomenology. There are prejudicial attitudes and perceptions of self and other underlying these philosophical traditions, which are born out of the experiences and viewpoints of the philosophers themselves. As will be revealed in this section, their prejudicial attitudes shaped their conception of recognition that paradoxically concealed, produced, and legitimised the misrecognition of nature and subaltern people.

The epistemic origin of the misrecognition of subaltern people and nature can be traced back to *Cartesian logic*. Scholars have made little effort to determine who the Cartesian subject of *Cogito (I think)*, the significant "I", is, which Descartes refers to in his *Meditations*. The tendency has been to assume that this "I" is universally relevant and represents all beings across space and time. This is highly problematic since the "I" of *Cogito* was a construct of the particular experience of the Renaissance that swept across Western Europe in the fifteenth century. Ramon Grosfoguel (2013: 75) argues that this "I" replaced the epistemic authority of European Christendom and defined the period of secularisation and epitomised the liberation of the European philosopher as a "free" thinker. The philosopher assumed the mantle of the God's Eye view of the world, having the autonomous epistemic privilege of not only being an exclusive producer of knowledge about the world, but the sole critic and distributor of that knowledge. Crucially, the particularity of their experience of reality was exteriorised from epistemology. This was achieved by the adherence to Descartes' commitment to an "ontological dualism" – the notion that the mind (the thinking being) was separate and distinct from the body (the physical being). To reify his position, Descartes argued that the senses attributed to the body or physical being are deceptive and can distort one's experience of reality and the knowledge that emanates from it; truth can only therefore be determined through reason alone – thought as an affirmation of the existence of self – "I think therefore I am". It follows that, if the body and mind were collapsed into one entity, it would be impossible to remove the experiences of the body from the projection of thought, subsequently denying knowledge objective and universal relevance (Quijano & Ennis, 2000: 555). Therefore, the mind would be constituted of the same substance as the body, and must thus be located in, and conditioned by the body. This results in knowledge being produced from the body's *situatedness* in a particular space in the world, rendering the transcendental and universal claims of *unsituated knowledge* immutable and irrelevant to specific and varied experiences of reality.

With the rational (thought) trumping reality (lived experience), knowledge was sanitised of the prejudices and exclusivity of a particular experience. The *unsituadedness* imbued the Cartesian subject with neutrality, objectivity and certitude when observing and producing knowledge about the world that is unconditioned by the body and "unbiased". Knowledge produced within the logocentric and phallocentric paragon of Cartesian logic was, therefore, universally applicable and veridical. The outcome of portraying particularity as universality was that it relegated other particularities and knowledges produced from experiences outside of Western Europe to the realm of *un*reason, *un*truth and *un*objectivity (Mills, 2007). With the onset of European colonisation, however, the knowledges of peoples from Africa, Asia, Australasia and Latin America were not only exteriorised, but also exterminated, misappropriated and misrepresented. The murder, rape and torture of non-Europeans was therefore inextricably connected to the erasure, distortion and disruption of intergenerational memory of their respective knowledge of their cultures, traditions and languages – what Ramon Grosfoguel (2007: 214) refers to as a genocide/epistemicide coupling. As a result, the emergence of the all-knowing Cartesian subject with a God's Eye View (*I think therefore I am*) became synonymous with the historical event of colonisation marked by the extermination of other (*I conquer therefore I am*). What fundamentally links "I think therefore I am" with "I conquer therefore I am", is the epistemic racism/sexism – the idea that the European man is an epistemically and morally superior being compared to non-Europeans. This is vindicated when one looks at the justification for colonisation as a "civilising mission" to save non-Europeans from their heathenism, indolence, barbarism, immorality and developmental backwardness.

Non-Europeans were devoid of a "soul" and without a God, prerequisites to assuming the objective consciousness of the all-knowing Cartesian subject (Maldonado-Torres, 2007: 244). The non-European exists outside of the realm of spirituality and rationality needed for solipsistic introspection that defines the significant "I". S/he is therefore an object and not a subject of reason. Scientific disciplines steeped in Cartesian logic, such as anthropology, were subsequently predicated on racist pretentions that reduced non-Europeans to research objects. Non-Europeans belonged to the *anthropos* and not the *humanitas* (Mignolo, 2011: 275). Cartesian logic, which was designed to be neutral and objective, was actually underpinned by subjectivity. It was therefore shaped by a prejudicial attitude towards non-Europeans that was far from sanitary. Ironically, in emphasising its "freedom" from body politics, Cartesian logic ended up being reduced to it.

In fact, Descartes's personal silence on matters of race, and slavery in particular, given that he wrote during a period marking the highpoint of the transatlantic slave trade and was heavily influenced by the works of philosophers who dealt explicitly with questions on servitude and European imperialism, is a major liability in his philosophical and theoretical project. Timothy J. Reiss (2005: 18) argues in his piece, *Descartes's Silences on Slavery and Race*, that freedom for Descartes was "opposed not to slavery or servitude but to abstractions like licence or ignorance or to realities like prison (the last less different than appears)". Although Descartes was indifferent to external social categories, such as skin colour, sex, and facets of the human body, which he referred to as accidental qualities, since race was constitutive of a single human species distinguished ethnographically in terms of lineage, clanship, and occupation of specific environments, he emphasised difference in relation to the nature and form of people. The non-European, in this regard, was an alterity to Renaissance European man in that s/he represented an uncivilised pre-enlightenment brute. In short, the non-European was an inferior mind that failed to employ a God-given ability afforded to all humans in the form of reason (intellect) needed to advance from a *state of nature* to an enlightened civilised form (modernity). In his seminal work, *Discourse on Colonialism*, Aimé Césaire highlighted this exception referring to Descartes' statement, "the charter on universalism, that reason … is found whole and entire in each man," and that "where individuals of the same species are concerned, there may be degrees in respect of their accidental qualities, but not in respect of their forms, or natures" (1972: 12). Anibal Quijano (2007: 173-174) elucidates how these differences in forms and/or natures "were admitted primarily above all as inequalities in a hierarchical sense", relegating non-Europeans to "objects" rather than "subjects" of reason.

Like non-Europeans, nature was also on the periphery of Cartesian logic, since it is incapable of reason it is, therefore, not a moral agent of justice to which rights and freedoms can be afforded. The natural world belongs to the material realm outside of rationality and is open to the deception of the senses. Because mathematical shapes and logic are the only "constants", it, therefore, holds that nature only possesses epistemic value in so far as it can be measured in terms of mathematical formulae and logic (Deluca, 2005: 75). Nature was, therefore, reduced to an object of study using an empirical method that formed the epistemic foundations for natural sciences. In other words, it postulated that all knowledge of nature, that is produced using this method, will always be objectively and universally true (Padrutt, 1992: 20). Although there have been radical interventions that question the universality and absolute truth of scientific knowledge, especially Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, published in the 1960s, the critique was based within the "rational" and experiential boundaries of Western Europe. Despite serving as a seminal text challenging western science as a linear progressive discourse pointing to significant paradigm shifts subverting universal "truths", it offered its critique within the framework of Cartesian logic. Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2006: 123) refers to this as "subversive complicity". It did not raise ontological questions that create a theoretical platform for extending greater cultural and moral value to the natural world. Instead, it reinforced the idea that human relations with nature are purely mechanistic and "material" and do not have ontological relevance and worth (Paterson, 2006: 147). Nature is not related to and has no role in the creation of human ontological development. Through the universalisation of the Cartesian logic, humans placed nature firmly on the margins of moral thought and action, justifying the need to control and order it.

Non-Europeans and nature were both victims of misrecognition as a construct of Cartesian logic. The Cartesian legacy lives on in mainstream environmental thought and practice that attempt to resituate nature within a broader discourse of justice, and are embedded in scientific racism, colonial domination and white European superiority. For liberationist black scholars, such as Frantz Fanon (2004), these epistemic traditions that underpin environmental thought metaphorically situate non-Europeans in nature. Beinhart and McGregor (2003: 7) elucidate that in earlier traditions of African studies that explored the links between society and environment:

> ...Africans could be interpreted as creatures of nature, exhibiting the indolence induced by the tropics, or subject to 'primitive' impulses born of a non-technological society.

They were savages that belonged to nature and, like the "wilderness" (nature), were in need of taming as part of the salvific enterprise of colonisation. Since colonised non-Europeans were a part of nature, they, like nature, are firmly on the exteriority of the *humanitas*. The othering or misrecognition of nature was therefore synonymous with the othering of non-Europeans (*anthropos*). Therefore, knowledge about nature that was produced by non-Europeans or "insignificant 'I's" outside Cartesian logic is considered irrational and non-real since they were incapable of reason and lacked moral virtue. The knowledge that non-Europeans had of nature was based on superstition, folklore and myth. Consequently, the practices informed by this knowledge were therefore endemically flawed and pejorative to the natural world (Walsh, 2007: 225). As Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007: 39) illustrates, such knowledges are considered as part of the *mythos* and not the *logos* because they are produced by people with little to no ontological density.

The negation of non-Europeans and justification of European domination over them is not only endemic to Cartesian logic, but also to other philosophical traditions. Hegelian phenomenology, that attempted to provide a historicist and dynamic conception of recognition grounded in social relations, was also informed by a prejudicial attitude. In his hermeneutical historical account of the struggle for recognition, Hegel relied exclusively on the lived experiences of European society, of which he was a part, to illustrate the dialectical relationship between fluctuating social conditions and social relations (Smith, 1989; James, 2012). As a consequence, the objective-reality which formed the canvas for Hegelian practical rationality was restricted to Europe. This creates a worrisome situation where a "centralised experience" forms the basis for the Hegelian historical method that is "decentralised" and universally applicable. Whilst this method is celebrated for revealing how, through social agency motivated by the developmental spirit, the institutional and social conditions for autonomy or freedom were established and can still be used to address questions of moral epistemology today, it paradoxically rationalises and reproduces *un*freedom. So, the question is: What does this method conceal when revealing the moral and sociological gains of modernity? Answers to this question can be proffered on three counts. Firstly, unequal relations of power resulting in acts of misrecognition (viz. slavery, colonisation etc.) are reduced to an outcome of the collective will of society at a point in history, that were subsequently revoked and redeemed due to changing public sentiment and social conditions. Secondly, it follows that the constantly changing nature of morals and ethical practice is used as a viable argument to deflect from engaging normative claims in historical analysis challenging the cultural hegemony of social agency. And finally, in reconciling objective-rationality with subjective-rationality through the self-determined state that provides the institutional conditions (objective-rationality) that serve as the legislative boundaries within which individual practical reasoning (subjective-rationality) is achieved, that, in turn, is shaped by the demands of civil society, the Hegelian method fails to adequately consider the pre-institutional normative conditions required to ensure that recognitive relations are morally genuine. Consequently, the real or actual conditions, under which social order was established outside Europe through European colonial domination, can easily be passed off as being for an ethically just cause (Pippin, 2008: 276). This constitutes significant oversights that can be traced back to the principle of mutual recognition between self-conscious beings as a basis for social relations. In the master-slave dialectic, which is Hegel's main approach to understanding social relations (mutual recognition), he rationalises the oppression of the slave and reifies the dominant position of the master. Expounding on Hegel's notion of mutual recognition in the master-slave dialectic, Axel Honneth alludes to how both the master and slave can break free of the shackles of this dialectic through a form of mutuality informed by the logic of promoting individual interests. He posits that, despite the master not recognising the freedom and desires of the slave, s/he does recognise the productive function of the slave's alienated labour, which ultimately "benefits" both the master, who profits from the value of the slave's labour, and the slave, whose self-preservation is guaranteed by seceding his\her freedoms to the master (Wood, 1990: 85; Rössler, 2007: 139; Sinnerbrink, 2004: 279).

There is, however, a more sophisticated reading of how mutual recognition is achieved in such a context. The slave's capacity for work is a means for her/him to attain recognition from the master. Since the self-actualisation of the master is contingent on increasing production, a process in which s/he does not directly expend her/his labour power and depends almost entirely on the slave, the master realises that certain conditions must obtain in order to achieve this: for example, introducing incentives and rewards that serve to enhance the social well-being and quality of life of the slave giving her/him a reason to work harder in order to produce more. Work, from the perspective of the trapped self-consciousness of the slave, becomes an emancipatory tool, enabling her/him to break free from the master-slave dialectic. Basing mutuality on the satisfaction of individual interests does not imply that recognition is intersubjective where the master genuinely respects the slave and her/his right to autonomy and the slave truly recognises the master as a person in and of her/himself, independent of her/his role as a dominant individual on whom the well-being of the slave depends. The self-consciousness of neither the master nor the slave is able to gain an authentic affirmation of self from the other. This interpretation of the master-slave dialectic proposes that, although the master is the victor in the fight for recognition, s/he does not enjoy total freedom. In fact, the master is presented as a victim of her/his own dominance in the absence of reciprocity between the self-consciousnesses. The fundamental flaw of this specific reading of emancipation of both self-consciousnesses that constitutes mutual recognition is that it evades the fact that the master-slave dialectic cannot be undone through the realisation of the slave's self-consciousness. Mutual recognition, paradoxically, is solely determined by the master's realisation that the relation no longer serves her/his needs (Lopez, 2013: 75). Recognition is not attained through a "mutuality" that represents a genuine extension of love and respect for one another that is in "good faith"; instead, it is an outcome of an intrinsically unequal relation where the freedom of the slave is left to the interest of the master. This is irrespective of whether granting the slave her/his freedom is motivated by the latter's practical desire to maximise profits or to act and live a morally just life.

Therefore, the main problem with the narrative of Hegelian dialectics in terms of *realpolitik,* is that it fails to acknowledge that the subordinate position of the slave relative to the master is a construct of power and can be interpreted as a vindication of historically oppressive events, such as Western colonialism and slavery (Hanssen, 2000). This has compelled some scholars, particularly Paul Gilroy, to call for "a heightened awareness of how the Hegelian dialectic functions as the deep structure not just of Western subjecthood but also of its hegemonic articulations of history" (ibid: 192). Beyond the productive function, which is the primary reason for enslavement, the master has no obligation to recognise the slave in her/his full capacity as a human-being – someone who has a history, language, culture and possesses reason – as having ontological worth. Hegel affirms this position by arguing that a slave becomes a slave because s/he chose not to fight for her/his own freedom in the struggle for recognition (Laden, 2007: 274). As a consequence, s/he has to be condemned to a life of servitude born out of her/his weakness and lack of self-respect. The prejudicial attitude towards non-Europeans, and Africans in particular, which justifies their enslavement and colonisation and that is endemic to Hegel's master-slave dialectic, is also reflected in his larger intellectual project. For example, in *The Philosophy of History*, Hegel paints this damning picture of Africans within a hierarchal racialised structure of "subjecthood":

> The peculiarly African character is difficult to comprehend, for the very reason that in reference to it, we must quite give up the principle which naturally accompanies all *our* ideas-the category of Universality. In Negro life the characteristic point is the fact that consciousness has not yet attained to the realization of any substantial objective existence-as for example, God, or Law-in which the interest of man's volition is involved and in which he realizes his own being. This distinction between himself as an individual and the universality of his essential being, the African in the uniform, undeveloped oneness of his existence has not yet attained; so that the Knowledge of an absolute Being, an Other and a Higher than his individual self, is entirely wanting. The Negro, as already observed, exhibits the natural man in his completely wild and untamed state. We must lay aside all thought of reverence and morality-all that we call feeling-if we would rightly comprehend

> him; there is nothing harmonious with humanity to be found in this type of character. The copious and circumstantial accounts of Missionaries completely confirm this, and Mahommedanism appears to be the only thing which in any way brings the Negroes within the range of culture. (Hegel, 2001: 110-111)

> At this point we leave Africa, not to mention it again. For it is no historical part of the World; it has no movement or development to exhibit. Historical movements in it-that is in its northern part-belong to the Asiatic or European World. Carthage displayed there an important transitionary phase of civilization; but, as a Phoenician colony, it belongs to Asia. Egypt will be considered in reference to the passage of the human mind from its Eastern to its Western phase, but it does not belong to the African Spirit. What we properly understand by Africa, is the Unhistorical, Undeveloped Spirit, still involved in the conditions of mere nature, and which had to be presented here only as on the threshold of the World's History (ibid: 117).

Because the African is an abomination and exception of humanity s/he has no conception of freedom since s/he is an unconscious victim of an "unhistorical" and "undeveloped spirit". As a result, the unfreedom of the African is measured according to her/his cultural and social proximity in relation to the morally and developmentally superior human spirit of the European. The assimilation of Asian or Arab culture and religion, that happen to be closer to the European spirit and above the African in the chain of being, represents a transitionary path to self-realisation. It is necessary to note here that, even though the Asian and Arab are closer to Hegel's conception of a self-actualising spirit, they still do not fully represent the ultimate realisation of the human spirit that is only found complete in the European. Therefore, the non-European (slave) cannot enjoy the right to self-determination and definition in and of her/himself; her/his freedom is ultimately reduced to the benevolence of the European (master). Indeed, this has been the story of independence of most colonised peoples and nations in modern times. It is interesting to note that Hegel fails to make reference to the success of the Haitian revolution, which was driven and carried out by slaves and that occurred around the same period when he engaged the issue of the struggle for recognition (Mignolo, 2000: 55). The reason for this oversight is due to his belief that the slave, in this case a black person, is a perpetually subordinate self-conscious being.

As the more significant self-conscious being, the master (European), therefore, has the benefit of introspection and the opportunity to criticise and change his/her attitude provided that it comes from self or another master (European). This is no different to the solipsist narcissistic form of the Cartesian subject. Although Hegelian phenomenology proffers a critique of the parochial rationalistic approach of Cartesian philosophy, which does not focus on real social relations, as the basis of constructing knowledge about the world that is "visibly" true, it too, is predicated on prejudicial conception of "other" outside of the Occident. No reference is made to the immorality of how the "other" was oppressed and enslaved, and the fact that brutality, violence and deceit were used as instruments in their subjugation. Hegel's conception of mutual recognition is non-reciprocal and is informed by a European viewpoint and experience of social relations that does not explore the *ontos* (experiences) of the marginalised. The natural world has no moral or social significance in Hegel's notion of mutual recognition since intersubjective social relations are restricted to self-conscious beings, only. Self-consciousness is in exclusive reference to humans because they are the only organism capable of reason and that aspire to social needs that extend beyond the fundamental urges of the body motivated by physical and biological drives rather than a conception of the right (James, 2012: 50). Nature, therefore, exists outside of the realm of moral reasoning and ethics.

Hegel's later Jena writings, however, do attempt to reconcile a conception of self and an other with physiological, biological and chemical processes that inadvertently incorporate nature into the framework of recognition. He posits that the natural process of sexual-differentiation and sexual intercourse culminates in natural individuation, which represents the ultimate form of recognition, where a self relates to itself as other (Hegel, 1977: 168). In other words, this constitutes intuiting oneself in an other. Intercourse is predicated on the notion that mates recognise themselves as belonging to the same species and they simultaneously recognise their sexual difference and appreciate the individuality of the other (Testa, 2012: 180-181). Natural individuation is achieved when the self preserves and individuates itself through a universalising moment (Hegel, 1986: 79). This universalising moment entails the coming together of two selves to create an other – a child. Recognition can therefore be understood in terms of a natural history of the self (ibid). Whilst this may appear to offer Hegel some redemption from his prejudiced conception of mutual-recognition inherent in the master-slave dialectic, and more pertinently, opens a path for incorporating the natural world into a larger framework of recognition, it is severely limited. In terms of sexual-differentiation and sexual intercourse as the basis for natural individuation, Hegel firstly assumes that all sexual relations are heterosexual, and therefore by inference, that recognition is hetero-normative. And secondly, he succumbs to biological reductionism, presuming that, since all humans belong to the same species and can therefore reproduce, interracial relationships are a socially desirable practice. The ideological dimension of recognition, which influences how humans view one another in terms of norms and stereotypic attitudes, has no consideration in Hegel's conception of recognition. Furthermore, Hegel's notion of natural individuation is predicated on a love relationship and not one of oppression: where the self expects the other to see itself as it takes itself to be and vice versa (Young, 2007: 205). Rather, the oppressed is non-consenting and, therefore, does not intuit itself in another. Biological recognition is devoid of moral recognition driven by dignity and respect. In this context, physiological and biological actions are motivated purely by the senses without sensibility. In reference to the natural world, Hegel does not extend and develop his thesis to embrace plants and animals. Natural processes, for Hegel, are confined to the physiological, biological and chemical processes of the human body (self) in relation to other significant human-beings. No effort is made to incorporate humans into the biological and chemical processes of nature. Insignificant others and nature remain on the periphery of Hegelian thought.

The closest Hegel came to integrating the natural world into his discourse of recognition in the *Philosophy of Right* (1967), was in terms of the satisfaction of basic needs, such as food and private property. Steven Smith (1989: 9) argues that, whilst Hegel acknowledged the importance of food, "it is not a sufficient condition for the fulfilment of our truly human needs". Although the desire for food is universal, there is much room left to determine how we should eat, when, where and with whom. Hegel alludes to ethics and how they are informed by culture and identity; however, he does not mention how culture also informs human interactions with nature through the production, distribution and consumption of food. Nature, for Hegel, is reduced to private property.

It does not possess any value beyond its utility in achieving self-actualisation through the satisfaction of needs. Despite Hegel's failure to incorporate nature into his conception of recognition, later thinkers, who were acolytes of Hegelian phenomenology, attempted to fill this lacuna. For example, Friedrich Engels' work, *The Dialectics of Nature* (1940), which has its roots in Hegelian dialectics explored natural physical and chemical processes in the natural world, such as the transfer of energy and sublimation of organic substances (Foster, 2002). This provided an impulse to better understand the dynamic processes of nature that could contribute to solving social problems linked to our material existence, namely, increasing food production to meet the demands of growing populations, managing waste production and conserving scarce natural resources. In his letters to agronomist and chemist, Justus von Liebig, Karl Marx alludes to a "metabolic rift", pointing out that human demands and consumption of nature were far exceeding the earth's reproductive capacity (Foster, 1999: 370). Marx's observation and concern for the effect that modernity was having on nature was driven by the experiences of Europe at the zenith of the Industrial Revolution. There was an increasing need to find innovative ways through scientific discovery and practice to increase agricultural productivity and to manage waste for an ever-growing urban population in Western Europe. Capitalism and western modernity did not just alienate labour but alienated us (humans) from nature (non-humans), which is the very source of our survival. The idea that nature, like labour, was commoditised and subject to exploitation for purposes of the production of surplus and generation of capital was a seedbed for Marxist ecology (Kovel, 2002). This was the case, since nature (i.e., climate, soil and animals) are an extension of labour. Activities that affect the natural conditions of production inevitably have a bearing on the rate of work and pressure on labour to meet productivity demands (Foster, 2002).

This new current in Marxist thought grew and developed a critique of capitalism and its impact on nature and also devised solutions to mitigate environmental degradation. On the solution side, this spawned the discourse of ecological economics. Its primary objective was to extend monetary value to nature by integrating it within the mode of production as "natural capital". This implied recognising the "cost to nature" of industrialisation internalising the externalities into the overall monetary price of the natural commodity (Martinez-Allier, 2002: 217). The "cost to nature" is measured in terms of the time and energy that the earth has to undergo to produce a natural commodity and the impact that excessive consumption has on its capacity to replenish itself. Unequal terms of trade and undue stress on ecosystems in the Global South as a result of the presence of dominant western capital interests and multinational corporations would, therefore, be mitigated by factoring in the "cost to nature". Integrating nature into a conception of global economic injustice, articulated in terms of ecological debt, actually result in an "inversion of indebtedness" – a scenario where the developed world ends up being indebted to the developing world rather than the other way around, which is the status quo (ibid). Although this proffers a monetary market-based solution to the ecological crisis, it does not fundamentally alter how humans relate to the natural world at an ontological level.

Attempts within Hegelian phenomenology to incorporate nature into a conception of recognition, whilst referring to the destructive and profligate effects of capitalism and modernity on nature, fail to explain how and why humans came to relate to nature as a commodity external to ontology. In other words, reference to the cultural, social and ideological significance of nature manifest in the construction of individual and collective identity is absent. Furthermore, the extent of alienation from nature is reduced to an estrangement from a means of production rather than to a way of life and, fundamentally, to a conception of self and community. Productive relations to nature outside the dominant capitalist mode of production, is largely on the absolute margins or excluded from the narrative of human-nature relations. The magnitude of the impact of capitalism and modernity, not only as systems independent of human control and agency, but as instruments to create a specific image of nature and its worth that erased the knowledge that colonised peoples outside Europe had of their unique ecosystems, is non-existent.

There have been efforts by existential phenomenologists, especially Martin Heidegger, that point to how technology and science have simultaneously brought us (humans) closer to nature, but also taken us further away from it (Deluca, 2005: 72). The primary reason for this ontological distancing between being and the natural world (beings) was due to the material scepticism endemic to Cartesian logic undergirding the natural sciences and literature that was synonymous with the intellectual French tradition. Knowledge about nature was fundamentally reduced to promulgating methods to investigate and understand natural processes, determine the intrinsic molecular design of organisms, and how all these elements functioned to create a natural order of life. This approach was motivated by a desire to master, control and manipulate nature. For Heidegger, on the other hand, nature was a constructive feature of the "essence of being", intrinsic to a conception of self that was entwined into a social liberatory discourse where the individual life gains significance and meaning through the community to which s/he belongs. Natural surroundings (landscapes and flora, fauna) – a person's *habitus* – did not exist in and of itself independent of ontological meaning but was constitutive of a cultural landscape inextricably linked to language, national identity and history. This symbiosis between being and nature was the seedbed of Heidegger's concept of "blood and soil" underpinning his philosophical project and that served as the theoretical and existential rallying point for the German National Socialist regime in the early twentieth century (Staudenmaier, 2011: 23). Whilst leading to a robust natural conservationist consciousness and activist tradition influencing "green movements and political parties" in post-war Germany that translated into effective natural conservation policies – situating nature within an apparently advanced ontology promoting self-definition and determination – it was a part of German Völkisch nationalism and Nazi racism (Radkau, 2005).

The problem with this approach to extending recognition to nature and people is that it borders on a form of ecofascism built on culturally hegemonic and racially superior underpinnings. In recognising nature, people justified the exclusion and domination (misrecognition) of other peoples. This paradox revealed in Heideggerian philosophy in application to nature illustrates how the protection of nature was used as an instrument of oppression. Nature conservation in Nazi Germany led to the misrecognition of non-Germanic cultural and social groupings. By inferiorising them in terms of biology (as imperfect products of nature) and ontology (as immoral beings), Nazi logic reflected a mastery over nature (through the emphasis on eugenics), which is an inherent contradiction to conservationism. The extermination of other "imperfect" human beings using this flawed logic constitutes a mastery and domination over other ways of knowing and being in relation to nature. Conservationist thinking and practice is therefore also woven into an "ontology of power".

Conclusion

In sum, this chapter demonstrated why misrecognition of subaltern people and nature is endemic to mainstream political theory and philosophy. It revealed why the epistemic frameworks that are commonly used to conceptualise an idea of justice that affords recognition to marginalised people and the natural environment is informed and shaped by an ontology of power. The ontology of power, however, is tied to a particular conception and configuration of superiority/inferiority – the fundamental problem of coloniality, which is the source of misrecognition. Therefore, in the subsequent chapter I explain why misrecognition is a product of coloniality which permeates all aspects of both our private and public lives. To achieve this objective, I first explain and then employ the analytics of coloniality (the first stage of the decolonial method) to identify and explore the origins of misrecognition as a sociogenic phenomenon that emerged in a specific historical context. This is central to understanding how and why the dehumanisation of some people by virtue of their inferior status was phenomenologically coterminous with the destruction of the natural world, which will be dealt with in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER THREE

The Cartography of Misrecognition: A Decolonial Perspective

Misrecognition is endemic to mainstream political philosophy and theory. As discussed in the previous chapter, the application of distributive and recognitive justice frameworks not only reproduced misrecognition by exteriorising the experiences of the subaltern, but also pushed the natural world to the margins of moral and ethical consideration confining it to a mere container through which social injustices are produced. Efforts to reconcile and incorporate social injustices and environmental degradation within an apparently more inclusive discourse of ecological injustice also did not fare any better in dealing with the issue of misrecognition. An alternate analytical framework that articulates misrecognition in the context of human-nature relations from the viewpoint of the subaltern is required. This would help lay the foundations for establishing an authentic conception of justice, which is inclusive of both the natural world and the subjugated. Decoloniality, as demonstrated in subsequent chapters, provides the most relevant and useful framework for realising this two-fold objective.

In Chapter Four, the coloniality of nature as one of the pillars of the analytics of coloniality/modernity is conceptualised and applied to illustrate how the destruction of unique ecologies and, ultimately, our ontological estrangement from the natural world, was essentially inherent to a process of dehumanisation (or misrecognising) of non-Europeans. Before exploring this relationship, which is a critical component of this research, it is necessary to first understand the origins and dynamics of misrecognition as a sociogenic phenomenon and how it has come to determine certain configurations of power that assume various manifestations of intersubjective relations from basic face-to-face encounters to more advanced global interactions. This chapter, therefore, provides an exegesis of the problem of misrecognition through a decolonial lens or from the spatio-temporality and corporeality of whom Franz Fanon refers to as the *damnés de la terre* (the wretched of the earth).

Given claims that decoloniality does not represent anything different to existing critical discourses such as Marxism and post-colonial thought – putting "old wine in new casks" – and advances a dangerous dismissive and subversive approach replacing one form of hegemonic thinking with another, this chapter will first explain what the decolonial option (or perspective) is by distinguishing it from what it is not. The intention is to address some of the misconceptions and misrepresentations of this analytical approach that have arisen since its formalised entry into contemporary political thought and activism. Secondly, the chapter illustrates how the larger process of modernity, synonymous with the European colonial project, ostensibly contributed to the dehumanisation of non-Europeans/non-whites. In other words, it argues why misrecognition (denying respect and dignity to non-Europeans) is a product of coloniality – the idea of superiority/inferiority based on a racial hierarchy – which is the darker underside of modernity. Finally, the three core pillars comprising the analytics of coloniality/modernity, namely, the coloniality of being, knowledge, and power, will be discussed. An account of the assumptions and their interrelationship is crucial for establishing a theoretical framework to understand the dynamics of misrecognition that stretches across all experiences, not only human-nature relations, which is the primary focus of this thesis. Hence, this chapter aims to present a clear conception of misrecognition from the perspective of the decolonial before demonstrating its specific articulation in the context of ecological injustice.

Understanding Decoloniality through the Lens of Critique

As a formal theory within the broader realm of radical thought, decoloniality is relatively new, having emerged in the post-Cold War era. However, its inauguration as a liberatory critical political discourse committed to articulating the struggle for recognition from the structural location of the oppressed non-European other, can be traced back to acts of resistance carried out by individuals, such as Túpac Amaru, the last indigenous leader of the Sapa Inca, at the inception of the Spanish conquest of the Americas (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992: 551). The decolonial spirit and ethos demonstrated by Túpac Amaru was later reproduced in the thoughts and ideas of political revolutionaries, activists, and intellectuals through the course of modern history. They were evident in the nationalist struggles for independence in Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa, and the formation of the non-aligned movement (NAM) at the Bandung Conference in 1955 that marked a shift away from the polarised world order of democracy and communism (as well as their economic equivalents of capitalism and socialism) towards a "third decolonial option" (Mignolo, 2011: 52).

In the modern era, the decolonial voice has been expressed through radical civil society protests, especially in Latin America and Africa. One example is the joint protest carried out by a myriad of civil society actors, including indigenous communities, peasant and traditional worker unions, political parties and concerned citizens, in Cochabamba, Bolivia in 2000. It was against the state's decision to privatise water, which was a conditionality attached to the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) structural adjustment loans that were imposed on the country in the mid-1990s (Assies, 2003). Their revolt led to significant regime change through the appointment, for the first time in Bolivia's history, of an indigenous president, Evo Morales. Morales introduced a new approach to political leadership, decision-making and governance – one based on direct engagement with the grassroots of civil society – where policies are directly informed by interested and affected parties rather than the typical top-down approach adopted by representative democracies (Harten, 2011). Furthermore, his government usurped the internal political elite and bourgeoisie and asserted its political and economic autonomy from International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and western powers, openly defying negative terms of trade and dependence on foreign financial capital.

Another, more recent example, is that of the radical student movement, "Rhodes Must Fall", which began at the University of Cape Town, South Africa in 2015 and that, subsequently, spread to other institutions of higher learning in the country, eventually finding its way to the metropole where it was established at Oxford University. This struggle initiated by, and predominantly made up of non-European students, involves a direct call to authorities to "decolonise education": to remove or relocate monuments memorialising colonial figures from university spaces; tackle racism within the institution through constructive and rigorous intellectual debate: incorporate knowledge produced by African scholars, that is relevant to the South African and African context, into the curricula of various disciplines; for subjects to be taught in the African languages; and to employ more African academics, amongst many other demands (Chaudhuri, 2016). Whilst Bolivia is somewhat of a success story in terms of the decolonial political, ethical and epistemic project, aspects of which will be expounded in later chapters in the context of ecological justice, the struggle in South Africa is on-going and has been compromised because student activists do not have a clear and comprehensive understanding of the "decolonial".

Although each of these struggles has very different areas of focus and interest, there is a fundamental commonality. Despite their unique histories, political and cultural heritage and economic status, both struggles are grounded in the lived reality of the dominated who share the common experience of the haunting sceptre of European colonisation. Hidden structures of power produced by dynamic colonial processes (what Anibal Quijano and Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o respectively refer to as colonisation of the imagination and colonisation of the mind) continue to act in the interior of the imaginations of the dominator and dominated alike and manifest in modern patterns of behaviour. These structures, which were constructed on the belief that non-Europeans/non-whites are non-human and used by the colonists to justify the exceptional treatment of the other. have become a normal and acceptable feature of everyday life. This accounts for why a newly established local political elite, most of whom were former liberators, instated in the seat of governance in Third World countries following the "decolonisation of the state", inflict the same brutality on the historically disenfranchised and are unable to "imagine" and, therefore, create a world beyond that which produced them. A classic example is the Marikana Massacre, which took place on 16 August 2012 at the Lonmin Mine in Rustenburg, South Africa, where 34 miners protesting low wages and poor working and living conditions were brutally shot and killed by police. The way the police – now a representative organ of a "functional" democracy – treated the miners was no different to how colonised subjects were treated by colonial and apartheid police (Ndlovu, 2013: 48).

The inability of the post-apartheid state to envision an alternative economic system outside of capitalism and to implement a policy framework that is committed to restorative justice where the voices of the oppressed are integrated within the arena of knowledge, legal practice, political and social relations, illustrates how hidden structures determine individual and collective action (agency*)*. In order to understand what constitutes misrecognition and how and why it replicates itself in the post-colonial neo-colonised world, it is necessary to understand how these hidden structures and agency (institutions and the actions of individuals and collectives) reproduce and construct one another. To achieve this objective, an exposition of the analytical/theoretical framework of decoloniality is required. Before doing so, however, it is necessary first to address some of the many criticisms, misconceptions, and misrepresentations associated with this particular school of thought arising from a combination of lazy reasoning, ignorance and misappropriation.

The most hostile, and perhaps most significant critique of decoloniality, emanates from scholars steeped in traditional philosophical and theoretical paradigms. Many of them view decoloniality as a dangerous essentialist discourse promoting an anti-humanist humanism, which targets whites/Europeans as the source of the problem of misrecognition. This critique stems from two interrelated factors. The first highlights the tendency to conflate decoloniality's criticism of "whiteness" with white people. And the second points to the rejection of decoloniality's claim that knowledge itself is not neutral since it reflects a dominant Euro-American vision of reality. Reducing the decolonial critique to a white body rather than focusing on the normative elements attached to being white on which relations of domination and oppression were formed, creates a situation where westernised scholars (both white and non-white) become victims of a hubristic attitude that prevents them from listening and understanding oppression from the viewpoint of the other. It is important to note that there are white people and those of European descent who are decolonial, and whose thoughts and actions are pivotal to the decolonial struggle for recognition. These individuals are conscious of their "whiteness" and situate themselves in the social and epistemic location of the other. Although decoloniality identifies race as a key organising principle of (mis)recognition, it does not advocate a hateful and retributive discourse. Rather, it adopts a Fanonian approach which, on one hand, channels the frustration and indignation of the other by providing an existential phenomenological account of how notions of superiority/inferiority configured around skin colour are reflected in social practices and are reproduced through the application of western philosophical models and theories explaining intersubjective relations. On the other hand, it emphasises that, to overcome misrecognition (negate the negation of other), as Fanon (2008: 180-181) illustrated in *Black Skin, White Masks*, both white and black "must turn their backs on the inhuman voices which were those of their respective ancestors in order that authentic communication be possible", so we can "build the world of the *You*". Acolytes of traditional philosophy and political theory close this line of "authentic communication" because they refuse to think beyond the borders of western epistemic structures, which restrict their reasoning to knowledge produced within a European (more recently, a westernised) history, geography and biography. Western paradigms of thought are the construct of a dominant privileged white Euro-American subjectivity that negated, excluded, and occluded other knowledges (Mignolo, 2007: 451). Employing such frames to develop a conception of recognition that advocates inclusion inevitably reproduces misrecognition of the other. This paradox emanates from the fact that western philosophy presents the other as a problem, an object of study representing an alterity to our understanding of human ontology and epistemology, instead of a "subject" contributing to knowledge on recognition.

Decoloniality also induces criticism from the more radical branch of the western philosophical and theoretical armoire, notably, Marxism. Through the lens of orthodox Marxism, by emphasising race over class as a key signifier of misrecognition, decolonial analysis is guilty of two major oversights. Firstly, it downplays the fundamental role that political economy played in the creation of social injustices. In other words, race and racism emerged as one of the many social processes in support of the larger process of capitalist accumulation. This explains why, during the early stages of European imperialism and capitalist expansion, class inequality assumed a racialised order. Secondly, claims of misrecognition in terms of race and racism in a post-colonial post-apartheid dispensation are naïve and have no theoretical basis in practical reality because they deflect from the fact that non-Europeans have experienced class mobility and currently form part of a growing middle class and an exploitative bourgeoisie. That the majority of the disgruntled working class in South Africa, for example, is predominantly made up of blacks, is not a matter of racial but class inequality. These criticisms are problematic because they constitute a gross misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the core assumptions of decolonial theory.

Decoloniality does not substitute class for race; instead, it argues that race and racism are endemic to capitalism and cannot be understood separately from it, nor can race, as it is argued in terms of the Marxist superstructure, be subsumed into class. It denotes that ideas of superiority/inferiority affecting all aspects of modern life including economic relations that translate into experiences of misrecognition were designed around a racial hierarchy that originated during the Spanish conquest of the Americas and, subsequently, spread and was normalised in other European colonies. For example, enslaved Africans brought to the Americas through triangular trade occupied the lowest position as slaves (free and bonded labour), indigenes were initially incorporated into the encomienda system. Following its abolishment, enslaved Africans later became housekeepers within the haciendas, mestizos (people of mixed Spanish and indigenous blood) were artisans and craftsmen, criollos (those of European descent born in the Americas) were clerics and administrators and the highest ranked were the peninsulares (those born in the Spanish mainland) who constituted the landed aristocracy and senior officials of the Spanish viceroyalties in the Americas.[8]

It was not coincidental that blacks were not afforded the same rights and treated in the same way as mestizos and that both did not enjoy the franchise of the peninsulares. Or, for that matter, that blacks were the most inferior in terms of their intellectual, social, and moral constitution; and, therefore, were inherently seen and depicted in social and scientific discourse as incapable of producing veritable knowledge, possessing a sense of spirituality (in terms of being non-Christian), managing their emotions and curbing their lascivious nature.[9] What the Spanish brought to the New World from the perspective of an indigenous woman was not just capitalism, but an "entangled package" constitutive of a combination of power structures commonly referred to as a "colonial matrix of power". It comprised of economics along with four other interrelated spheres where European (and now western) authority, control and domination were consolidated and exercised, namely, politics, race, sexuality and gender, and knowledge and subjectivity.

The introduction of the "colonial matrix of power" was synonymous with the arrival of a European/capitalist/military/Christian/white/male who had a certain set of beliefs, morals, cultural norms, knowledge, language, conception of self and of other*,* and a particular imagination informed by his positionality. This dominant subjectivity assumed an objective function by virtue of its superiority as a universal lens through which everyone came to understand him/herself, the significant and insignificant other, the world around himself/herself, and his/her position and role in it (Grosfoguel (2011: 8). In the lights of this reasoning, misrecognition cannot be fully reduced,

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[8] Martinot, S. *The Coloniality of Power: Notes Towards De-colonization.* Web Page: https://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~marto/coloniality.htm Accessed on 02 July 2016.

[9] Whilst the terms of racialisation subscribed to by the Spanish and methods employed to institutionalise it may have been different to their English and French counterparts, the organisation of colonial economies in direct proportion to a racial hierarchy was an endemic feature of European colonialism.

as neo-Marxists argue, to serving an instrumental function to capital accumulation. Neither can any viable theory conceptualising the problem of misrecognition from a non-European's viewpoint be derived entirely from Marxist teleology centred on the idea of "material progress", which consolidates the working class (proletariat) as the primary category of oppression and medium through which struggle and liberation are best articulated. Decoloniality rejects the economic fundamentalism underpinning Marxism. To fully understand and address the problem of misrecognition requires a deeper consciousness of how social identities intersect (or overlap) with others and how this is related to a nexus of systems – not just economic – of oppression and discrimination that was a construct of the superior European "subject" (Lugones, 2007: 192).[10]

This highlights a more fundamental aspect of the decolonial counter critique to the social scientism of Marxism; the fact that Marx's theory of capitalism was born out of a European subject's experiences of capitalist transformation in European society that was universalised as an analytical framework to understand economic, social, and political processes that affected the life of the other outside the Occident. Marx may have witnessed the departure of capitalism, but not its arrival. It follows that it would have been difficult for him, along with other westernised thinkers, to envision how western thought, history, and social discourse would have contributed to the domination and oppression of the non-European. As Cedric J Robinson (2000: xxviii) argued, while Marx emphasised that theory will become a material force assisting the overthrow of capitalism when it is "seized" by the "masses"; by "masses", he was referring to "European male wage labourers and artisans in the metropoles of Western Europe, Britain and the United States" and not black slaves and indigenous peoples whose experience of capitalism was very different.

Critical thinkers and dedicated Marxists from the Third World, such as José Carlos Mariátegui (2011), were fully aware of the geographic provincialism of Marxist thought and chose to adopt a more organic approach. Whilst Mariátegui understood the various struggles of class, culture and nationhood in Latin America through a Marxist frame, he thought about it and applied it from the particularity of the Andes (Walsh, 2007: 224). Mariátegui's approach may have appeared to be radical in that it exposed the geopolitics of Marxism and attempted to reformulate and adapt it to suit his spatial and temporal context; however, it was not radical enough. By elevating the struggles of class over race and converting certain social groups into class-based categories, Mariátegui not only underestimated the complexity and unique value systems governing economic relations and social organisation, but also reproduced Marx's racial blindness. Indigenous peoples were seen as *campesinos* (peasants) and blacks were denounced as barbarians who did not contribute to any significant struggle on the continent. Mariátegui was ignorant of the fact that indigenous peoples' relation to the land and the environment and the value they afforded to it was not exclusively shaped by a specific "class consciousness", but also by an ecological treatment of the cosmos and adherence to a "moral economy" predicated on the principles of reciprocity and the right to subsistence (Varese, 1996: 123). This is fundamentally different to, and at complete odds with, the capitalist notion of land and nature as a commodity (capital) separate from human ontology to be manipulated (worked on) and exchanged for profit. Furthermore, it failed to acknowledge the

[10] María Lugones (2007) emphasises that intersectionality enables one to reveal patterns of misrecognition that are not seen when we conceptualise categories, such as race, gender, and class, separately from one another.

influence that the Haitian revolution, initiated and executed by black slaves, had on liberation struggles throughout Latin America beyond inspiring slave revolts in plantations and stoking the intellectual flame of "black consciousness". More crucially, there were notable black figures who are commemorated for the pivotal role they played in the anti-colonial struggle. One such person was Juan Gualberto Gómez who united blacks behind the Cuban War of Independence, helped plan the insurrection, and published extensively in newspapers that advocated racial equality and were against Spanish monarchical rule (Morejón & Frye, 2005: 944).

It is important to note that not all scholars who were empathetic to Marxism and used it to analyse struggles in the Third World, and, in some instances, drew inspiration and guidance from it to inform their own actions and ideas within liberation movements, were unconscious of its blindness to race (biography) and its spatial and temporal parochialism (geography). Radical black scholars, such as Walter Rodney, were aware of both these limitations, yet they did not dismiss Marxist analysis as a viable instrument to conceptualise their existential condition. In a speech delivered at Queens College, New York in 1975 on *'Marxism and African Liberation',* Rodney grappled with the question of whether Marxism had any relevance to Africa, African society (particularly pre-colonial) and black people. The answer to this question, he argued, lay in the distinction between Marxist ideology and Marxian methodology. For Rodney, Marxian methodology, unlike Marxist ideology, was not bound to class determinism, which is cemented as a foundational idea of Marxist theory informed by the natural evolution of capitalism that was "historically generated within the culture of Western Europe in the 19^{th} century" (1975: 5). Marxian methodology subscribes to a generic formula that starts from the basis of existence; an examination of our (human) relationship with the material world (nature) and how our conception of life (human consciousness) emerges from that interaction, which humanises nature and where the application of labour produces technological innovations that precipitate social changes.

This method is independent of the particularity of the European experience and could be applied to any place at any time and is suitable to any society and situation. Rodney justified his argument by citing an essay titled, "The Weapon of Theory" written by a fellow black radical thinker and revolutionary, Amílcar Cabral, in which the latter pointed to the inadequacy of fundamentalist Marxist reasoning to capture and articulate the history of his country of Guinea-Bissau and its people. In this piece, Cabral stated that, by searching for classes within his society, he would be denying the history of his people because class in a conventional Marxist sense never really existed. In fact, he highlighted that, even when Marx and Engels made the classic statement that "the history of existing societies is a history of class struggle", Engels appended a note indicating that by "all history" he meant "all recorded history" (Rodney, 1975: 9). Since history of Guinea-Bissau was "unrecorded", Cabral took it upon himself to record that history, illustrating the relevance of the Marxist method in effectively serving this purpose.

Three major factors that articulate the "decolonial option" are reflected in the above argument. Firstly, decoloniality does not render the western philosophic and theoretical episteme (both traditional or critical) useless to non-European people and their respective geographies. Instead, it requires scholars, especially those committed to explaining the struggles of people in the Third World, to be conscious of, and to purposefully sanitise, epistemic frames of their Eurocentricity before employing them. The second point is that radical non-European thinkers who apply critical theories like Marxism are problematically associated with the ideology and are given the label of being Marxists. Amílcar Cabral for one did not see himself as a Marxist. Besides blurring the lines of distinction between a Marxist and a decolonial critique, such practices result in the oversimplification of the terms of liberation outside the Occident. This is reinforced by the fact that liberation struggles in the Third World were subsumed into the Cold War. Liberation movements that aligned themselves with the Soviet Union were often cast as being communist.[11] Prominent liberation struggle leaders like Patrice Lumumba, who was democratically elected as the first prime minister of the Congo, vehemently rejected claims by the West that the newly independent government was communist by virtue of its relations with the Soviet Union. In an interview he granted to a French correspondent in 1960, Lumumba was asked the following question: "Some of your political opponents accuse you of being a Communist. Could you reply to that?" His response was as follows:

> This is a propagandist trick aimed at me. I am not a Communist. The colonialists have campaigned against me throughout the country because I am a revolutionary and demand the abolition of the colonial regime, which ignored our human dignity. They look upon me as a Communist because I

[11] It is important to note that the Soviet Union did not compel liberation movements in the Third World to adopt Marxist ideology. And even when these movements came to identify with Marxist ideology, it did not replace or cause a serious rupture in political culture that set it on a new trajectory. In many instances, Marxist ideology resonated with them because some of its core ideals were very similar in principle and meaning to those espoused by their own cultural belief systems. The National Liberation Front for South Vietnam protected religious freedom and ensured the preservation of cultures and did not subscribe to the atheistic policy of the Soviet Union. The appeal of communism in Vietnam, even though it represented an alien ideology, was due to the fact that it shared certain ideals that were similar to Chinese Confucianism on which Vietnamese tradition, values, and culture were predicated and that determined social relations (Chaliand, 1977: 90). For example, the Confucian canon subscribes to the ideal of a communitarian society, which resonates with the communist principles of collectivisation and power to the people. This does not imply, as liberal Western scholars interpret, that, like communism, it privileges the common good over individual rights. Rather, there is a dialectical relationship between the common good and an individual being able to fully realise her/his potential and constant striving to be an ethical being that is committed to living a just life. This is mainly because the Confucian conception of the human-being is relational whereby the self-actualisation of the individual is inextricably connected to how s/he treats her/his fellow human-beings and the authenticity and nobility with which s/he carries out her/his role in society in satisfying the common good.

As an aside, this is why feelings of nationalism were so strong amongst the Vietnamese people which enabled them to win the Resistance War against America in spite of gross limitations in weaponry and armed combatants. In other words, the status of the common good is the outward expression of the individual's inward journey towards achieving moral, ethical, intellectual and spiritual growth. A society ruled by individuals driven primarily by self-interests and who harbour stereotypical conceptions of other people and project an egotistical attitude claiming to know the other and what is best for her/him without attempting to understand her/him cannot attain the common good. In fact, when asked by his student, Fan Chi, to describe what is humaneness and wisdom, Confucius replied that humaneness is about loving people espousing a desire for the other to live (both materially and ontologically) and that wisdom is about knowing people. The community does not take precedence over the self, as is the case with communism nor is it the other way around, as liberalism espouses; instead, both elements function in harmony. Although the Confucian canon demands submission and loyalty to a leader, this should not be misconstrued as vindicating authoritarianism. On the contrary, Confucianism, in keeping with the idea of "humaneness", posits that it is one's duty and moral obligation to speak frankly against anyone including rulers who commit acts of injustice on another (Wong, 2004: 35). Other more recent liberation movements, such as the Juntas de Buen Gobierno (JBG) in Mexico, that have also been given the Marxist label, which they vehemently denounce, adhere to a basic Zapatista principle of political theory that bears a striking resemblance to Confucianism, "to govern while obeying at the same time" (Mignolo, 2011: 320).

> refused to be bribed by the imperialists. We are neither Communists, Catholics nor socialists. We are African nationalists. We reserve the right to choose our friends in accordance with the principle of positive neutrality (Interview with a "France-Soir" correspondent on July 22, 1960).[12]

Although Cabral was heavily influenced by Marxist thought and Lumumba chose to be an ally of the Soviet Union, their struggles were not reducible and could not be completely understood through the lens of Marxism. By denouncing the Marxist label, these revolutionaries assumed a decolonial path, emphasising that they and their struggles were "unindexable". A third aspect of the decolonial reflected in the approach, thoughts, and practices of individuals, like Rodney and Cabral, articulated the meaning of liberation from the perspective of the oppressed. True liberation meant having the exclusive right to self-definition and determination. In order to achieve this objective, the oppressed had to conceptualise liberation through an analytical frame shaped by a synthesis of ideas informed by their own genealogies, experiences, culture, indigenous knowledge, and consciousness of their position within a hierarchy of being that rendered them sub- or non-human and was used to justify their oppression.

Marxism represented an alien body of knowledge that black revolutionaries appropriated and incorporated into their broader scheme of thought, not a totalising epistemic project determining the content and trajectory of liberation. Revolutions in the Third World were not simply a struggle against capitalism as Marxism purports, it was a revolution against Western civilisation including the Left (Mignolo, 2007). This is not to say that the struggle against capitalism is not a key aspect of decolonisation in the post-colonial context. On the contrary, as emphasised earlier on, it is constitutive of the colonial matrix of power from which the non-European societies must "delink" in order to be genuinely liberated. It is pivotal that those contemporaries that side with the decolonial have a complete understanding of what this entails to avoid paradoxically reproducing Western patterns of power (aka re-westernisation). Unfortunately, many radical social groups, as well as self-proclaimed revolutionaries in post-colonial states have, due to a combination of their own ignorance of decoloniality and the growing popularity of the term in civil society, misappropriated and misrepresented what the "decolonial option" is. In fact, there is a tendency to conflate decolonisation with de-westernisation. This is not only theoretically dangerous, but it also exposes the practical or activist dimension of the wider decolonial project to unwarranted criticisms and reductionisms synonymous with radical intellectual and social movements that foment various forms of essentialist discourses.

Whereas de-westernisation shares the same objective of re-westernisation to ensure the survival of capitalism, decolonisation calls for non-European societies to imagine an alternative to capitalism. In other words, it involves rejecting the vices of modernity, such as dependence on a technocratic approach to managing and solving social issues resulting in the mechanisation of human interaction that increases ontological distancing between peoples; conspicuous consumption as a vehicle for obtaining societal acceptance and creating a sense of belonging; and material expressions of success whether through accumulation of wealth or educational achievements as a marker of elevated social status affording greater authority and recognition. The confusion between de-westernisation and decolonisation emerges because de-westernisation is critical of the

[12] *Patrice Lumumba (1960)* https://www.marxists.org/subject/africa/lumumba/ (Accessed on 03 August 2016)

colonial matrix of power in terms of the other four dimensions, namely, politics, race, sexuality and gender, and knowledge and subjectivity. As non-western societies "modernise", especially the newly established political and economic elite along with the expanding middle class, their level of political consciousness also grows and they become emboldened enough to reject Western frames of thought and cultural perspectives that they accepted in the past and, they now come to understand, were used to justify their dehumanisation since the onset of European colonisation (Mahbubani, 2004). However, these societies become entranced with capitalism and the consumer culture associated with modernisation that benefit Western capital interests and increase indebtedness and dependency of the poor majority, leaving them in a worse-off position.

Their self-destructive pathological obsession with western materialism was captured by Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o (2004: 3) in the introduction of his seminal book, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature,* where he alluded to how the cultural bomb unleashed by European imperialism makes the non-European/non-white other "want to identify with that which is decadent and reactionary, all those forces that would stop their own springs of life". Ngũgĩ was referring to how the vices of modernity, especially a consumer culture, have translated into the duplicity of the subjugated in their own oppression preventing them from assuming a more radical stance. The political elite and the newly established bourgeoisie also fall victim to this mentality and are either not fully conscious or purposely avoid assuming a critical view of capitalism and modernity because they benefit their self-interests. They often abuse the anti-western rhetoric using cultural resurgence (viz. Africanisation) as an instrument to curb dissidence amongst the "masses" disillusioned with the lack of redistribution in wealth and to deflect attention from their poor governance and acts of corruption. Their attitude is, therefore, one of self-affirmation (a destructive egoism) rather than decolonial (situating oneself in the position of the oppressed and whose actions are driven by humility in the service of the majority). This is also reflected in the disingenuous actions displayed in transnational relations between countries in the Global South under the guise of "benevolence".

For example, efforts to strengthen South-South cooperation as a mitigating strategy against negative terms of trade and unfair financial practice instituted by the Global North have not translated into improved living and working conditions of the poor. Through the exercise of "soft power", emphasising the common identity of historical victimisation by the West, China is able to build trust and loyalty amongst African states (Alden, 2005: 156). China distinguishes its relations with Africa compared to the West as "friendly" and non-imperialist on account of subscribing to a policy of non-interference, respecting state sovereignty. It does not use financial assistance and capital investments to make political and economic development prescriptions. Rather, it provides infrastructural development and loans-for-natural-resources (a form of economic bartering) in exchange for economic concessions. Amongst the concessions demanded by China to invest in infrastructural development is that it is able to employ its own skilled labourers and capital inputs, instead of assuming a more benevolent role assisting with the transfer of knowledge and skills to domestic labour and utilisation of local resources encouraging a re-injection of investment through the credit multiplier effect and ensuring sustainable development (Sun, 2014: 8). Furthermore, its natural-resources-for-loans strategy has not only encouraged further exploitation of non-renewables, but also fuelled political conflict – South Sudan being a case in point. China has simply replaced the West in the seat of the neo-imperialist in the Global South, however, it has managed to earn "legitimacy" by abusing the ideal of mutual friendship against western exploitation (and India is following China's example in this regard).

The explosion of the Chinese export markets has also triggered large-scale industrial production within its own borders, resulting in an exponential increase in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, exacerbating climate change, the effects of which are borderless and threaten the most vulnerable people within its own borders and in the Global South in general, especially indigenous and women farmers, fishermen and hunter-gatherers (Piao et al., 2010). China's development, however, should not be seen as representing a greater ecological evil than that posed by the West. After-all, the United States (US), for a considerable period, were the highest GHG emitters and refused to sign the Kyoto Protocol, yet they were one of the major advocates of mitigating climate change. This trend has been perpetuated in more recent times following US President Donald Trump announcing his country's abrupt withdrawal from the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change mitigation (Friedman, 2019). Chinese emissions may well be considered US emissions because American companies outsource manufacturing of commodities to China that are procured by large retail stores like Wal-Mart and are eventually consumed in the US (Shiva, 2009: 35). The most significant point here is that sustainable development in the Global South requires South-South cooperation that does not reflect the imperialistic behaviour of the West.

By adopting a de-westernised approach that subscribes to a capitalist economic system that exacerbates exploitation of labour, resources and destruction of the earth, the elite become complicit in the oppression of their fellow oppressed, and they end up taking a re-colonial instead of a decolonial turn. The decolonial option, therefore, entails a delinking from Westernisation in the past and preventing re-westernisation in the present and the future (Mignolo, 2011: 32). A demand is placed on oppressed social groups to dare to envision and create an alternative to capitalism or to reinvent it, so that it is relevant to their historical, socio-political, and developmental contexts, and satisfies needs defined for and by themselves. However, this can only be realised if representatives of the state and members of civil society are able to re-evaluate their lives in totality (self-consciousness, ideological disposition, conception of value and happiness, spirituality, dedication to justice, love, and respect for others achieved through understanding). It ensures that people do not reproduce the same mentality and display the same attitude and behaviour of the oppressor towards their fellow oppressed and oppressor. This is necessary in order to re-construct an ethical commitment to a liberation that is authentic.

Yet another misconception of decoloniality within academia involves the conflation of decolonial with postcolonial thought. The main reason for the relatively new school of thought in decoloniality being subsumed into the more established discourse of postcolonial thought is due to their similarity. Both schools of thought, for example, explore how Western imperialism caricatured non-western (the *other's*) culture, history, language, spirituality, and identity, and how this influences contemporary experiences and claims of misrecognition. However, there are major differences between the respective schools of thought. Decoloniality does not subscribe to the cultural essentialism espoused by postcolonial theory, which discredits the role played by other factors, such as political economy (the World-System, to be more precise), in the misrecognition of the other (Grosfoguel, 2011). As emphasised earlier, European authority asserted its power and control over various spheres of modern existence not just culture. They also have different points of origin.

The postcolonial has its origins in the experience of the decolonisation of India in the eighteenth century and is heavily influenced by Edward Said's seminal work, *Orientalism* (Young, 2016). The "decolonial", on the other hand, can be traced to when indigenous Americans and the African slave trade first appeared in modern historical narrative, which serves as the main point of distinction between the postcolonial and the decolonial and is present in the literary works of Latin American, Afro and Afro-Caribbean scholars, namely, Sylvia Wynter, Enrique Dussel, Anibal Quijano, Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, Steve Biko, Wangari Maathai, Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césaire, amongst many others, some of whose thought has already been explored in this chapter (Mignolo, 2013: 16). Said's work did not resonate with Latin American, Caribbean and African critical scholars attempting to explain struggles within their respective geographies as well as it did in the East and amongst radical thinkers in the West that were sympathetic to postmodernism and poststructuralism. The latter were committed to the Foucauldian archaeological method, which was confined to exploring the role that knowledge (through discourse and textual representations) played in the "construction" of "being" and served as an instrument of cultural domination and disciplinary power to exercise control over the other.

Although Said and other non-western scholars followed a common trajectory of thought, albeit from their own positionality (biography and geography of reasoning), arguing that the "Orient" and the "Occident" were both European inventions, there was one major shortcoming in Said's analysis. Whilst Said illustrated that orientalism was a nineteenth-century construct of European hegemony, he failed to recognise that the Occident was invented some three hundred years earlier following the "discovery" of the West Indies in the sixteenth century. Orientalism cannot be rationalised without Occidentalism; in other words, the latter serves as a point of reference for the former (Coronil, 1996: 55). Therefore, the foundational idea of alterity reflected in the West's invention of the Orient – representing the non-European/non-white/non-Christian other as a negative inversion of the European/white/Christian self – has its origin in the structures of domination and oppression that were introduced in the Americas. Said's failure to see the connection between the Occident and Orient was largely due to his following a path of modern history that is paradoxically a product of the Western geopolitics of knowledge. Modern (western) history started in Greece and Rome and then moved to France, England, and Germany without acknowledging what decolonial thinkers refer to as the "Atlantic detour" in which Occidentalism was invented (Mignolo, 2011: 54). This accounts for why the postcolonial and decolonial followed different genealogies of thought. Postcolonialism evolved from postmodernism and poststructuralism, which relied extensively on the works of Foucault, Derrida, Gramsci, Lacan and Lyotard, that provided a genealogy of social, moral, cultural, legal, and epistemic discourses of western European society based on critical discursive reflections of western European (which became "modern") history (Rodríguez, 2001: 4). These critical scholars interrogated the issue of *Otherness* as a cultural construction of power mediated through various apparatuses, namely, the state, universities and schools, religious institutions and clinics (what Foucault refers to as a "regime of truth") relative to the experiences of the European other (viz. the mad person, woman, child, homosexual and Jew) located in Western Europe and informed by Western European history not the non-European other. Postmodernism and poststructuralism, therefore, constituted a Eurocentric critique of Eurocentricism (Grosfoguel, 2007: 211). In spite of postcolonial scholars, such as Edward Said and later on Ranjit Guha, Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhaba, developing a critique of Eurocentricism from the *existentia* (within time and space) of the non-European other (a trait that postcolonialism shares with decoloniality), by relying on postmodernism and poststructuralism to explain the experiences of oppression and domination, they inadvertently afforded epistemic privilege to the European subject and subjectivity.

A lack of introspection on the part of postcolonialism to acknowledge that the subject and subjectivity cannot be dislocated from theory has translated into significant oversights and oversimplifications regarding the theorisation of the non-European/non-white's experience of misrecognition and conceptualisation of liberation in the post-colonial world. For example, postcolonialism's quixotic interpretation of the fetishisation of Otherness – an idea espoused by postmodernism and poststructuralism – serves as the foundation on which the liberatory concept of hybridity that engenders a utopian cosmopolitan humanism is built. Postcolonialism argues that colonialism evoked in the subjective consciousness of both the coloniser and the colonised, a "desire" for the other that, in concrete biological and physiological terms, translated into interracial sex and marriages resulting in miscegenation, and ideologically encouraged the appropriation of cultural values and practices, social norms, and religious beliefs of people across fixed identities (Young, 2005:171). In other words, the fetishisation of Otherness created a multiplicity of identities incorporating complex blends of race, class, ethnicity, culture, religion, nationality, sexuality and gender.

Hybridity emphasises that this mixture led to the non-fixity of self-definition – a feeling of not belonging to any single identity but an embodiment of all identities constituting the self – whereby people occupy spaces in between cultures (liminality) that undoes puritanical claims centred on identity and serves as the moral and ethical basis for establishing a singularity through multiplicity (Bhaba, 1999). The problem with hybridity is that, by romanticising the relationship between the coloniser and colonised, it oversimplified relations of power. For example, the fetishisation of the non-European other (both man and woman) did not, apart from extraordinary cases of authentic love, translate into consensual sexual relations between races. A significant number of mixed-race individuals throughout the various colonies were the product of sexually exploitative and violent relations where white/European men ("masters") raped non-European women ("slaves") (Collins, 2004:56).[13] As a result, the liminal status of the hybrid did not necessarily generate positive feelings – of being recognised and accepted by the respective groups, contributing to the multiple subjectivities that define her/his complex self. Rather it elicits, in many instances, a sense of rejection and resentment not only of the social group to which her/his mother and father belonged, but of the parent/s themselves , added to which is personal hatred of self. Even if the mixed child were to be loved and accepted equally by both her/his parents, this does not imply an acceptance

[13] Citing Barbara Omalade, Patricia Hill Collins (2004: 56) argues that sexual slavery represented the ultimate submission of slave to master because "every part of the enslaved African women was commodified". To the white master "she was a fragmented commodity whose feelings and choices were rarely considered: her head and her heart were separated from her back and her hands and divided from her womb and vagina".

in society. This individual becomes an objective representation, depending on the relative status (social identity) of the perceiver, of the other that s/he deems superior or inferior to her/himself. In terms of social relations, the hybrid is an antagonistic rather than a harmonising figure. Within the context of more intimate relations, fetishism of this mixed individual from the perspective of the interested observer (potential partner) can be seen as "liberating" or self-affirming should s/he fall in the lower ranks of the hierarchal racialised order. Or, if s/he occupies a higher status, it is seen as chivalrous, rescuing that person from her/his relative inferiority and absorbing her/him into a superior status.

The corollary is that the hybridised person is perceived and treated in terms of that identity that constitutes its multiple self, which is relatively the most inferior. Although this individual may not see her/himself in terms of any single identity (and subjectivity), this does not imply that, through intersubjective relations s/he is not placed within this particularity. In fact, given the intersubjective nature of human relations where the desire of the *self* is to be desired by another *self*, to be seen and treated as one takes her/himself to be and not what s/he ought to be according to archetypes attached to the social grouping that s/he appears to fit, it is inevitable that one's social experiences have a bearing on how s/he sees her/himself. In keeping with the ideal of hybridity, this does not mean that mixed peoples do not openly denounce being pigeonholed and embrace their conflicted position at the interstice of identities that opens the possibility for a cosmopolitan frontier, which transcends difference. Popular influential figures, like the political activist and reggae artist Bob Marley (a mulatto or biracial person of mixed white and black ancestry), for example, are considered as exemplars of hybridity. Marley embodied his hybridity, which is reflected in his own words:

> I don't have a prejudice against myself. My father was white and my mother was black. Them call me half-caste or whatever. Me don't deh pon nobody's side. Me don't deh pon the black man's side nor the white man's side. Me deh pon God's side, the one who create me and cause me to come from black and white.[14]

The message of the "oneness" of humanity is also evident in the lyrics of some of his songs; however, this was not the only message that he preached. Postcolonial interpretations conveniently ignore that Marley remained dedicated to "wiping away transgressions" that still plagued humanity, such as racism, westernisation and capitalism, which were very much part of his life experiences and were articulated through his work. The "I" in "Redemption Song" represented the oppressed black side of Marley that intuited itself in the experiences of his slave ancestors which was manifest in his contemporary life in the form of "slavery of the mind" – the fact that black people saw themselves as inferior and lived under a system that reinforced this belief in thought and practice. In other words, the human dignity that was denied to his black slave ancestors was a feature of his own existence. Hence, his mission was to give voice not only to black oppression, but also black liberation through the recovery of black histories, traditions, knowledges, cultures and languages. Black people could only obtain their dignity by knowing that they have a civilisational heritage and that they did make a significant contribution to humanity's development. Marley's black consciousness may have been influenced by his staunch belief in the socio-

[14] From *Marley: A Film by Kevin MacDonald*, 2012 (DVD) (Viewed on: 15 August 2016).

philosophical and religious precepts of Rastafarianism and the ideas of black radicals, such as Angela Davis and Malcolm X, in whose writings he indulged; however, it was also triggered by the abandonment of his white father and the reality of poor living conditions and oppression that blacks (including himself) suffered at the hands of wealthy and politically powerful whites in Jamaica (Stephens, 1999: 167).

Although he was a victim of anti-mulatto sentiment from the black community with whom he lived because he was half-white, he knew what it meant and felt to be black and understood that racism was alive and as virulent and socially and institutionally entrenched in his life as it was during slavery. Marley did not look towards the future without seeing the present in the past and the past in the present. Whilst he envisioned a non-racial world in the future and espoused those values, this did not deflect from him standing up against the scourge of racism that dominated and contaminated human relations. Any hope of creating this utopian society could only be achieved through dialogue between the races, the success of which was contingent on the parties (especially dominant whites) adopting a specific attitude:

> There should be no war between white and black. But until white people listen to black with open ears, there must be, well, suspicion (Marley, 2012: 33).

Marley epitomises the decolonial, which argues that the postcolonial concept of hybridity (as well as other arguments advocating a liberal humanism) trivialises and emasculates claims of racism that must be acknowledged and addressed while simultaneously working towards creating a cosmopolitan future in the present. Decoloniality, unlike postcolonialism, does not subscribe to a chronological progressive view of history where "post-" infers that racism is a residue of colonialism. On the contrary, it portends that the very same logic – invisible structures of power relative to racial status – that was produced during European colonisation, remains in operation today; in other words, it is transhistorical. By applying an epochal historical method to understanding intersubjective relations, postcolonial theory eliminates the historicity of non-European/non-white extant experiences of racism. In simple terms, the end of colonialism and apartheid marked the end of racism as a formalised system of domination. As a result, postcolonialism does not consider incidents of racial discrimination as constituting a major disruption to the existing social order unless they culminate in extreme violence and anarchy.

Erasing the past does not eliminate long-established ideas and attitudes which reinforce beliefs in racial superiority and inferiority. This manifests in intersubjective experiences that reproduce feelings of misrecognition on the part of the oppressed, who is either subjected to intimidation, acts of violence or being patronised. Neither does it address the sense of embitterment felt amongst the oppressors who bemoan relative loss in material and political gains, but who retain their conviction in being and knowing "better" and, therefore, deserving of greater respect. In fact, the pursuit of restorative justice within societies, which have a history of institutionalised racism, with the dual purpose of redressing the past and seeking political reform in the future, does not address this concern. A prime example is The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa. This platform was designed with the intention of "healing" the divisions between white and black South Africans by establishing a dialogic platform for the perpetrators and victims of crimes committed under apartheid to confront the memory of a painful past. The main objective of this intervention was to lay the foundations for nation building. However, with a recent spike in incidents of racism (although this could be the result of access to social media as a medium of transmission rather than an actual increase) more than twenty years since apartheid ended, questions about the effectiveness of the TRC and the myth of the "rainbow nation" (promoting unity through diversity) in dealing with the issue of racism, have re-surfaced.

This is further vindicated by increased mobilisation of civil society and emergence of social movements representing "black interests" and by a predominantly black government speaking openly against the inimical effects of westernisation and racism (which is problematic due to inconsistencies between their rhetoric and action). According to Mahmood Mamdani (2015), the TRC was unsuccessful in its endeavour to obtain political and social justice because it recognised victims as individuals and not groups, when apartheid was an ideology based on group oppression. Therefore, it identified perpetrators in terms of those that committed grievous bodily harm in the form of murder and torture that were not sanctioned by government, which constituted crimes under apartheid, whilst ignoring structural or political violence that violated the human rights of all blacks, such as the pass system and forced removal from land. In other words, the TRC excused political violence authorised by apartheid law, thereby upholding a political system that legitimised racial discrimination instead of questioning it. For Mamdani, to understand human wrongs we must understand them in context, thus locating the agency of individuals in a historical process, in order to move from the criminal to the political.

By adopting such an approach, we can establish a narrative of the political that identifies the core issues driving a cycle of violence. This also enables us to avoid descending into essentialist reasoning where agency is abstracted from history, resulting in a process of naming, blaming, and shaming, identifying whites as perpetrators or blacks as victims in perpetuity, that defeats the true end of justice, which is to establish a non-violent and non-racialised society. Within this line of reasoning, claims of racism by non-whites in a post-apartheid post-colonial dispensation represents an exploitation of victimhood that justifies the criminalisation of whites, resulting in apartheid in reverse. Arguments pointing to experiences of misrecognition as a manifestation of colonial discourses of power are, therefore, rendered redundant. Mamdani (1996: 2015) limits his analysis of racism to specific historical contexts; namely, colonisation and apartheid, and posits that any reference to those epochs as a basis for understanding the present not only incites violence but does not reflect reality. Consequently, he reduces social and political justice or veritable claims for recognition to procedural institutional change (extension of rights and freedoms within a democratic constitutional and legislative convention), which he believes is a true reflection of our common reality. Mamdani, like postcolonial thinkers in general, ignores real-life experiences of racism encountered in intersubjective relations which does not only evoke a memory, but a reality informed by a particular pattern of power that has not changed since colonisation.

Failure to constructively deal with racism does not have to descend into a full-blown physical war to have dire social, moral and material consequences. For example, it entails an unwillingness to work to one's full potential if the company in which s/he works is owned by someone of a different race, resulting in lower productivity and loss of profit, a reluctance to impart knowledge and skills contributing to development and not affording due reward for someone's efforts, minimising or obstructing her/his chances of personal growth that is beneficial to society at large, amidst a wide range of examples. Such experiences constitute indirect or symbolic acts of violence that provoke feelings of misrecognition, which eventually spill over into more direct forms of violence. To avoid reproducing the cycle of violence, it is paramount that more energy is poured into understanding not just the institutional or material, but also the structural and practical dimension of racism. Hence, the true purpose of theory and philosophy is to accept and effectively deal with the existential and phenomenological accounts of racism as the basis of misrecognition rather than avoid, dismiss, or downplay its significance, as Mamdani does. Unlike Mamdani and other postcolonial thinkers, the decolonial does not focus on describing "postcolonial situations around the world" by investigating "how those situations were thought out, debated, and evaluated" (Mignolo, 2011: 60). Instead, its point of entry into exploring in situ cultural, social, and political dynamics is through discourse, which, in the context of racism, assumes a myriad of articulations and manifestations. This includes how people belonging to different groups interact with one another in the public domain and how individual agency (execution of respective performative functions) reproduces coloniality (structures) within formal institutions. How the other is portrayed in literature and formal disciplinary knowledge, as well as the media, such as film, comedy and art, and what behaviour and attitude are acceptable in the treatment of some people, but unacceptable to the other.

(Mis)recognition as a Product of Coloniality/Modernity

How and why did we humans come to see certain social groups as more/or less deserving of respect than another? As it has been argued thus far, attempts at understanding intersubjective relations and developing a liberatory conception of justice (for both "master" and "slave") within the strictures of mainstream recognition theory and philosophy have ostensibly contributed to the problem of misrecognition because they exteriorise the experiences and silence the voices of the non-whites/non-Europeans. Relying on such epistemic structures considered as universally relevant and applicable, that privileges a western centric subjectivity to analyse human struggles for recognition through the course of modern history, therefore, presents and favours one perspective – that of the "master". In order to gain a more comprehensive and accurate picture of the problem of misrecognition, it must also include the perspective of the "slave". Given the inherent limitations and complicity of traditional frames of analysis in misrecognition, it is necessary to identify and employ one that locates itself within the subject position of the non-European/non-white "other". Decoloniality provides a twofold thesis extrapolated from the Fanonian method highlighted earlier to achieve this objective; namely, the analytics of coloniality/modernity and the approach to decoloniality. The analytics of coloniality/modernity constitute a critical conceptual matrix designed to unveil the logic of coloniality that precipitates misrecognition, and the analytics of decoloniality provides a framework within which an ethics of liberation that is inclusive of all peoples can be developed so humanity can draw closer to an authentic justice. While the latter will be applied in Chapter Five, a closer inspection and discussion of the analytics of coloniality/modernity will be provided here. Before this can be done, however, there are two inter-leading questions that must be answered: What is coloniality? and Why is (mis)recognition a product of it? It is necessary to emphasise that coloniality is fundamentally distinct from colonialism. Colonialism denotes a particular relationship of domination often synonymous with the process of empire building whereby the political and economic sovereignty of a weaker state is subjected to the authority and control of a more powerful one. On the other hand, coloniality is more abstract, as it refers to invisible patterns of power and control born out of European colonisation, which continue to define and manifest in intersubjective relations, labour and culture, as well as the production and dissemination of knowledge (Maldonado-Torres, 2007: 243). Coloniality, therefore, outlives the juridical and political institutions of the colonial administration. It is visceral and non-corporeal, omnipresent across all spheres of modern life, which, at the level of basic human experience, determines individual ambition and the image of "self" and "other", the epistemic frameworks informing our understanding and vision of the world, and the criteria we use to evaluate our general successes. Even common sense is not free from its influence.

The origins of coloniality can be traced back to Columbus's "discovery" of the Americas in 1492 which signified the beginning of the European colonial enterprise and marked "the origin of a process of concealment or misrecognition of the non-European" (Dussel, 1993: 66). As a system of domination and oppression born of European colonialism and tied to capitalism, coloniality was therefore not restricted to experiences of the colonial project in the Americas; in fact, it served as a model of power subsequently followed in other regions of the globe that became the basis of modern identity. This model of power lies at the centre of humanity's experience of modernity beginning with the European Renaissance up until the present. Therefore, coloniality is constitutive of modernity, representing its darker underside, which has remained constant in the face of the evolution of modern society. The colonial matrix of power was configured and operated on two axes that capture the quintessence of coloniality. The first emphasised the logic of superiority/inferiority of peoples structured around a specific idea of race, and the second pointed to a new structure of controlling labour and resources that involved slavery, serfdom, and small independent commodity production functioning within a capitalist world system. The conception of superiority/inferiority was framed in terms of the physiognomic characteristics of the conqueror and the conquered. The dualism between the conqueror (superior) and conquered (inferior) was superimposed on a hierarchal social classification system – introduced to the world for the first time – that was determined according to the racial categories of white, Indian, mestizo and black (Quijano, 2007: 171). This system measured ontological worth – the degree of a person's humanity – according to the relative lightness of her/his skin colour with the white European Christian (Spanish) male at the summit of being – the personification of human "perfection" (possessing the ability to identify and rectify his/her own imperfections in keeping with the Cartesian tradition) in whom morality, social progress, cultural advancement, and cognition were absolute. As the human archetype, the white European Christian male (the "subject") assumed the epistemic and moral authority of questioning the humanity of those in the lower echelons of the chain of being. A misanthropic scepticism – the question of whether you are human, and the rhetorical cynical multidimensional forms this took – was a key aspect of the imperialistic attitude that came to determine modern identity and social practices (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). In other words, the generic affirmatives of humanness, such as, you are human, you are rational, and you have rights, when applied to the non-European, assume the following form: are you completely human, are you rational enough and why do you think you have rights? Whilst such doubt represents an imperialistic attitude that is a construct of the European conception of the other (non-European), it is present and alive in non-European intersubjective relations. In other words, misanthropic scepticism is also endemic to the psyche of non-Europeans and is expressed in their perceptions and behaviour towards each other, which reproduces the logic of difference and reifies the relative superiority/inferiority between them. In *The Wretched of the Earth,* Frantz Fanon (2004: 182) emphasised how colonialism altered the subjugated individual's perception of self which set this notion of superiority/inferiority in motion by forcing her/him to constantly ask the question: "Who am I in reality?" He alluded to the fact that the colonised subject has to confront an existential crisis on a daily basis. For the non-European, the scepticism shrouding her/his being relative to the European subject becomes a rhetorical intra-subjective criterion for determining self-worth, manifesting in a perpetual state of paranoia of the inferiority of the self and *an*-other. Self-doubt, however, dialectically leads to superiority complexes between non-Europeans relative to their respective proximity to the ultimately supreme white European in terms of aesthetics, social values, language, reasoning and beliefs: a neurotic condition where intersubjective relations are defined by competing narcissistic attitudes with each seeking self-validation and establishing her/himself as subject through the objectification of *an*-other. This neurosis is best captured in *Black Skin, White Masks,* where Fanon (2008: 163-165) writes:

> The Negro is comparison … that is he is constantly preoccupied with self-evaluation and with the ego-ideal. Whenever he comes into contact with someone else, the question of value, of merit, arises. The Antilleans have no inherent values of their own, they are always contingent on the presence of The Other. The question is always whether he is less intelligent than I, blacker than I, less respectable than I. Every position of one's own, every effort at security, is based on relations of dependence, with the diminution of the other. It is the wreckage of what surrounds me that provides the foundation of my virility … The Antillean is characterized by his desire to dominate the other. It is always a question of the subject; one never even thinks object. I try to read admiration in the eyes of the other, and if, unluckily, those eyes show me an unpleasant reflection, I find that mirror flawed: Unquestionably that other one is a fool. I do not try to be naked in the sight of the object. The object is denied in terms of individuality and liberty. The object is an instrument. It should enable me to realise my subjective security. The Other comes onto the stage only to furnish it. I am the Hero. Applaud or condemn, it makes no difference to me, I am the centre of attention. If the other seeks to make me uneasy with his wish to have value (his fiction), I simply banish him without a trial. He ceases to exist. I don't want to hear about that fellow. I do not wish to experience the impact of the object. Contact with the object means conflict. I am Narcissus, and what I want to see in the eyes of others is a reflection that pleases me.

The imperialistic attitude of misanthropic scepticism, which is captured so well by Fanon in the context of intersubjective and intra-subjective relations, also underlies global relations of power. In order to understand how it manifested here, it is necessary to dispel the conventional understanding of modernity as an exclusively European experience confined to the geopolitical terrain of the continent that simply then spread to other parts of the globe through exploration, trade and socio-political interaction. Rather, European modernity is inextricably tied to events, processes, and experiences in the developing world and cannot be disentangled and understood separately from them. For prominent Latin American historian and philosopher Enrique Dussel, modernity is, "a European phenomenon but one constituted in a dialectical relation with a non-

European alterity that is its ultimate content” (Dussel, 1993: 65). As an intellectual discourse and sociogenic project, modernity appears at the point at which Europe inaugurated itself as the centre of World History with the periphery cemented as an integral component of this self-affirmation and definition. Modernity’s appearance is therefore synonymous with the colonisation of the New World – that moment when non-European societies are introduced to Europe as an imperial force. The self-enunciation of Europe as an advanced (superior) history of the entire human species consolidated its position as the chief referent of human development. In other words, Europe’s journey to modernity on the evolutionary continuum from primitiveness to civilisation, savagery to rationality, traditionalism to secularism, and proto-capitalism to capitalism became the template for other societies to follow (Quijano & Ennis, 2000: 542). From this perspective and at a theoretical level, the pre-colonial experience of non-European societies was rendered “pre”-historical (a “proto”-ontological era defined by non-reason). With the onset of colonisation, other perspectives, modes of knowing, producing and disseminating knowledge, and modes of signifying and conceptualising the cosmological were not only eliminated, but also replaced with the European (western) conception of modernity.

The imposition of a hegemonic western-centric notion of human development translated into specific modernising ventures pursued by Euro-American interests in the developing world (particularly the former colonies) at various stages in modern history. Each venture was underpinned by misanthropic scepticism that took a particular form and that subsequently changed as priorities shifted. For example, between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries at the zenith of European colonisation when Christian Theology was at the heart of the “civilising mission”, misanthropic scepticism was cast as “Do you have a soul?” From the middle of the twentieth century onwards, with industrialisation and foreign financial capital investments taking centre stage, it became “Do you have development?’ (Grosfoguel, 2011: 7). Towards the end of this century, proposed policy reforms advocating democratisation of state institutions and liberalisation of the economy meant that this doubt translated into “Do you have democracy?’ In the post-9/11 era, the question of democracy morphed into “Do you have security?”, which was broken down further into “Do you have rights and freedoms?” with securitisation of state borders from Islamic fundamentalist groups, and protection and advancement of individual rights and freedoms as the main priority. Despite having unique agendas that reflected changing political and social orders, all of these modernising enterprises have a common thread. They are part of a single grand humanitarian project prefixed on the rational concept of emancipation aimed at “rescuing” disenfranchised peoples in the developing world from suffering by creating the material structural conditions (i.e. state institutions, an economy built on market principles, constitutional and legislative frameworks, and civil society organisations) to enhance their quality of life. However, the non-European experience of these modernising efforts has been quite the opposite, manifesting in new forms of oppression and articulations of misrecognition. This includes, inter alia, chronic indebtedness, increased exposure to environmental hazards, exploitation of labour, profligate appropriation of natural resources, unequal terms of trade, and democratic political reforms that undermine and criminalise other (non-Euro-American) types of governance and social organisation informed by non-western religious and cultural belief systems. It also entails the expropriation of indigenous knowledge and the voices of community struggles by academics and research institutions to generate profit and enhance their status within academe and the knowledge economy without due acknowledgment and commitment to creating a better life. The paradoxical effect of these "humanitarian interventions", which have resulted in a life of damnation instead of emancipation, constitutes what Walter Mignolo (2007) refers to as the "irrational myth of modernity". Such "irrationality" is not only reflected in the incongruence between modernity's claims and its actual ill-effects, but by the fact that violence – murder, torture and rape – has been legitimised and reproduced in its name.

From the onset of the Spanish conquest of the Americas to the present, the imperialistic attitude of misanthropic scepticism has been used to justify heinous acts of war or genocide against non-European/non-white people. For example, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the question of whether Amerindians: had a soul", undergirded ideas of a just war (Maldonado-Torres, 2007: 246). Even radical thinkers of the time, who attempted to develop an alternate approach to what constituted a just war outside the favoured tradition of divine law, could not set aside their firm belief in the exemplary status of the dominant white Euro-Christian identity in relation to others. One such person was Spanish jurist, theologian and founder of the Salamanca School of Philosophy, Francisco de Vitoria, who developed an idea of a just war that subscribed to the legal framework of the universal law of nations or *jus gentium* – a prolegomenon to international law – to determine the moral integrity and sovereignty of Amerindian nations.

As a universal law, *jus gentium* was predicated on natural law, which advocates that there are certain characteristics innate to human nature, such as the capacity for reason, the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, and the desire to do good. These, it was suggested, were recognisable in all people through practical reason. It espoused a cosmopolitan worldview that humans were morally obliged to respect and protect the fundamental rights of another person irrespective of whether the other person belonged to their society or shared a common identity. Because natural law remained the same across all societies, unlike civil laws, it did not change from one society to the next. These core assumptions were the epistemic foundations on which Vitoria constructed his secular critique of the Catholic Church. He used them to negate the temporal authority of the Pope in the New World and to emphasise the need to recognise and protect the private property rights of Amerindians and to respect their religions (Anghie, 2005). Although Vitoria's argument appeared to be all-inclusive (universal), acknowledging that Amerindians had equal rights to subsist like any European, it was paradoxical.

For Vitoria, whilst Amerindians were bound to *jus gentium* because of their capacity for reason reflected in their ability to organise society – a requirement for natural law – they did not possess the capacity for sovereignty because their cultural and social practices were barbaric. In other words, the exclusion of Amerindians from the realm of sovereignty was premised on a logic of difference informed by a white Euro-Christian conviction that they (that is, Amerindians and non-Europeans, in general) were culturally and socially inferior. Since Amerindians were bound to *jus gentium*, in instances where they were adjudicated to have contravened the accepted standards of inter-state conduct, a sovereign power (in this case the Spanish Crown) had legitimate grounds to wage war against them. However, the Spanish military forces had no obligation to adhere to the rules regulating normal behaviour of a sovereign power within the context of a just war because Amerindians lacked sovereignty. For example, the right to exercise physical violence and to enslave the conquered in war was not restricted to armed Amerindian combatants or warriors. In his lecture notes, *De Indis* (1532), Vitoria argued that any display of resistance by Amerindians, including women and children, that obstructed the evangelical and commercial enterprise of Spaniards in the Americas, constituted acts of hostility that warranted their enslavement by Christian nations as was permissible in relation to the treatment of barbarians (non-Christians) in the Middle Ages:

> Assuming the unlawfulness of the slaughter of children and other innocent parties, is it permissible, at any rate, to carry them off into captivity and slavery? This can be cleared up in a single proposition, namely: It is in precisely the same way permissible to carry the innocent off into captivity as to despoil them, liberty and slavery being included among the good things of Fortune. And so when a war is at that pass that the indiscriminate spoliation of all enemy-subjects alike and the seizure of all their goods are justifiable, then it is also justifiable to carry all enemy-subjects off into captivity, whether they be guilty or guiltless. And inasmuch as war with pagans is of this type, seeing that it is perpetual and that they can never make amends for the wrongs and damages they have wrought, it is indubitably lawful to carry off both the children and the women of the Saracens into captivity and slavery. But inasmuch as, by the law of nations, it is a received rule of Christendom that Christians do not become slaves in right of war, this enslaving is not lawful in a war between Christians; but if it is necessary having regard to the end and aim of war, it would be lawful to carry away even innocent captives, such as children and women, not indeed into slavery, but so that we may receive a money-ransom for them. This, however, must not be pushed beyond what the necessity of the war may demand and what the custom of lawful belligerents has allowed.[15]

Reliance on a prejudicial conception of cultural difference as the rational premise to legitimise the genocide of Amerindians was not unique to Vitoria. It also served as the primary logic underlying moral and theological interpretations of a just war that emerged during the Great Debate in Valladolid in 1550 between Juan Ginés Sepúlveda and Bartolomé de Las Casas over a decade after Vitoria provided his more secular account. Sepúlveda argued against his fellow Spaniard (and theologian and philosopher) that the Spanish had a moral obligation to engage in a just war against the Amerindians because they were an intrinsically "evil" people, who would not adopt the superior Christian religion and Spanish culture of their own volition:

> The Spanish have a perfect right to rule these barbarians of the New World and the adjacent islands, who in prudence, skill, virtues, and humanity are as inferior to the Spanish as children to adults, or women to men, for there exists between the two as great a difference as between savage and cruel races and the most merciful, between the most intemperate and the moderate and temperate and, I might even say, between apes and men … Until now, we have not mentioned their impious religion and their abominable sacrifices, in which they worship the Devil as God, to whom they thought of offering no better tribute than human hearts. … War against these barbarians can be justified not only on the basis of their paganism but even more so because of their abominable recklessness, their unusual sacrifice of human victims, the extreme harm that they inflicted on innocent persons, their horrible banquets of human flesh, and the impious cult of their idols.[16]

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[15] http://theahi.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Francisco-de-Vitoria-on-War.pdf (Accessed on 10 August 2016).

[16] Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1547) *Democrates II* (or, *on the Just Causes for War Against the Indians).* Available at: https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active_learning/explorations/spain/spain_sepulveda.cfm (Accessed on 19

A common denominator in Sepúlveda's and Vitoria's respective interpretations of a just war was the normalisation of *exceptionality* in the treatment of Amerindians that rendered their lives *dispensable*. Both thinkers, in spite of their ideological divergence on the role of the Church in the Americas, advocated that the Spanish Crown had the self-proclaimed right by virtue of moral and cultural superiority to transcend the rule of law in the interest of the social advancement of "humanity". As an abomination of the "human" character, Amerindians were outlaws, exceptions to the law, and yet still subject to punishment and, therefore, included, through the very act of exclusion, within the law. The code of ethics that regulated how subjects of the Spanish Crown interacted with one another in their own kingdom, and in relation to fellow European Christian countries, was not followed upon arrival to the new world. Their actions emulated that of Christians of the Ancient World and the Middle Ages, who legitimised the enslavement and extermination of certain individuals, especially the vanquished and prisoners of war. Such practices represented a non-ethics rather than ethics of war.

Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2007: 247) argues that what transpired during the conquest of the Americas, however, resulted in a transformation and naturalisation of the non-ethics of war. This would, in time, define not only how non-Europeans would be treated in the context of war, but also determine the trajectory of how Europeans would come to behave towards them in ordinary day-to-day life, and how non-Europeans would be integrated into the modern world system. It was transformed in one particular way: the exceptional treatment of the vanquished in war was not contingent on their religious beliefs or faith, but on the physical and ontological composition of the people themselves – according to race. During the Middle Ages in Europe "the vanquished in war" represented people that were non-Christian by "blood", such as the Saracens and Turks. Around the period of the re-conquest of Al-Andalus and in the period that followed, the label was extended to Jews and Moors (non-Christian by faith). With the colonisation of the Americas, the terms of reference shifted to skin colour and the associated characteristics that were attached to their respective categories (Mignolo, 2011: 9). The fact that the vanquished in war could be enslaved, subsequently took on a new meaning: conquered peoples now came to include non-Europeans in general, such as blacks and indigenous peoples, who, because of their inherent inferiority, had to assume positions of slavery and serfdom. As the lowest-ranked on the scale of a racially hierarchised system of labour, enslaved blacks were economically dispensable. Since it was not only the labour power of black slaves that was commoditised in classic capitalist terms, but their actual lives, they were seen as disposable objects. It was common practice for an enslaved black body, who succumbed to debilitating illness or physical injury and who was no longer labour productive, to be replaced by another enslaved black body. In his work entitled, *Dispensable and Bare Lives: Coloniality and the Hidden Political/Economic Agenda of Modernity*, Walter Mignolo (2009) explored how the dispensability of human lives was intimately connected to the economic aspect of slavery by drawing on historical narratives of the enslaved themselves such as London-based black abolitionist, Ottobah Cugoano. He documented how European slavers who transported enslaved blacks across the Atlantic to the Americas would often throw sickly slaves overboard in order recover the financial cost of the slave from insurers because they foresaw a poor return on

August 2016). The information contained in this source outlined the arguments Sepúlveda presented at the Valladolid debate.

their investments when taken to the market in the West Indies (Mignolo, 2009: 74). The decision of whether an enslaved person lived or died was subject to the will of the slave master because they were his/her official property. A black life could be taken freely without fear of reprisal because s/he was non-human (a beast). Whilst the terms of racialisation subscribed to by the Spanish and methods employed to institutionalise it may have been different to their English and French counterparts, the organisation of colonial economies in direct proportion to a racial hierarchy was an endemic feature of European colonialism. In other words, the economic dispensability of non-European lives became a normal phenomenon not only in the periphery, but also in the metropole.

Rape was another act synonymous with war that was normalised during the conquest of the Americas. This particular treatment of sexuality and femininity, argues Maldonado-Torres (2007: 247), was not mutually exclusive from the dominant conception of race; instead, it was constitutive of it. Such an approach does not essentialise rape as an act of war that suddenly emerged during European colonisation, which was mainly perpetrated by white men against women of colour, implying that non-white men did not commit rape and that white women were not subjected to sexual violence and, therefore, not victims. Rather, it focuses on how rape came to be interpreted within a racial hierarchy that provided a "rational basis" to legitimise the penetrability and excessive violence against the non-European body, which was predicated on a distorted image of the sexual nature of women and men of colour. Through the European gaze, non-European females were "savage women", who possessed voracious primitive sexual appetites and were, therefore, prone to promiscuity and motivated by the primary desire to reproduce. Associating concupiscent traits with the essential character of the woman of colour meant that sexual violence (rape) against her was not only considered an acceptable practice that absolved the perpetrator from guilt and assuming responsibility for his actions, but, more cynically, transferred the blame of this violation onto the victim. The lasciviousness of the exotic non-European woman was therefore deemed a corruptible force, a "Jezebel", who tempted the civilised European male to engage in acts of debauchery that were antithetical to his calm, respectable, and intrinsically moral character (Collins, 2004: 219).

In metaphorical terms, the non-European woman was a physical representation of those "wild passions" of covetousness and sexual perversion that civilised European society was able to suppress and overcome through religious conviction and moral reasoning. By the nineteenth century, with the emergence of the scientific revolution, these myths and stereotypes about the sexuality of women of colour sought "empirical" validation. Scientists, such as renowned French naturalist, Georges Cuvier, drew correlations between certain anomalies in the anatomy of the black female body when observed in contradistinction to that of the white female – the embodiment and standard measure of female sexuality – with the sexual virtues of women of colour. During his observation and subsequent dissection of Sarah (Saartjie) Baartman upon her death in 1815 – more popularly known by her display in ethnographic exhibitions and freak shows throughout Europe as the "Hottentot Venus" – Cuvier deduced that the steatopygia (accumulation of fat around the hips and buttocks), macronymphia (enlarged labia minora) or "apron" and elongated breasts resembled the genitalia of mandrill baboons and were, therefore, physical signs of the highly erotic, animalistic nature of black women (Boëtsch & Blanchard, 2008: 66). The black man was not exempt from this warped and fundamentally flawed type of scientific reasoning that set out to "authenticate" sexual myths and beliefs spawned by the European imaginary, rather than to evaluate their legitimacy with the view to developing an episteme founded on objective truths, which, paradoxically, was the stated telos of western science. Due to his enlarged phallus, the black male was symbolically depicted as a sexual beast – a "Mandingo" – driven by the desire to rape women, especially white women (Hutchinson, 1996: 70). Whilst the black male represented the act of raping and was deemed a rapist, the black female was considered a legitimate victim of rape synonymous with being raped. Consequently, both the act of raping and being raped was inscribed onto the black body, which resulted in rape becoming a natural condition attached to blackness as though it is the constitutive essence of black people.

The double standards displayed in how Europeans treated non-Europeans during colonialism is reflected in modern political discourses and social patterns of behaviour. Western powers continue to use their hegemony to manipulate political discourse in order to advance their self-interests and legitimise acts of war against non-Europeans, reducing them to the status of "the vanquished in perpetuity". An example of such a political discourse is the "war on terror". The US government's justification to wage a war against terror was contingent on their ability to effectively entrench the interrelated binary logic of "us vs them" and "good vs evil" in public sentiment and epistemology on terrorism (Spivak, 2004: 101). With the assistance of the media, the US government was able to spread a rhetoric that instilled in the public mind-set the belief that America and the West, in general, were a total embodiment of freedom and defenders of this democratic virtue. They had a God given mandate to protect the free world, which did not only include citizens of Western countries, but also innocent civilians in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, from Islamic extremists affiliated to the al Qaeda terrorist network that perpetrated the September 11 terror attacks. However, statistics of the casualties and the consequences of the "war on terror" paint a different picture. Since the onset of the war, close to 5 million people have been displaced from their homes in Iraq alone, and are living in squalor, and suffering from starvation, disease, and psychological trauma. A combined total of approximately 1.3 million people (this number could be 10 times higher) have died in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan as a direct result of the war (PSR, PGS &IPPNW,, March 2015: 36, 15).[17]

Between 2003 and 2011, the US-led coalition was responsible for the deaths of 15,141 Iraqis, which comprised of 13% of the total number of civilian casualties (IBC, 2012).[18] The cost of the "war on terror" on non-European lives is often overlooked in the mainstream media and by Western allies. The media primarily bemoans the loss of military combatants on the frontlines of the conflict and of innocent civilians that are maimed and killed because of retaliatory terrorist attacks carried out on their own soil. Western casualties of war (and their allies) are valorised for making the ultimate sacrifice in support of the moral ideal of freedom. This is somewhat ironic because some of their citizens who are opposed to western domination are, themselves, treated as

[17] PSR, PGS & IPPNW. (2015) *Body Count: Casualty Figures after 10 Years of the "War on Terror" Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan.* 1st international ed. 36, 15.

Iraq Body Count (IBC). (2012) "Iraqi Deaths from Violence 2003-2011: Analysis and Overview from Iraq Body Count." Available at: https://www.iraqbodycount.org/analysis/numbers/2011/ Accessed on: 15 December 2016.

"outcasts" within their own societies because they are either Muslim, of Arabic heritage, and/or of a Middle Eastern nationality. The death of innocent civilians in non-western countries is simply associated with the "hellish nature of war" and not a social injustice or fundamental violation of human rights in the context of a just war. Instead, it is portrayed as an unintended consequence in an effort to eradicate a "greater evil" that represents an even greater threat to establishing a utopian future where they can experience "true" freedom.

This reflects a Kantian ethical approach to rationalising just war since the West's altruistic commitment to defend and protect the freedom of "all" people from the evil scourge of terrorism, represents an act of pure goodwill, which is motivated by an austere sense of duty to preserve the universal principle of justice. Although Kant vehemently denounced war (even a "just" one) and considered it "the source of all evils and moral corruption", which is clearly stated in his work, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch,* he did emphasise that coercive force can be used if it "hinders a hindrance to freedom" (Orend, 1999: 329). Such reasoning is extremely problematic in that it does not consider the issue of power: who defines freedom and decides what constitutes freedom and when we are free, as a rational basis for a just war. And more crucially, who has the ultimate power to suspend ethics in order to uphold the moral ideal of freedom. In other words, failure to recognise that the protection of a universal categorical imperative (which represents an act of "pure" goodwill) can be used to legitimise tyranny and exceptional acts of violence, not only reproduces the "master" narrative, but constitutes a complicity in the nihilistic destruction precipitated by this inauthenticity. Even Nietzsche, a critic of Kant's universal categorical imperative, acknowledged that it is an expression of power. In response, Nietzsche advanced the notion of moral relativism, which searched for the truth without overtly privileging either a master or slave consciousness. However, his position was centred on the belief that some individuals (those who overcome physical and mental adversity to become warriors, philosophers, artists, musicians, and ascetics – the Übermenschen or super-men) are destined to be superior to the masses, which inevitably favours a consciousness of lordship. This implies that the domination of the strong over the weak and the expression of violence is a natural human condition. Nietzsche's rationalisation of the idea of the superiority/inferiority divide is, at least, consistent with his proclivity to nihilism. In other words, the powerful, because of their inherent superiority, can determine the trajectory of human society and have the right of exceptionalism and can deploy destructive means to advance their interests. In terms of Nietzsche's logic, the use of violence in protecting the "moral ideals" that superior peoples create for the rest of humanity is totally acceptable. For Nietzsche, subscribing to the dichotomous conception of good and evil to understand what constitutes right or wrong in the treatment of an-"other" is problematic. Rather, we (humans) should accept the duality of good and evil as an intrinsic feature of our being.

In his book, *Against War: Views from the Underside of Modernity*, Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2008: 32) argues that moving beyond good and evil, for Nietzsche, therefore, meant going "beyond the prohibition to commit murder". He vindicated this point citing Nietzsche who stated: "When the ends are great humanity employs other standards and no longer judges crime as such even if it resorts to the most frightful means." This is reflected in torturous methods carried out on detainees suspected of terrorism in prison camps, such as Guantanamo Bay including rectal feeding and forcing their bodies into positions of extreme physical stress and denying them dignity by stripping them naked, as well as violating them sexually. That such practice is justifiable (irrespective of whether this is done through legal reasoning because they are not classified as prisoners of war since they do not wear uniforms and do not belong to a military of a "sovereign" state, therefore, do not have to be treated according to the Geneva Convention) on account of preserving freedom, represents an incongruence between a "just cause" and "just action" (Nash, 2009: 1079). The justification of inhuman acts in defence of "humanity" points not only to an oxymoronic and disingenuous form of reasoning, but to the moral decay that lies beneath the "shiny" veneer of civilisational advancement that Western man ("human") claims to epitomise. The hypocrisy displayed by the West in the "war on terror" in terms of the non-Europeans/non-white life (both innocent civilians and terrorists) being lesser valued and that could be violated and subjected to excessive physical violence and psychological trauma compared to Europeans/whites, reflects a common trend in the course of modern history. Aimé Césaire incisively expressed this in his seminal piece, *Discourse on Colonialism*:

> … colonization works to *decivilize* the colonizer, to *brutalize* him in the true sense of the word, to degrade him, to awaken him to buried instincts, to covetousness, violence, race hatred, and moral relativism; and we must show that each time a head is cut off or an eye put out in Vietnam and in France they accept the fact, each time a little girl is raped and in France they accept the fact, each time a Madagascan is tortured and in France they accept the fact, civilization acquires another dead weight, a universal regression takes place, a gangrene sets in, a center of infection begins to spread; and that at the end of all these treaties that have been violated, all these lies that have been propagated, all these punitive expeditions that have been tolerated, all these prisoners who have been tied up and "interrogated, all these patriots who have been tortured, at the end of all the racial pride that has been encouraged, all the boastfulness that has been displayed, a poison has been instilled into the veins of Europe and, slowly but surely, the continent proceeds toward *savagery*. And then one fine day the bourgeoisie is awakened by a terrific reverse shock: the gestapos are busy, the prisons fill up, the torturers around the racks invent, refine, discuss. People are surprised, they become indignant. They say: "How strange! But never mind-it's Nazism, it will pass!" And they wait, and they hope; and they hide the truth from themselves, that it is barbarism, but the supreme barbarism, the crowning barbarism that sums up all the daily barbarisms; that it is Nazism, yes, but that before they were its victims, they were its accomplices; that they tolerated that Nazism before it was inflicted on them, that they absolved it, shut their eyes to it, legitimized it, because, until then, it had been applied only to non-European peoples; that they have cultivated that Nazism, that they are responsible for it, and that before engulfing the whole of Western, Christian civilization in its reddened waters, it oozes, seeps, and trickles from every crack. Yes, it would be worthwhile to study clinically, in detail, the steps taken by Hitler and Hitlerism and to reveal to the very distinguished, very humanistic, very Christian bourgeois of the twentieth century that without his being aware of it, he has a Hitler inside him, that Hitler *inhabits* him, that Hitler is his *demon*, that if he rails against him, he is being inconsistent and that, at bottom, what he cannot forgive Hitler for is not *crime* in itself, *the crime against man*, it is not *the humiliation of man as such*, it is the crime against the white man, the humiliation of the white man, and the fact that he applied to Europe colonialist procedures which until then had been reserved exclusively for the Arabs of Algeria, the coolies of India, and the blacks of Africa. And that is the great thing I hold against pseudo-humanism: that for too long it has diminished the rights of man, that its concept of those rights has been – and still is – narrow and fragmentary, incomplete and biased and, all things considered, sordidly racist.

In her/his everyday life, the non-European/non-white other continues to suffer the humiliation that characterised the life of her/his ancestors and contemporaries under European imperialism and exceptional conditions of war. For example, the Mexican government's decision to establish economic zones in the form of maquiladoras on the Mexican-American border where American multinationals are granted major concessions, such as "zero" corporate tax, lower wage ceilings and relaxed labour laws, has not only resulted in exploitation of the labour of Mexican women, but has exposed them to increased health and livelihood risks and sexual harassment tantamount to physical and emotional torture. Many of these women sustain burns from toxic chemicals that are placed in containers labelled in English, which they do not understand and suffer damaged or severed limbs while working with dangerous machinery, and, when they threaten legal action or are unable to meet their production targets, they are often fired and replaced with someone else without just compensation (Chretien & Muldoon, 2011).[19] There are numerous examples in other parts of the world that further illustrate the dispensability of non-European life. The mass murder of black miners at Marikana demanding better wages and working conditions in South Africa mentioned earlier in the chapter highlights the "state of exception" in practice within a post-apartheid democratic dispensation. The expropriation of land from aborigines in the Americas and the San in Southern Africa without just compensation, and the limited and distorted presence of their history, culture and language within centres of knowledge production, point to their "nothingness" or non-existence within the realm of being. That a black woman (whether heterosexual or homosexual) "deserves" to be raped, manifests in a perpetuation of sexual abuse due to a lack of protection from the legal system and inadequate financial assistance to sustain a decent living. They are, thus, compelled to take up illicit jobs as sex workers and drug traffickers because of financial destitution, which increases the risk of exposure to sexual violence. That it is acceptable for Muslim women to be banned from wearing a burqa in France because she "could be a terrorist" or a black woman/man with dreadlocks being verbally abused and intimidated by police at a German airport because s/he fits the profile of a drug trafficker, are phenomenological accounts of misrecognition. As has already been demonstrated, none of the mainstream analytical frames of recognition has been able to capture and explain these real-life experiences and feelings of misrecognition of the non-European/non-white "other". On the contrary, they have reproduced them.

The Analytics of Coloniality/Modernity

Coloniality of Being:

Any academic project pursuing a decolonial path – this research is no exception – employs the analytical framework and method of decoloniality. The decolonial method is predicated on ontology as first philosophy distinctive from metaphysics reflected in the Cartesian meditation whereby one's existence, and the reality and "truths" that derive from it, are determined through epistemic certainty. It also does not search for the meaning and purpose of life through reflexive subjective interaction with the inanimate objective world. Instead, inspired by the Fanonian

[19] From the *Socialist Worker.org*. Available at: https://socialistworker.org/2011/11/18/misery-of-the-maquiladoras (Accessed on 16 December 2016)

meditation, the decolonial method begins its philosophical investigation by exploring the ethics involved in the face-to-face encounter between the subject and the "other". Three interrelated pillars, each constitutive of the other, comprise the analytics of coloniality/modernity, which is informed by this method, namely, the coloniality of being, power and knowledge. The coloniality of power and knowledge are contingent on the coloniality of Being. Employing Heideggerian reasoning, if Being or Dasein refers to a being "who is there", distinct from being as a genus or category of person. In other words, someone who exists in a specific spatial and temporal context where laws and established conventions determine social interactions which, in turn, determine her/his subjectivity (that is a conception of self, idea of purpose and finding meaning in life), then coloniality of Being infers that the condemned or *damnés* was never "there". As Heidegger posits, any enquiry into Being inevitably involves questioning the being – to understand the being "who is there" (Dasein), one needs to establish the "whatness" and "thatness" of the being (i.e., what constitutes the "who"):

> … that the ontological analysis of Da-sein in general constitutes fundamental ontology, that Da-sein consequently functions as the being that is to be *interrogated* fundamentally in advance with respect to its being. (Heidegger, 1996: 12)

If, upon interrogation, a being is seen to be devoid of those qualities that render it human, such as possessing a soul or capable of thought or moral virtue, then it cannot be. Since the non-European/non-white "other" did not meet the requirements of being, s/he did not "exist", and as such, has no historicity and, therefore, subjectivity which is a pre-requisite on the way to authenticity that is achieved through interactions with multiple beings or the "they" (Bernasconi, 2010: 61). Put in another way, if the "other" is shown not to constitute a being, it cannot be, and, therefore, has no Being; in other words, no meaning, and purpose in becoming. Hence, decoloniality develops the coloniality of Being on the premise that fundamental ontology, as we have come to know and understand it, is essentially a philosophical project of power that affirms the inherent superiority of European/white/Christian/heterosexual/male's subjectivity that asserted its presence in the realm of the *Dasein*, whilst dismissing the other from it. In other words, the non-European/non-white other is in an ambivalent situation where s/he is ontologically "absent" yet objectively present, whereas the opposite applies to the white/European. The non-existence of Being soon becomes evident to the other en route to self-definition and determination. As Fanon (2008: 105) stated, when the other "has taken it into [his/her] head to try to express existence, [s/he] runs the risk of finding only the non-existent".

Heidegger's deviation from transcendentalist and phenomenological explanations of ontology and epistemology towards an existentialist interpretation grounded in interaction between human beings opened the possibility for exploring the question of racial difference in terms of the lived reality of the condemned other. Although subjectivity is determined by the "they", which limits the chances of the *self* (read as the *other* for purposes of this argument) achieving authenticity, Heidegger emphasised that it could be obtained through mortality (or death) since this is an experience that is solely one's own and cannot be experienced by another (Demske, 1970: 42). In death, one defines one's own existence for her/himself discovering resoluteness and allowing for critical introspection – a redemptive or self-affirming exercise enabling one to reflect on her/his actions in life, weighing its merits and demerits (O'Brien, 2014: 535). Heidegger also proposed a collective path to attaining authenticity that is made possible by a virtuous leader dedicated to uniting her/his people around a desired vision. An individual, who sacrifices her/his life in war to achieve this common ideal for the *they* (the nation) and leader, achieves self-authenticity. However, this does not mean that death is the exclusive preserve of the victor but is also attainable by the vanquished. It is easy to see how Heidegger's idea of Being resonates with the experiences of the other, especially those who lost their lives in the struggle for independence and against institutionalised racism. The valorisation of death as a positive authenticating medium, however, is restricted to actual experiences of war or other unique circumstances and does not reflect the experiences of the other in the context of ordinary day-to-day life (especially in the contemporary postcolonial world).

In Fanonian terms, the non-European exists in a "hellish 'zone of nonbeing'" – "exceptional spaces" of work and living where there is a suspension of law and ethics defined by experiences of suffering, violence, and rejection of "self" and the social group to which s/he belongs – which constitutes a socio-ontological death that becomes normative (Gordon, 2007: 11). Contrastingly, the white non-European is located in a "zone of being" where s/he is treated with dignity and respect, enjoys the protection of the law, and is free to pursue her/his interests without fear of persecution and doubt about her/his human capabilities and integrity. Life in the "zone of being" is characterised by regulation and social order. This does not mean to say that white Europeans do not suffer and are not victims of violence. On the contrary, what is claimed is that their (i.e., white/European) experiences of domination and oppression in relation to their humanity being doubted is restricted to face-to-face encounters amongst themselves. The dynamic of "superiority/inferiority" which governs their intersubjective relations is therefore not determined by skin colour, but by a different conception of "race" that is based on ethnic, cultural, sexual, gender, spiritual, economic, and epistemic hierarchies. Consider the Irish, for example, although they are extremely light in terms of skin colour, in the context of British political and religious history and society, they were (and are) considered inferior due to their religion (Catholicism) and culture. Therefore, there are "zones of nonbeing"' within the "zone of being". The opposite is also true, where there are "zones of being" within the "zone of nonbeing" (Grosfoguel, 2016: 12). For example, Indians are ranked ahead of Africans in the hierarchy of race; however, there are differentiations within each racial category. The hierarchisation amongst Indians is determined according to gender, sexuality, religion, caste, class, and regional affiliation, with lighter-skinned North Indians being superior to darker-skinned South Indians. The same hierarchical logic leads to further differentiations within these respective groups. Amongst Africans in the context of Africa, one's position in the chain of being is also measured in terms of relative lightness/darkness of the hue of one's skin, gender, sexuality, and ethnic superiority/inferiority associated with unique regional histories (which were exploited and exacerbated by colonial forces, especially the British and Belgians), as well as her/his fluency and aptitude in speaking and writing a colonial language (for example, the proficiency of a Congolese in French or Angolan in Portuguese). In other words, within specific non-white race groups, intersubjective relations also subscribe to a fluid conception of "race". However, this should not be construed as a contradiction in terms, which subverts the primary infrastructure of intersubjective relationships that permanently places non-whites in the zone of nonbeing and whites in a zone of being. Rather, it implies that the multiple intersectional hierarchies of power mentioned above, are attached and determined relative to the

European/white/Christian/bourgeoisie/male, who became the benchmark for measuring human superiority/inferiority (ibid.: 10).

Whilst the zones of being and nonbeing are a key component of the coloniality of Being used to understand intersubjective experiences of (mis)recognition of the non-European/non-white "other" relative to the white/European, it should not be seen as promoting an "Olympics of oppression" where the former is seen to have suffered more than the latter. Interpreting Fanonian thought in this manner reproduces the very same "ego attitude" on which coloniality itself was created, and that decoloniality detests.

Coloniality of Being refers to the fact that the condemned other does not possess any human worth (Maldonado-Torres, 2007: 253). Consequently, the spaces the other occupies and the time in which we exist is a reflection and construction of a Euro-American subjectivity born of their own historical experience of modernity, which they deem to be inherently superior and progressive and represent what all of humanity have to "be". Because the other is not a being and is therefore not *there,* s/he cannot possess a history, a language, a culture, rationality, and social and moral virtues etc. The coloniality of Being is used as an analytical frame to explore the role that language played in dehumanising (misrecognising) the other. As Fanon (2008) argued, to speak a language is not simply a matter of identity, but it is a representation of an entire civilisation. In other words, the forceful imposition of European languages on colonised societies did not just imply an alienation from her/his own identity and the appropriation of another culture, since language is a means through which we make sense of our world, it meant seeing reality through the experience of the dominant European subject. For example, there are words that signify persons, objects, actions and experiences that cannot be directly translated from indigenous non-western languages into colonial languages. such as, English, Spanish, French or German. Underlying language – or rather the process of signification – is based on specific social principles and moral codes informed by unique cosmologies that are fundamentally different from one language to another that inevitably produce varied hermeneutics on social existence. In a context where a large number of indigenous non-western cultures in Africa, Asia and Latin America conceive and express the self or "I" not as an individual but in relation to family, community, ancestors and the natural world, deliberating on how to extend recognition to them whether through formal structures like rights and freedoms or at a more casual intersubjective level, is problematic. In other words, views on property ownership, a sense of responsibility and duty to others, and feelings and expressions of injustice is contingent on a more inclusive communal understanding of "self", which is very different to that centred on an atomistic western liberal conception of "self" (Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 2004).[20]

[20] Whilst the position advocated here appears to be a communitarian critique of liberalism, and is, therefore, paradoxically in itself, a construct of western philosophical thought, it represents a decolonial interpretation distinct from traditional approaches to communitarianism in two fundamental respects. Firstly, it does not subscribe to an impractical and dangerous theoretical parochialism, which advances the pluralistic view that the experience of the subjugated social group (i.e., "community") along with its language, culture, history, and values be understood in isolation or be alienated from other groups. Therefore, it does not assume a relatively dominant political, social and moral status. Such reasoning risks preserving social systems, roles, and norms that promote "difference" through moral relativism (e.g., casteism in India discussed in the main text). A second distinction points to the inherent limitations of the more universalising communitarian approach to justice advanced by luminaries like Michael Sandel. This view posits a weak multiculturalism (alluded to in Chapter 2), emphasising

Furthermore, language was also used to signify the other through the attachment of stereotypes to specific racial categories. The Indian diaspora in South Africa is one such example. The term *kuli* was historically used to describe Indian indentured labourers in South Africa. In contemporary society it is a derogatory term that is used to refer to Indians. There are, however, different facets to its meaning. Ashwin Desai and Goolam Vahed (2010: 78) posit that while *kuli* in Tamil referred to payment for menial work done by people without customary rights at the bottom of the labour market, the Gujarati root of the word was in reference to people belonging to the *kuli* tribe (a lower caste in Indian society) whose members "were commonly described as robbers, plunderers, degenerate and inferior – a villainous race". Over the course of South African history, the term *kuli* was transformed and came to assimilate both meanings. The collapsing of "payment" into the individual Indian combined with the attachment of labels that rendered Indians as a social stigma resulted in the appropriation and elimination of their humanity. The British colonial administration and plantation owners in South Africa portrayed and identified indentured Indians with pejorative character traits, such as deceitfulness, cunning, selfishness, greed, and cowardice, which were used to justify the further exploitation of their labour. In other words, Indians should work harder and for less because they are manipulative and are constantly trying to find ways of cheating in order to better their financial and social status relative to others. This belief was also reified amongst black South Africans. The first indentured Indians started arriving on South Africa's shores around the *Battle of Isandlwana* when the Zulu nation was mounting its resistance against colonial occupation. Indentured Indians arrived to work in sugar plantations on land that was expropriated from the Zulu nation. As a result, Indians were perceived as agents of Empire rather than colonial subjects. In other words, Indians were viewed as supporting the advancement of British imperialism and were, therefore, complicit in the subjugation of blacks in South Africa. These perceptions that were born out of colonial domination soon became normalised in South African society. Indians were permanently associated with being a conniving, self-serving, and conceited

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the co-existence of communities in an inclusive state system governed by universal ethical principles; thus, avoiding a situation where one community is privileged over another, which is symptomatic of the conservative approach mentioned above. Two major concerns emanate from this approach. It ignores the fact that the underlying logic of power (i.e., "coloniality"), in spite of its complexity and unique spatio-temporalities, is the same, revealing an integral link between misrecognition of people in the Americas to those in Africa and Asia – the organisation of society around racial hierarchy. And secondly, the practical plausibility and potential success of getting "strangers" to subscribe and work towards achieving a universal ideal of justice underplays the "strangeness" – the alienation of social groups born out of pejorative stereotypes – that lies at the heart of human relations and serves as the source of conflict. In other words, it is necessary to conceptualise a framework that preserves and enables self-definition and self-determination of social groups, but which emphasises the need for each group's story to be articulated by themselves and be systematically shared with others, building the foundations for establishing an inclusive narrative. Decoloniality thus advances a discourse of justice that is aimed at overcoming "strangeness" through authentic constructive dialogue and does not only focus on creating a "neutral" political and legal environment that simply recognises and enables difference to co-exist. Applying practical reason, respective social groups need to engage with the process of knowing themselves and then to get to know others as they see themselves, thus debunking pejorative stereotypes, which minimises the potential for conflict. As a result, each group is able to contribute to the making of the universal rather than the universal serving a purely objective function detached from subjective realities. The motivation for a social group to promote knowledge about itself as a means to achieving self-determination generates a reason to promote the knowledge of others. In such a context, self-interest is commensurate and mutually beneficial to that of another. This avoids the ethical egoism of communitarian debates on justice that many argue is in contravention of rationality and self-interest.

race that is willing to aid the exploitation and dehumanisation of others in pursuit of self-aggrandisement. In fact, without explicitly using the term *kuli,* these traits reflect the human constitution of Indians and are the key signifiers that dominate the perception of the unknowing "other" (ordinary stranger) in intersubjective relations. The fact that other non-white race groups also came to see Indians through the lens of the British colonial settlers creates a situation where the *other* is *known* before *knowing* her/him.

Coloniality of Knowledge:

That the other experiences a relatively limited sense of ontology implies that s/he lacks epistemology, thus, s/he is only a consumer and not a producer of knowledge. In other words, the coloniality of Being is inextricably linked to the coloniality of knowledge. Coloniality of knowledge emphasises the fact that extant epistemic structures are imbued with a Eurocentric, and in more recent times, a Western-centric subjective position reflecting their particular vision of the world, whilst excluding and "silencing" the viewpoints of those inherently inferior peoples of non-European descent (Wynter, 2003: 266). Language cannot be separated from knowledge. As alluded to earlier, language is an instrument through which we order the world and construct knowledge about it. It follows that, if western languages have come to dominate the non-western world, those languages that have been pushed outside the margins of mainstream communication and social discourse are themselves outside the realm of knowledge construction, production and dissemination.

Non-western languages are not viable ways of conceptualising "reality" therefore knowledge produced using them are simply folkloric, mythological, nonsensical and untrue. Another aspect of the coloniality of knowledge is that knowledge about the other (the Third World in general) continues to be produced in the West predominantly by westernised thinkers. For example, area studies and cultural studies departments that explore issues of race, culture, dehumanisation and liberation in Africa and Latin America are mainly located in western universities or research institutes and consist of scholars who are considered as experts possessing specialised knowledge, whilst having very little lived experience of the regions and people that they study (Mato, 2000: 480).

Students from the non-western world who are interested in knowing their own histories, cultures, traditions, language, socio-political and economic dynamics (and in essence "themselves") take up courses in these departments that are instructed in European languages using postcolonial frames of thought, which deny them any historical significance and authority of self-definition and advocate a multiculturalism and hybridity that trivialise and romanticise their contemporary reality at the same time. As a result, these students, paradoxically, come to understand and see themselves through the gaze of another, which misrepresents, disfigures and alienates them from themselves. This also does not mean that the establishment of centres for African studies in Africa, for example, as long as they privilege western canons of thought or filter African thought through western analytical frames (e.g., postmodernism, post-structuralism and postcolonialism), would necessarily renew in the hearts and minds of these students a sense of historicity and dignity through recognition of culture and language (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020). Hence, coloniality of knowledge also investigates the various ways in which a western subjectivity reinvents itself and re-appropriates its dominant status through institutions of knowledge that claim to be designed with the intention of articulating the lived reality of the other, whilst failing to provide the necessary inspiration and cognitive tools to “imagine” an alternative future. In other words, these centres merely become factories of knowledge production where issues of justice and recognition of the oppressed are treated as commodity-driven by the desire to generate profit and bolster one’s intellectual status within the broader epistemic community.

Coloniality of Power:

Coloniality of power is an analytic frame used to illustrate how the idea of race and racism became the core organising principle around which multiple hierarchies of the contemporary world system are structured. In terms of the global capitalist system, it explores how and why cheap disposable labour, that exploits the socially vulnerable (such as children and women) is concentrated in the Global South, whilst the Global North has “free labour” where labourers experience relatively better labour protection and conditions of work (Quijano & Ennis, 2000: 536). It posits that the conception of race also reconfigured gender hierarchies. Whereas European society subscribed to the basic patriarchal idea that women were inferior to men, with the introduction of the colonial matrix of power, white European women were deemed superior to men of non-European origin. Racial privilege meant that white European women not only had economic control and ownership of the labour of black men because of their relatively higher material status (as employers), but also enjoyed intellectual and moral authority over them (Lugones, 2008). This meant that white women could subject black men to the kind of patronising and violent treatment they experienced at the hands of white men. The coloniality of power explores how political, economic and civil society institutions, social apparatuses of communication, such as the formal and social media, and centres of knowledge production and dissemination that were born of global imperial designs and shaped by Euro-American social discourse, reinforce misanthropic scepticism (i.e. the perpetual doubt about the humanness of those in the lower echelons of the chain of being). It provides a framework to analyse the interventions carried out by supranational organisations, such as the United Nations and World Food Programme (WFP), as well as international financial institutions (IFIs) and non-governmental organisations. These institutions remain under the control of powerful western states and business interests that are characterised as “humanitarian” and “life-giving” when, in fact, they paradoxically lead to greater material and psycho-social suffering and eventual death instead of creating “life”.

Conclusion

The three core pillars of the analytics of coloniality discussed above serve as a relevant and uncontaminated framework that is grounded in the lived experiences and subjectivity of the other and can be used to examine a variety of issues related to the (mis)recognition of the non-European/non-white other. In other words, it speaks *from* and *with* the non-European/non-white other rather than on their *behalf* and about *them*, minimising the risk of being complicit and reproducing misrecognition. The following chapter aims to draw from the logic of the analytics of coloniality to construct the fourth less-developed pillar, namely, the coloniality of nature. The coloniality of nature will then be employed to demonstrate how the misrecognition of people, as illustrated in this chapter, is coterminous with the mastery, control, destruction, and, therefore, misrecognition of nature.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Dialectics of Misrecognition: Coloniality of Nature and the Making of Ecological Injustice

How are the mastery and destruction of nature inextricably bound to the dehumanisation of subaltern people? Attempts at answering this question are largely centred in revisionist Marxist conceptions of ecological injustice exemplified by scholars like David Harvey. He posits that advancements in science and technology – catalysts of capitalist development and modernity – afforded powerful interests the ability to control nature's reproductive potential to harness desired properties, which served an instrumental function in controlling and exploiting vulnerable social groups. The premise of Harvey's (1996) argument in his book, *Justice, Nature and Geography of Difference,* is that ecological conflicts (or injustice) across different geographies are constantly reproduced and emanate from the capitalist mode of production. Whilst there are various articulations of misrecognition in the context of ecological injustice, whether it be in terms of environmental racism in black communities in the American South or in terms of indigenous rights of campesinos in Latin America, these struggles are reducible to the relative status of material deprivation. The oppression of these groups and the associated decimation of their environments is due to the simple fact that they are poor.

Overemphasising "identity" beyond economic positionality of a social group is considered essentialist by Harvey. The problem with Harvey's dismissal of other articulations of misrecognition in the context of ecological injustice is that it trivialises the complexity of what dehumanisation in relation to the mastery and control of nature implies. Dehumanisation constitutes more than being alienated from nature as the means of production or being unjustly exposed to hazardous environments. It is about who had the power to define and control the discourse on human-nature relations and how this, in turn, contributed to the oppression of the subaltern and the natural world. Rather than an ill-effect of unequal relations of power solely produced by the process of capital accumulation as Harvey's conception of dehumanisation contends, this chapter postulates that misrecognition of the subaltern, particularly non-Europeans, lay at the heart of ecological injustice.

Chapter Three focused on explaining and mapping the origins of the misrecognition of subaltern people and why and how this established the foundations of a perpetual state of dehumanisation by entrenching coloniality. However, this chapter aims to demonstrate how the mastery, control and destruction of nature were inherent to this process as both cause and effect. The central premise being that pejorative conceptions of non-Europeans as sub-human or inferior, introduced during European colonisation (misrecognition), contributed to maintaining the ontological divide between humanity and nature. By dismissing other experiences, knowledges and cosmologies of human-nature relations as myth rather than fact, we have limited the potential to transform how we value, conserve and think about nature that could set us on a path towards creating an ethical framework necessary for establishing an authentic conception of ecological justice. (This will be developed in Chapter Five.) It is the privileging of western conceptions and interactions with nature as superior to others that subsequently led to ecological injustice, which constitutes the coloniality of nature. The chapter, therefore, begins by historicising the genocide-ecocide nexus tracing early links between the dehumanisation of non-Europeans and destruction of local ecologies (the origins of the coloniality of nature) to European colonisation of the Americas. Given the parochialism of extant Marxist frameworks, indicated above, the coloniality of nature as a fourth pillar of the analytics of coloniality/modernity, which were explicated in the previous chapter, will be developed. This matrixed framework will be employed to provide a phenomenological account of how the hegemonic Eurocentric viewpoint or gaze of human-nature relations was imposed on colonial societies.

Subsequent sections of the chapter explore manifestations of the gaze demonstrating how European conceptions of ecologies beyond its borders, that were seen as an alterity to its own, played a pivotal role in rationalising European conquest. The first section expounds on the role that colonial discourses on wilderness and civilisational development that were supported by scientific theories played in reinforcing the "diffusionist myth of emptiness". It demonstrates how such ideas laid the epistemic foundations for the conquest of non-Europeans and imposed a regime of privatising the commons that resulted in the commodification of nature. It then explores how perceptions of landscape (geography) were intrinsic to rendering non-Europeans sub- or non-human (determining their biology) – as belonging to nature – thus warranting their exceptional treatment as animals (*anthropos*) rather than *humanitas* across spatialities. In fact, it is argued here that the very idea of ecology itself, emphasising humans' interrelatedness with all creatures and objects on earth and in the larger cosmos, while advancing a kind egalitarianism or "community", paradoxically reproduced ontological hierarchies. In the second section, the *epistemic authority* of western scientific episteme as a superior mode of knowledge production and dissemination is challenged. Drawing on relevant examples, I question the "discovery" and truth claims of western science by revealing that certain facts about nature were already known and accurately captured in indigenous myth.

The last manifestation illustrates how settler colonies, in an effort to create an identity attached to land, established an authoritarian racist conservationism informed by western scientific discourse that discounted the interdependence and instrumental role indigenous communities played in preserving local ecologies. It posits that, because of such *willful ignorance*, interventions to protect unique ecologies from perceivably damaging indigenous practices actually led to the destruction rather than conservation of nature. Finally, the chapter focuses on how the Euro-American viewpoint continues to shape the trajectory of global environmental discourse. In so doing, it explores the role played by international institutions and function of modern science in perpetuating the oppression of poorer communities in developing economies and the destruction of environments on which they depend.

The Coloniality of Nature and the Historicisation of the Ecocide-Genocide Nexus

Before explaining what constitutes the analytics of the coloniality of nature in theoretical terms and applying it to reveal dialectics between the misrecognition of subaltern people and nature, it is necessary to explore the historical context in which it emerged. The coloniality of nature has its origins in the Columbian Exchange that began with the European colonisation of the Americas in 1492. European colonial expansion into the New World in search of exotic places provided a cornucopia of natural resources and fertile lands to fuel a bourgeoning capitalist economic system (Guha & Martinez-Allier, 1997: 82). Colonisation of the Americas did not only mark the creation of the modern world system based on grand imperial designs consolidating the coloniality of power, it was justified on the pretext of a "civilising mission" with a dual purpose – to save the "souls" of savages and to tame "wild" lands – what Rudyard Kipling would later, in the context of the *Scramble for Africa* refer to as the "white man's burden" (Beinart, 2000: 270). On the pretence of spreading civility, ethics and justice, the colonial encounter sardonically brought violence, extinction and pillaging. This is an anomalous condition whereby efforts to modernise and civilise (humanise) non-Europeans was obtained through inhuman practices that were also ecologically destructive:

> The paradox of 1492 is posited in the increasingly sharp conflict which interprets it as a "glorious achievement", a heroic deed of discovery, "a triumph of the Christian West" on one hand, and on the other hand, as a brutal invasion and conquest which led to the genocidal extinction of large numbers of indigenes as well as set in train the now looming prospect of an ecological catastrophe. (Wynter, 1991: 258)

Crucially, the genocide of indigenes did not only involve direct violence (bodily harm inflicted by the coloniser on the colonised); nature, also served an instrumental function in this process that proved detrimental to both indigenous peoples and ecologies. Alfred Crosby (2004) referred to this phenomenon in his ground-breaking work on ecological imperialism, as a "portmanteau biota". In addition to guns, Europeans brought microbes and alien flora and fauna to the New World. Europeans were vectors of variola (pathogen) that caused smallpox, a deadly virus that was initially accidentally transmitted to Amerindians with deadly consequences given the latter's lack of immunity to the disease. Pathogens would eventually be deliberately harnessed as a biological weapon for nefarious ends. In an early documented act of bioterrorism during the French-Indian War (1754-1767), the commander of the British forces, Sir Jeffrey Amherst, suggested the use of smallpox to eradicate unpleasant Indian tribes' hostile to the British. His sub-ordinate, Captain Ecuyer, successfully executed Amherst's plan capitalising on an outbreak at Fort Pitt in a smallpox hospital by distributing contaminated fomites, like blankets to Indians as "gifts" that resulted in the decimation of Amerindians in the Ohio River Valley (Riedel, 2004: 400-401). There are numerous other examples where colonists made effective use of pathogens as a strategy to control and dominate indigenous peoples by reducing the size of their populations. This includes the conquistador, Francisco Pizarro, presenting clothing contaminated with variola to South American natives in the 15th century.

The colonists themselves, however, comprised just one agent of the larger portmanteau biota. Domesticated animals like cattle, pigs and horses along with weeds as well as food and ornamental plants that accompanied Europeans to the New World, and later to other regions of the globe, rapidly transformed landscapes and destabilised niche ecosystems that had evolved over millennia. Often, this proved detrimental to indigenous flora and fauna. The introduction of domesticated animals to the Great American Plains contributed significantly to soil erosion as a result of overgrazing that allowed for secondary pioneer plant species such as nettles, nightshade and red filaree to colonise original grasslands. Besides outcompeting grasses and herbaceous perennials for soil nutrients, these weeds also inhibited their further growth. With sporadic ground cover, invasive plant species increased the risk of soil erosion, thus limiting the supply of feed for bison and other large wild mammals in America. Hence, in addition to colonial activities, like prolific hunting of wild game and farming, the unintentional spreading of weeds aided the near extinction of animals such as the bison (American buffalo).

Neglectful discarding of seeds and purposeful growing of Old-World fruit trees, like the peach and wild (or sour) orange, by settlers on the eastern to south eastern seaboard resulted in these aggressive plant species rapidly spreading across both the woodland savannah and swampland (everglades). Whilst these fruits were eventually propagated by Amerindians and contributed massively to their diets and later to larger American food culture and identity throughout much of the country, the peach tree, for instance, repressed the growth of lowland or longleaf pine savannahs that sheltered a diversity of endemic animals and plants. The main reason for this is that peach trees are slow burning like hardwoods, which suppress surface fire whereas longleaf pine ecosystems depend on it. At present, less than 4% of this once dominant ecosystem currently remains randomly dotting the landscape across the U.S (Westerhold, 2013). As a result, by the end of the twentieth century, at least 27 species of rare plants and animals associated with longleaf pine ecosystems were federally listed as endangered or threatened on the U.S Fish and Wildlife Services and another 99 were proposed for listing, including the dryland gopher tortoise (Noss et al., 1995: 21). The gopher tortoise plays a crucial role in maintaining smaller biospheres within the longleaf pine ecosystem because the large number of burrows that it digs serves as a refuge for a further 360 species.[21] Naturally, the loss of habitat of the gopher tortoises had a domino effect on dependent organisms. The present reality of the possible demise of animals, like the gopher tortoise, due to the degradation of the longleaf pine savannahs, for example, dispels the common assumption amongst proponents of chaos theory in the environmental sciences that significant near and mass extinctions of ecosystems and, therefore, plant and animal species, are shock events primarily triggered by random complex natural phenomena.[22] Rather, it not only emphasises that

[21] U.S Fish &Wildlife Service publication on the gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*). Available at: https://www.fws.gov/southeast/pdf/fact-sheet/gopher-tortoise.pdf (Accessed on 31 December 2018).

[22] Chaos theory can be applied to a wide range of disciplines stretching from mathematics to the natural sciences and human sciences. In the context of environmental issues, it has often been used by climate change denialists, for example, to emasculate claims that ecological degradation is triggered by human action. Instead, they analyse random events in the course of history (as far back as possible) and link this to specific scientific data sets on temperature fluctuations, winds and perennial flooding and alterations of a given biome to identify certain underlying patterns pertaining to climatic change, which results in ecological transformations. For example, some scientists have employed this theory to argue that *El Niño* is a naturally occurring phenomenon, rather than one instigated by human-induced climate change. It can be traced from 1520 onwards when capitalist development and population density and

major ecological changes are also human-induced and take place over an extended period of time, but that they are the product of watershed moments in human history. None, in this regard, is really comparable to the magnitude and impact of European colonisation of the Americas, which constituted the single greatest mass migration across the species divide.

Conscious as well as unconscious dispersion of the portmanteau biota facilitated the creation of Neo-Europes (viz. the U.S, Australia, New Zealand and Argentina) – where there was a demographic takeover by Europeans – that bore an uncanny resemblance in form and substance to mainland Europe. Depictions of the bucolic European lifestyle were replicated and found expression in colonial and settler existence. An example is the *American plantation scene*[23] with the homestead at the centre of a plot of land shrouded by a manicured garden of exotic hedgerows adjacent to evenly arranged fruit and nut orchards, fields of monoculture worked by enslaved Africans, and demarcated pastureland populated by Old-World flora and domesticated animals bordered by vast expanses of grassland. In featuring "constructed or manmade nature", this classic pictorial did not only celebrate European superiority expressed in its ability to enhance the fecundity of the land through technological innovation and exploitation of slave labour, but, more crucially, it pointed to their triumphant "conquest" of New World ecologies.

The spread of epidemics and invasive plants and animals coupled with the avarice of settler communities steeped in Yeoman culture that viewed land as private property and nature as capital inputs for commercial enterprise, set the train of a large-scale ecocide in motion. In the case of the U.S, the growing demand for meat by colonies moving towards the frontier connecting east to west through the trans-American railroad, stage lines and telegraph, and the insatiable desire of animal skin and fur traders for its prized hide that fuelled the leather industry in Europe, resulted in the American buffalo (or bison) being hunted almost to extinction by the end of the nineteenth century. Whilst the lucrativeness of the bison as an economic resource did have a major impact on its population, it was the regular culls and "grand hunts" administered by commanding officers of the U.S Army responsible for managing the Great Plains and protecting the landed interests of big business, such as the railroad companies, that, arguably, had the most devastating effect. The main objective of these destructive practices was to effectively deal with the "Indian problem" by starving them of major food stocks and to "cut the heart out of their economy" strategically forcing them into reservations and compelling them into the labour market (White, 1991). In fact, during a hunting expedition, Sir W.F. Butler – a British army general and avid adventurer – on his travels to America, who displayed an extreme sense of guilt for killing 30 buffalo bulls during a single hunt, was given a crass reassurance by one Colonel Dodge: "Kill every buffalo you can! Every buffalo dead is an Indian gone."

This highlights a specific pattern of reasoning of empire distinct from conventional utilitarian reasoning in social and economic history, which portends that the massacring of specific animals

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their effects on the natural environment in terms of greenhouse gases (GHGs) emissions that causes climate change was nowhere near present day levels (Grove, 1998).

[23] One example is a painting by Edward Beyer in the middle of the nineteenth century entitled, "Bellevue, The Lewis Homestead, Salem Virginia, 1855". This picture is depicted in John Michael Vlach's (2008: 20) chapter, "Perpetuating the Past: Plantation Landscape Paintings Then and Now" in *Landscape of Slavery: The Plantation in American Art* edited by Angela D. Mack and Stephen G. Hoffius.

was merely for capital gain (profit) and served as a mechanism for divesting indigenous peoples of a natural resource, enabling greater control over their labour power. It offers a more complex view of the dialecticism of genocide in the context of ecology that is not limited to Marxist interpretations, which blinds us to the fact that the teleology of nature is not just about satisfying material human needs but lies at the nexus of our physical life and existential reality. Since the buffalo was the axis on which Amerindian bodily sustenance, culture, economy, social organisation, and cosmology revolved, the extermination of the buffalo was the extermination of the Plains Indian.

Despite popular conservation tropes depicting the "native buffalo hunt" where bison were driven in their hundreds over cliff faces to their death as an act of profligacy and animal cruelty, this did not lead them to the brink of extinction. Reverence for the lives of these animals was reflected in the fact that Amerindians made use of the entire bison for food, as well as to manufacture a plethora of accoutrements. Whereas the U.S Army slaughtered massive herds to harvest only the most valued parts, like the hide and tongue, leaving a slew of wasted putrefying carcasses littered across the plains. Romanticised notions that indigenes lived in perfect harmony with nature before European colonisation were waylaid by prominent environmental historians steeped in the apocalyptic tradition, like Donald Worster, William Cronon and Alfred Crosby. Drawing from veritable paleoecological research, they embarked on debunking the myth of the "ecological Indian", postulating that early (pre-colonial) Amerindians had direct agency in mass extinctions of large mammals, such as the mammoth during the Pleistocene, and also altered landscapes and ecologies through their farming practices. Indigenes were, therefore, no more noble than their modern European counterparts in destroying nature, except that their actions took place in a different time and were therefore restricted by primitive technology. This thesis was further advanced by Alfred Crosby (2004) in *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900*, and, later, Jared Diamond (2006) in *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Survive.*

Crosby, for example, explained how the first Maori in New Zealand, in an effort to secure limited meat in an ecosystem devoid of big game animals, contributed to the extinction of the Moa (giant flightless bird) through overhunting, which subsequently lead to the elimination of its main predator the Haast's eagle. They also decimated sensitive woodland forests through indiscriminate fire use that exposed this sensitive ecosystem to colonisation by pioneer plant species that later accompanied European settlers.

Diamond, on the other hand, presented a more nuanced "self-destruct (ecocidal) thesis" arguing that ancient civilisations, like the Maya and Anasazi in the Americas and Rapa Nui (Polynesians) in Easter Island precipitated their own collapse due to excessive deforestation and overpopulation brought about by cultural and political excesses. These pre-historic ecological experiences share similar characteristics to the threats confronting modern societies and serve as a stark reminder of the fate that awaits them should they persist on the existing path of capitalist development. Through a masterclass in genealogical analysis, Diamond wove a grand narrative of ecological catastrophe (apocalypse) from a myriad of biological histories of culturally and socially diverse societies traversing space and time. What appeared to be a scientifically neutral approach to understanding why and how human societies either succumbed or averted ecological crisis was, however, not immune from ideological bias and dangerous theorisation.[24] In emphasising the transhistoricity and universality of human-induced ecological catastrophe, Diamond and Crosby unconsciously advance the liberal call to de-essentialise ecological debates. This entails dismissing mean-spirited arguments that point to European colonisation and, by assumption, racial inequality and oppression and cultural difference as the harbinger to humanity's current position in relation to nature.

The problem with transhistoricising ecological catastrophe is two-fold. Firstly, the strategy of analysing ecological catastrophes as isolated events to form a common narrative is insensitive to chronological distinctions between pre-colonial and colonial experiences, which dilutes and obfuscates the ricocheting and cumulative effect that colonial conquest had on ecosystems throughout the world. Although Diamond (2010: 880) takes the moral high-ground in a later article, arguing that it was "Europeans, not Native Australians or Americans or Africans, who have expanded the globe in the past 500 years", he viewed conquest as all-encompassing, instantaneous and transformative, rather than something that is enacted, re-enacted and rewritten for each succeeding generation (Wilcox, 2010: 139). By parochialising conquest, there is a sense that its origins lay elsewhere, creating a disconnect between the past and the present that not only renders us powerless over contemporary manifestations of ecological injustice, but exonerates European agency from having any determining influence.

Secondly, in focusing on particular moments in pre-colonial history where natives instigated the extinction of species and transformation of landscapes, such an approach ignores how their cultures and social values had evolved in relation to nature from this point until colonisation. It was not happenstance that Amerindian societies were effectively coexisting with their surrounding environments when Europeans first encountered them. The fact that their economic and socio-political systems was ecologically configured, and they defined human action, character, values, and an overall sense of being according to the signs and symbols imprinted on totem animals or present in natural phenomena, is beyond a naturalistic pantheism. Sacred conceptions of the "circle of life" endemic to the majority of native American cultures that underpin supposed warnings of the potential extermination of the human race if we continue in the vein of excess and abuse of the natural world, are beliefs born out of practical historical experiences rather than from a lack of an anthropomorphic deity due to their relative primitive state of development. Their ancestors were able to pass on valuable ecological lessons through oral tradition and other forms of symbolic

[24] Claims that Diamond's approach has racial and culturally essentialist undertones is not restricted to *'Collapse'*, but also extended to his earlier work, *Guns, Germs and Steel*. This is where he accounts for uneven development between the so-called first and third world. He argues that the relative success of European civilisation leading to its eventual domination through colonisation is the result of the accidental access to a greater variety of domesticable plants and animals that set them on a path of early modernisation compared to the societies they conquered. Reducing events leading up to European colonisation to an "environmental blessing" discounts the influence of other factors. Many scholars argue, for instance, that the Spanish conquest of the Americas was religiously motivated – predicated on a desire to expand Christendom. This is a position adopted by the decoloniality school as well, which was articulated in the previous chapter. In other words, normative elements, like religious belief and culture, were major determinants of European colonisation. Although Diamond attempted to remedy this oversight in *"Collapse"* by inverting his view pointing to the significance of culture as causing ecocide, he portrayed the culture of ancient societies in a negative light without exploring elements of these cultures that were conducive to ecological protection rather than death. In the process, he conflated their actions with those of European colonisation, which were fundamentally different.

representations (e.g., petroglyphs and hieroglyphics). Indigenous societies were, therefore, conscious not to repeat the same mistakes of their predecessors; choosing instead, to re-assess their relationship with the natural world before the arrival of Europeans. As notable critiques of Diamond, McAnany and Yoffee (2010) allude, the fact that there are a considerable number of descendants of the Maya, Anasazi and Rapa Nui alive today exemplifies the resilience rather than collapse of these societies. Although many antagonists who share this sentiment emphasise that we cannot establish with any certainty when, why, and how these civilisations underwent the endless cycle of collapse and re-emergence from pre until "recorded" history, it is clear that the "Indian" Columbus met was not the same as her/his ancestors. Their survival and relative success were not just the product of an unintended consequence of individual astute decision-making on the part of their forefathers or climatic good fortune – a position commonly advanced by proponents of environmental determinism – but of effective moral and social agency.

Resilience against natural elements, like extended periods of drought, require more than just a will to survive, it demands adaptability, innovation and, most of all, the ability to introspect and learn from your own mistakes as well as others'. This is ironically identified by Diamond (2006) himself as one of the five reasons that led to the eventual demise of the Greenland Norse. The Greenland Norse referred to the Inuit along with other New World natives in Vinland and Greenland that included the Dorset and Indians as *skraelings,* which, in Old Norse, roughly translates to wretches (ibid: 261). Such prejudice manifested in sustained hostility towards the Inuit in Greenland and a repudiation of the latter's harpooning, kayak and umiaq building technology, whale and seal hunting techniques, their innovative use of blubber as a source of fuel in a relatively tree scarce environment, and ability to make use of readily available renewable resources, such as ice to construct shelters. On the contrary, archaeological evidence from Inuit settlements reveal that they attempted to fabricate wooden screws and iron knives, which were produced by Greenland Norse, suggesting a willingness to learn from their detractors.

To his credit, Diamond identifies the racial supremacy of the Greenland Norse as the last in a series of factors that led to their subsequent collapse. In his narrative, deforestation brought about by an insatiable demand for firewood and coal for iron production coupled with grazing of domesticated animals and the use of turf for lining walls and fuel were the initial and main reasons behind the Greenland Norse's ecocide. This logic is in keeping with Diamond's methodology of environmental determinism: the Greenland Norse collapsed because their practices were ecologically unsustainable. Since the Inuit survived and the Greenland Norse society all but disappeared, there is credence to the claim that, had the latter abandoned its bigotry and chosen to learn, work, and live in genuine harmony with the former, the Greenland Norse would most likely also have survived on the icy island. By peripheralising the ethics of intersubjective relations rather than affording it primacy, Diamond relegates recognition to a relationship between a specific group of people and their surrounding environment instead of a social dynamic involving different peoples occupying and engaging a common environment. Atomising what is essentially a universal problem undermines the possibility of dealing with it collectively. Once again, misrecognition between social groups as the source of ecological injustice is acknowledged but is then gently pushed to the far reaches of intellectual engagement.

Even though Diamond invokes present and future generations to follow a similar path of "learning" compelling humanity to draw key lessons from the successes and failures of ancient and modern societies to prevent future ecological catastrophe, he conveniently bypasses this critical point of reflection. Diamond does not ask why, if pre-colonial indigenous people could learn from the actions of their ancestors, were European colonisers, like their Greenland Norse predecessors, not willing to learn from them, and why does the vast majority of humanity, in the present, continue in the same rut in spite of the knowledge we have at our disposal. By exploring these questions, Diamond, along with some of his more ardent critics, would have realised that underpinning contemporary ecological challenges lies a deeper more fundamental social and ethical crisis: a repudiation of alternative perspectives on nature by virtue of racial hierarchisation. The institutionalised inferiorisation of the role and value of the subaltern in not only transforming nature for the betterment of humanity, but conserving, managing and respecting it, is a major symptom of the dominant cultural, epistemic, moral, spiritual, and economic baggage that initially accompanied, and then survived, European colonisation.

Such a broad generalisation that focuses on the whole rather than the sum of the individual parts, however, is prone to attack due to its perceivable methodological shortcomings. As notable comparative studies highlighting the nuances and complexities between the environmental histories of the colonised world reveal, the conservation management approaches adopted in the British and French colonies were not only distinct from one another, but, in many instances, there were fundamental differences between colonies within empires (Grove, 1997a: 477). For example, while British forestry management laws and strategies were mainly hierarchical and centrally determined by the colonial state, a practice strictly adhered to in the colonies in Africa, this was not the case in India. Under the auspices of Hugh Cleghorn, the former Conservator of Forests for the Madras Presidency in 1855, political leverage, including the extension of equal access rights and recognition and allowance of controversial indigenous practices such as *kumri* (shifting cultivation) in forest conservation, was afforded to indigenous communities (Beinart & Hughes, 2007: 121).

The ramifications of such nuances were that conservationist policy in this minor regency of India, in particular, took on a more inclusive character assuming a middle ground that balanced the somewhat contradictory dual objective of the colonial state to conserve natural resources while driving economic expansion with the cultural and livelihood demands of local populations. At the time, within this limited space, Cleghorn's action, as Beinart and Hughes (2007) suggest, not only broke down race and class barriers whereby colonists and their subjects worked together and shared ideas and practices on forest management, but also possibly accounted for why conservation in this small area compared to the rest of British India, let alone colonies in Africa, took a very different trajectory. By the latter half of the nineteenth century, India was a vanguard of forest conservation in the empire at the centre of disseminating scientific findings, experiments, and discourses in joint epistemic platforms such as the Royal Geographic Society. However, its inclusive approach involving direct participation and influence of indigenous communities in managing forest resources was not widely adopted in African colonies until the era of decolonisation.

Unsurprisingly, continuities (and discontinuities) in conservation narratives between and within empires were varied. Whilst the task of identifying differences between conservation trajectories of empires such as the nature of colonial rule, whether direct or indirect or within empire – including the role of individual agency – is easier, establishing commonalities is naturally more complicated and difficult to prove. Hence, the comparative historical method is an effective tool to dismiss and emasculate sweeping claims that racism was a common feature of environmental preservation and conservation during European colonisation. However, it falls flat when delving into the ontology behind the unique actions of the likes of Cleghorn, which did have a positive influence on conservation in areas under his jurisdiction. As a result of his inherent superiority and the power vested in his position as an agent of empire, the decision to recognise indigenous rights of access and systems of forest management was a sole determination. It was an act motivated by optimising the interests of the colonial state and empire rather than enhancing the well-being of indigenous peoples and their surrounding ecologies. This in no way derides the virtuosity of his action but emphasises the constraints on indigenous agency on ecological matters. They were unintended beneficiaries in the process of arriving at this middle ground rather than joint stakeholders. Moreover, the benevolence of colonial conservators was more of an exception than a norm.

It is clear from the preceding discussion that historicising ecocide is a highly contested terrain. There are two dominant approaches in the context of ecocide to theorising the dialectics of misrecognition between people and nature. The first advances a self-destruct thesis emphasising what political theorists like Michael Sandel (2004) refer to as a "Promethean aspiration or urge" whereby the innate desire of humans to remake and master nature for purposes of developmental progress results in environmental destruction and, subsequently, the demise of humans – a rationale that underpins the ideas of Diamond and Crosby. In other words, ecocide and the social violence and conflicts it precipitated (or genocide) is a product of a hedonistic "Promethean attitude" endemic to all humans that traverses time and space from the pre-colonial to the colonial and now the post-colonial eras. European colonisation is not responsible for creating this attitude since it was also a feature of the collapse of pre-colonial non-European societies. By introducing modernity and capitalism, it simply established the ideal conditions for it to thrive. This included an anthropocentric value system and political, juridical, and economic institutions that reduced nature to a commodity. Through this logic, the reason that the cycle of ecocide-genocide is repeated and compounded from European colonisation onwards is reduced to a function of the capitalist mode of production.

The second approach explores the instrumental role ecocide plays in human oppression with the advent of European colonisation, which has two distinct articulations. Unlike the first approach foregrounding structure (capitalism), both articulations emphasise the centrality of European agency as a trigger for ecocide-genocide nexus except to varying degrees. The first articulation refers to the deliberate destruction of the environment by colonists as a means to exterminate colonial subjects. And the second, alludes to the "accidental" unforeseen damage inflicted by European settlers on local ecosystems through biological transfer and the radical alteration of the natural environment because of modernisation that had an inimical impact on indigenes. Genocide as an effect of ecocide, in the first articulation, is understood exclusively in material terms. It focuses on physical suffering and death experienced by the subjugated at the hands of the powerful. This interpretation is extremely superficial as it restricts the ecocide-genocide nexus to actions undertaken during European conquest and subsequent cases of war only. In other words, claims of there being a direct correlation between dominant forces fomenting ecocide with the intent to harm a specific social group has no value outside the context of physical warfare and therefore does not constitute genocide. Comparatively, in the second articulation, genocide is not an intentional outcome of European agency in ecocide. Rather, it constitutes a pejorative side-effect of western European modernity.

Both articulations, however, undermine the significant "staying power" of European colonialism and structural agency (coloniality) in perpetuating ecocide and, by default, genocide. The source of this oversight is that it is bound to a somewhat provincial legal conception of what constitutes genocide outlined in the UN Convention of Genocide that still does not recognise ecocide as genocidal. Despite persistent calls beginning at the Stockholm Conference on Human Environment in 1972, for environmentally destructive strategies employed in war to be labelled as an ecocide, the term has never gained official status in the lexicon of genocide. Even though the United Nations attempted to address this deficiency by commissioning a special working group on ecocidal warfare that established an International Convention on the Crime of Ecocide, this did not translate in the criminalisation of ecocide. The findings of this group tasked with resolving the "perpetrator genocidal intent" conundrum – a longstanding issue of contention in Genocidal Studies – emphasised the difficulty of determining direct intent between environmental destruction and "mass murder"; the underlying rationale being that ecocide is a consequence of regularly occurring economic activities and not necessarily confined to a military offence in the context of war. In a document on Ecocide Convention drafted in 1973, Richard A. Falk argued that humans have, in times of war and peace, "consciously and unconsciously inflicted irreparable damage to the environment". This particular view not only avers that ecocide is irrelevant to an official conception of genocide, but that it cannot be deemed criminal because proving that the environment was destroyed with the intention to cause harm to a specific group of people will be impossible without an admission. This sentiment was echoed in a report produced by the Special Rapporteur of a sub-commission of the UN's Human Rights Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities in 1978. The rapporteur posited that states are prone to place ecocide in a context other than that of genocide and warned that, by extending the idea of genocide to cases of ecocide, which has a distant connection to it, there is a risk of prejudicing the effectiveness of the Genocide Convention altogether (Crook & Short, 2014: 308).

Recalcitrance on the part of international legal frameworks, like the Genocide Convention, to formally recognise ecocide as an act of genocide, stems from a parochialised orthodox definition of genocide that represents a distortion and compromise from what Raphael Lemkin – founder of the term genocide – intended it to be. Lemkin initially campaigned for the adoption of the cultural method to genocide, which he defined in his autobiography, *Totally Unofficial Man* (2002: 393), as constituting the "destruction of the cultural pattern of a group, such as language, the traditions, the monuments, archives, libraries, churches"; he referred to these elements as the "shrines of the soul of a nation". Whilst nature is not explicitly identified as one of the "shrines of the soul of a nation", it stands to reason, given that indigenous communities throughout the world revere living creatures and inanimate entities, like land, waterways, and mountains as cultural symbols, that desecrating or destroying them would constitute an ecocide equivalent to genocide.

Apart from indigenous communities who retain a deep-seated cultural connection to nature, the vast majority of western and non-western peoples would be able to trace an organic relationship to land and its creatures. Ecocide, it can be argued, is therefore an experience endemic to histories of all people whether self-inflicted, structurally produced or perpetrated by an external force. Universalising the experience of ecocide, however, not only undermines the extent to which European colonisation contributed to ecological destruction and normalised such behaviour, but it places limits on classifying certain actions, especially those where intent cannot be proven as genocidal. Emphasising elements like the introduction of a capitalist mode of production and western modernity as potential individual sources of ecocide and separate from European colonisation as a project of cultural domination, is a gross oversimplification of the ecocide-genocide nexus. Lemkin's cultural method of defining genocide accommodates, but also reveals both the extent and complexity of the ecocide-genocide dialectic. Rather than simply using this holistic definition to recognise ecocide perpetrated during European colonisation as a historical crime of genocide to justify punitive legal action through some form of needs- and rights-based reparations for indigenous communities, the rationale for adopting this approach is to acknowledge how this event imposed a dominant logic of human-nature relations that lies at the base of contemporary thoughts and actions that perpetuate ecological injustice. It is the institutionalisation and normalisation of a western-centric conception of human-nature relations that constitutes the coloniality of nature.

Defining the Analytics of the Coloniality of Nature

There is a dearth of knowledge and lack of clarity concerning what constitutes the coloniality of nature. Most interpretations and applications of the concept are based on a rather generic and somewhat fickle explanation accounting for the alienation of subaltern peoples from nature. As Arturo Escobar (2007: 197) portends, the environmental crisis is, in essence, a crisis of modern instrumental rationality which emphasises "modernity's failure to articulate biology and history save through the capitalisation of nature and labour". He further explains that the onset of a regime of capitalist nature resulted in the subalternisation of other (non-European) articulations of biology, history and society. These alternate articulations were built on a fundamental belief of the "oneness" or contiguity between the natural, human and supernatural, and were etched in cultural life ways (local models and practices) that were transmitted from one generation to the next.

The apparent primacy afforded to the "commoditisation of nature" in fomenting the separation of subaltern peoples from their respective ecologies risks conceptual conflation with the revisionist ecological Marxist analysis, discussed earlier. In other words, Escobar's account of the coloniality of nature seems to cast capitalism as the instigator of ecological injustice, potentially undermining, and, to certain extent, contradicting the position of decoloniality. It is, therefore, necessary here to identify the main points of convergence and divergence between the Marxian dialectical approach and the analytics of the coloniality of nature in explaining the link between dehumanisation and the mastery and destruction of nature. As stated earlier in the thesis, although the analytics of coloniality/modernity borrow extensively from other radical schools of critical thought, including, inter alia, (neo)Marxism, postmodernism, post-structuralism, and post-colonialism, it is sensitive to their geopolitical and bio-political bias (Eurocentricity), which paradoxically exteriorises the viewpoints of the oppressed while claiming to represent their experiences. While the commoditisation of nature constitutes a major dimension of the analytics of the coloniality of nature, it is not a central tenet, as is the case with the Marxist dialectical approach advanced by the likes of David Harvey. This does not imply that capitalism and modernity play a subsidiary role in the making of ecological injustice, but that they simply constitute key processes entangled within the colonial matrix of power.

What distinguishes the coloniality of nature (and the colonial matrix of power, in general) is that it is foregrounded in the *colonial difference*. This refers to that historical moment marked by the commencement of the Atlantic commercial circuit and European colonisation when the Americas and then the rest of the non-western world were seen in contradistinction to the West whereby social relations, material practices, culture, language, and discourse were configured around a hierarchal racialised order. With the fundamental term of decoloniality established, it is crucial that a basic "cognitive map" is sketched for the purposes of structure, direction, and most crucially, to add further conceptual dimensions to the analytics of coloniality discussed in previous chapters. The cognitive map of the coloniality of nature rests on what is proposed here as a tripod of difference constitutive of *ontological difference*, *epistemic difference* and *power difference*, which respectively draws from, and directly corroborates with the coloniality of being, knowledge and power:

a) *Ontological difference*

   Whilst ontological difference has its origins in Heideggerian thought emphasising the distinction between being and the "being who is there" (or Dasein), as alluded to in part in Chapter Three, it has a very different meaning and application in this context. Drawing from Mignolo's conception of the ontological colonial difference as a product of the coloniality of being, the main point of departure is, unlike in Heidegger's view where mortality is the gateway to authenticity (self-realisation and self-worth aligned to a collective ideal), for the *damnés,* "death" is regularised. A feature of this death is not just a denial of the *ontos* of the human subject (read here as non- European other), but by default, the peripheralisation of the *being* of other beings (nature) that also give meaning and purpose to the subject's existence beyond the mere aesthetic value it proffers. Far from contemplating and achieving some sense of what Coyne (2013) terms Heidegger's ontological conception of the sublime, they are not only preoccupied with survival, but also constantly reminded of their relative *absence* in terms of their role in the positive construction of all facets of human history seen through their lenses and enunciated in their language. Hence, it is Mignolo's interpretation of the ontological colonial difference, as it is framed here, that is foundational to the coloniality of nature. Ontological difference as applied in this context is, therefore, based on the assertion that the white/Euro-American/Judeo-Christian/male's experience, imagery, and knowledge of nature informed by a specific geography assumed a dominant status. Western imperialism ensured that a subjectivity informed by a particular spatio-temporality (social, literary, political, cultural, religious, and epistemic lens), through which ideas about nature was filtered, became universalised.

In his seminal work, *Orientalism,* Edward Said (1978) introduced the concept of imaginative geographies to illustrate the triangulation between subjective power, knowledge, and the representation of space. For Said, spaces, the people that occupy them along with their cultures, are social constructs. Those who had control over the production of knowledge (i.e., literary and social discourse) had the power to define (and redefine) a geography. In other words, social and ecological relations and the language and culture that governed and gave meaning to a particular space, were no longer determined by the people who occupied it. The fact that western imperialism was inaugurated through violent conquest, control, and chartering of land – and by extension nature – meant that it was essentially geographical. As a result, the domination over a physical territory and its inhabitants (both human and non-human nature) constituted the imposition of an imperial geography that distorted and separated people from their immediate geographies. By overlaying on social and physical formations, like the natural environment, a particular form of knowledge and conception, European colonisers were able to render these "geographies" ripe for colonial rule. The natural world beyond their geography (the borders of Europe) became a canvass on which their ideas, reveries, ambitions, and values were painted. In fact, the non-European was simply another "object of nature" fulfilling the "artist's imagery" reflected in his/her material representation rather than an agent actively shaping and being shaped by its unique surrounding. Through this process, other ecologies were not only destroyed bringing actual death to nature and non-Europeans but were also transformed in the image and likeness of a dominant ecology. Thus, non-European interactions with nature in unique ecologies, which gave meaning to culture and spirituality, represented patterns of social, economic and environmental production (and reproduction), and where language was produced, were insignificant. Consequently, the alteration of landscapes through the introduction of new flora and fauna and the removal of the old entailed the erasure of non-European collective memories. The non-European's alienation from self (*his*tory) did not just imply a separation from geography, but from ecology (a conception of nature in relation to *self*) – in effect, ecologising the geographical (DeLoughery & Handley, 2011).

Whilst European superiority involved denying non-Europeans any historicity in terms of articulating their relationship to nature, it also translated into the criminalisation of non-Europeans, which was a dominant narrative in the genealogy of the environmental discourse. Environmental policy as well as conservation and preservation thinking and practice implemented in the colonies was underpinned by an authoritarian racism, which contributed even further to the ontological separation of non-Europeans from the natural world. The inextricable link between environmental protection and a politically and socially oppressive past epitomised by material dispossession lays the foundations for the psychological hostility that non-Europeans (the majority, except for some indigenous communities who persisted with a traditional way of life) have towards nature. This actually manifests in contemporary intellectual debates in specialised fields like political ecology. Within this field, environmental justice scholars and activists, who articulate the struggles of non-Europeans, consider stringent conservation and preservation measures to be an obstacle to "human development". This results in the creation of antagonistic binaries such as anthropocentricism vs. biocentrism and "brown" (social) vs. "green" (environment) issues.

Another legacy of the association between oppression of non-Europeans and environmental protectionism is the "ecological emptiness" of non-European language. Specific meanings and contexts of names, cultural practices and values derived from a past rooted in nature (and ecology) lost its connection to that reality as a point of self-reference. Beyond the imposition of European language as a dominant medium of communication representing the natural world in text and social discourse that was devoid of non-European self-articulations of the natural, the violent separation of non-Europeans from land and nature as both resource and cultural symbol was particularly significant. It meant that the environment and environmental protectionism was synonymous with a traumatic historical memory. The intergenerational consequence of this – even in instances where native languages were not eradicated and had to undergo a more rigorous process of recovery – was that words (language) representing and historically grounded in nature was empty of the ecological (unique understanding and relationship with nature).

b) *Epistemic difference*

This particular arm of the tripod of difference explores the role knowledge plays as an instrument of power and domination that was employed not only to ensure mastery and control of nature and non-Europeans, but to consolidate the European subject as the "ultimate knower" of humanity's relationship with nature. It consists of two interfacing dimensions. The first entails the imposition and establishment of western frames and modalities of thought as inherently superior in the production and dissemination of knowledge about the natural world and of ecology. At its core, this dimension of the epistemic difference emphasises that the Euro-American viewpoint is endemic to ideological, theoretical and sociological discourses on nature, with the Occident established as the epistemological and ontological centre of the world (Coronil, 1996:60).

Epistemic changes inevitably shaped the evolution of environmental thought, both mainstream and radical. Whether from a religious justification of human domination of ecology advocated by early interpretations of Judeo-Christianity to Western natural sciences governed by empirical truth seeking to counter cultural eco-spiritualist narratives such as deep ecology, they were western-centric. Even though these paradigm shifts were portrayed as revolutionary since they captured bourgeoning intellectual thought and discourses as well as popular social and political rhetoric on humanity's relationship with the natural world, this constituted a family feud that became universalised. Western frames of thought were therefore afforded *epistemic privilege* and *authority* in articulating the "ecological", which scholarly agents and institutions advocating such knowledge worked hard at protecting and defending in the face of narratives that proved the contrary or that projected relatively greater truth. Inherent to western ideas, theories and philosophy on human-nature relations is what Fanon (2008) calls cognitive dissonance – a refusal to accept evidence that challenges a fundamental set of beliefs and the great pains proponents of these beliefs would go to in order to rationalise, ignore, and deny what does not fit in these beliefs.

As a corollary, the second dimension of the epistemic difference reveals the different facets of how the inferiorisation of other cosmologies and modes of understanding and representing human nature relations (epistemologies) beyond the borders of the Occident, were not only dismissed, denied, misinterpreted, misrepresented and misappropriated, but also relegated to the margins of ecological thought and practice. Its main point of reference is that the relegation of the non-European to the realm of the sub-human involved the inferiorisation of language, and by default, knowledge of the ecological. Non-European knowledge about nature predicated on the invisible (or belief in superstition and myth) was deemed inherently false and lacked epistemic credibility due to it being primitive and non-scientific.

Unlike the moral code emphasising a genteel trust that governed deliberative consensus between British scientists in the seventeenth century when confronted with credibility problems (determining truth and falsity) in natural scientific knowledge, western naturalists, and later scientists, assumed an attitude of dismissiveness towards indigenous communities outside the Occident. The effects of which did not only prove problematic in terms of the authenticity of knowledge of nature but translated into physical destruction of unique biomes and quality of life of people that interacted with various creatures and things in diverse ecosystems. Western scientists displayed an ethos within their epistemic communities whereby knowledge was considered a collective good based on the principle that what we know about things or nature inevitably requires that we have knowledge of the people who produce that knowledge. As Steven Shapin (1994: XXVI) posits, knowledge about nature is not independent from those who produced it, and their experiences and testimonies are key determinants of the value of such knowledge:

> What we recognise as people-knowledge is a necessary, not sufficient, condition for the making of thing knowledge. It follows therefore that what we call ‘social knowledge’ and ‘natural knowledge’ are hybrid entities: what we know of comets, icebergs, and neutrinos irreducibly contains what we know of those people who speak for and about these things, just as what we know about the virtues of people is informed by their speech about things that exist in the world.

Unfortunately, this ethical consideration and respect was not extended by the vast majority of early European naturalists and scientists (the colonial administration as a whole and the scientific fraternity) – apart from a few cases – to non-European communities from whom they acquired knowledge of New World environments. The idea that non-Europeans were not the cognitive and moral equivalent of Europeans was the justification for exceptional treatment of the former who were not knowledge producers. That their approach to knowledge production about nature appeared to represent an archaic and speculative method resembling pre-Renaissance Europe, a primordial stage that European society had already triumphed over through scientific and rational enterprise, is an illustration of the epistemic arrogance entrenched in western scientific knowledge. Whilst non-Europeans were dispossessed of nature materially during colonial conquest, this also, in a discursive sense, correlates with an epistemic as well as ideological, cultural and spiritual dispossession.

The implication of this was not only the possible elimination of natural knowledge, but that the actual meaning of things (the natural world) within the disposition of their habitus could be displaced. This displacement of meanings of nature and ecology with "new" ones cognised through the habitus of people with no experience of these surroundings did not just have the effect of removing cultural, spiritual and social affinities between non-Europeans and their natural environments, it also created room for gross misinterpretations and misrepresentations of the knowledge of different ecologies. While denialism (or wilful ignorance) was a feature of European responses to non-Western knowledges on ecologies and nature, it was also coupled with the unethical practice where Europeans claimed significant "discoveries" made by non-European societies as their own without due acknowledgement. Such knowledge, which was a harbinger to important "scientific breakthroughs" and came to play a central role in contributing to the advancement of human life, would eventually fall under the control of western monopoly capital supported by the supposedly independent scientific community that made it difficult for the very societies responsible for these discoveries to access and benefit from them.

c) *Power differenc*e

The central thesis of the third arm of the tripod of difference is that there are heterarchies of power configured on the principle of western superiority/non-western inferiority operating in terms of global political, economic and social structures that influence the general trajectory of environmental thought and practice across state, business and civil society. It points to the hegemony of western interests in shaping global environmental discourse that provides the base principles of political action, determines the terms and conditions of a cross-section of international policies and influence over institutions responsible for the production and dissemination of knowledge about nature. The consolidation of western power through the control of environmental ideology, rhetoric, policies and actions, whether in respect of advancing capitalist interests or even challenging and exposing such actions within activist arenas of environmental justice, perpetuates a western-centric ecological agenda. With the effect of not only alienating marginalised social groups, but also compromising efforts at establishing a broad-based and inclusive environmental ethic that has the potential of accommodating varying issues, perspectives and ideologies in minimising ecological injustices.

> It analyses the role that powerful international actors and institutions dealing with the environmental question (viz. the UNFCCC, IMF, WB, agricultural research institutes as well as eNGOs and social and environmental movements) play in reproducing ecological injustices that appeal to humanitarian discourses aimed at ameliorating the dual crisis of modernity: underdevelopment and environmental degradation. As an adjunct, it also explores how nature has been utilised as an instrument of "war" exploited by dominant forces to not only control, but also destroy weaker societies. In this contemporary context, misanthropic scepticism in terms of environment depending on which side of the social divide advocates of these programmes and interventions subscribe to, assumes a multiplicity of forms with the same pejorative outcome for the socially vulnerable and the natural world, as it did during colonisation.

While each dimension of the tripod of difference has been discussed individually, it must be stressed that this was done for purposes of analytic clarity and not necessarily functionality. None of these dimensions should be understood nor operate separately from one another. Instead, they are interfacing dimensions of a prism built on a common foundation of a racialised hierarchy that constitute the coloniality of nature. Inevitably, the attempt below to demonstrate how the coloniality of nature reproduces misrecognition of subaltern peoples and nature will entail an overlap across areas of being (ontological difference), knowledge (epistemic difference) and power (power difference).

"Empty" Lands (Terra Nullius) and Colonial Conquest

Why does the misrecognition of subaltern people and nature involve mutually reinforcing or convergent processes? The simple response is that they are both the product of a dominant Euro-American/Christian/male/white gaze of the relationship between humans and the natural world. In the preface to *The Order of Things*, Michel Foucault used the "Las Meninas" (Maids of Honour) painting by Diego Velasquez (1656) to emphasise hermeneutics or that there are multiple possibilities and perspectives on how we understand and see reality. While one can only infer that the painter on the left of the picture behind a canvas with the back visible is possibly sketching the king and queen reflected in a mirror on the right of him or the young princess standing at the centre surrounded by her attendants (the Las Meninas), there is no clear indication of who or what constitutes the subject from the object or nature of the relationship between them. Subjects within the picture and the spectator viewing it, will have their own idea and impose a unique order to making sense of the chaos. Different things appear central to each subject and, therefore, the relationships between things will be different, and, thus, the story told will also be different (Fendler, 2010: 84-85). For Foucault no gaze is stable, and the subject and object, the spectator and the model will reverse roles. In terms of who or what is included or excluded and how the relationship between things changes through the course of history, the gaze is not constant. Ironically, Foucault, an exponent of Nietzsche's emphasis on power as a key agent determining shifts in the relationship between words, objects and discourse in the genealogy of human history, gave little credence to how European colonisation consolidated the hegemony of a particular gaze. This is especially poignant in the context of the order of human-nature relations.

Underlying fluctuations and shifts in ideas concerning the relationship between nature and human society is a dominant pattern of thought, which reinforces the above claim and reveals the limitation of Foucault's conception of the gaze. The colonial imagination imposed a regime of order about ecologies outside Europe that was predicated on a diffusionist myth of emptiness – that pristine wilderness or virgin land was a sign that native cultures did not possess the rationality, inventiveness and desire to transform the landscape (Sluyter, 1999: 378). This idea was consistent with the Lockean justification for the commoditisation of nature. The conversion of the commons (or wild virgin land) to private property was determined by the application of human labour. Since there was no evidence that non-Europeans "worked" the land, this meant that it was "nobody's land (*terra nullius*) and was therefore ripe for exploitation and appropriation. The *diffusionist myth of emptiness* was supported by early colonial discourses on agriculture that advocated for the transition from wilderness to civilisational development. Guides on agricultural practices and animal husbandry introduced in the Americas, and later on in the other European colonies, including the establishment of monoculture and regulated pastureland or the homestead lifestyle, did not only aim to create a physical but an epistemic and psychological "barrier" between wild nature and a modernising human society. The discovery of untamed commons with people interacting at a more primitive level with nature engaging in hunting and gathering was deemed culturally and developmentally backward. It was the perceived failure of indigenous societies to dominate and control their environments that contributed to western scientific claims of the "wild proximity" between them.

In a part of his work, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson*, James D. Rice (2009), for example, explored a common element of British colonisation in Ireland and Virginia in sixteenth-century USA, postulating that English ideas and fantasies about the environment directly shaped descriptions of native peoples. Medieval accounts justifying the conquest of Ireland by Gerald of Wales in the twelfth century argued that, whilst it possessed potential riches in the form of fertile pastureland, honey and sweeping meadows, its rocky topography was a direct reflection of the character of the Irish people. He posited that it was the "wild and inhospitable people" and their lack of "want of industry" rather than "nature of the soil", which was to be blamed for the poor condition of the Irish landscape (cited in Pluymers, 2011: 616). This was the same view, argues Rice (2009: 78), which the British had of natives of Virginia – the Algonquians – who echoed images of Irish and were described as "beastly humans" in texts documenting the experiences of settler populations in Virginia. The changes in landscape were commensurate with the changes of the people occupying it, insinuating that European colonists, unlike their Algonquian predecessors, had a positive influence in transforming the physical environment from an untamed wilderness to an amenable, cultivated, ordered space.

Apart from domesticated plants introduced by colonists for commerce and aesthetics, wild plains populated by long indigenous grasses and flourishing herbs and shrubs were considered "weeds", and rocky terrain represented a kind of "filthy stubble" dotting a potentially pristine arable landscape ripe for cultivation. The dominant rhetoric captured in popular husbandry manuals, such as Charles Etienne's *Maison Rustique*, translated from French to English in the early seventeenth century by Richard Surflet, advanced by the British administration amongst settler communities in the USA, emphasised that the role of the farmer was to purge or cleanse the land of unwanted weeds, pests in the form of wild animals looking to destroy crops and livestock and stones (Pluymers, 2011: 613). Such works, at the time, were built on a Christian-centric "end of Eden" hypothesis: the idea that nature's perceived bounty is bedevilled with hidden snares designed to enchant and eventually destroy the wondering mind, and, therefore, as punishment for Adam and Eve's sin, humanity is condemned to a life of toiling on the land (Stoll, 2008: 238). Untamed nature was a tell-tale sign that native communities in the colonies were still lost in Eden and therefore racked by sin due to their indolence. Consequently, the taming of nature involved a "cultural conversion" of natives into "labourers" discarding their "loose" Edenistic mentality. Unwillingness to "convert" warranted cleansing as with blights on the land. Forceful transformation of the physical environment and indigenous people was, therefore, mutually inclusive and reinforcing elements of the colonial gaze that lay at the heart of European conquest.

Whilst the mastery and control of nature and natives in the colonies were projected onto wilderness, it subsequently found expression in controlled "spaces of domination" in the metropole in the form of ethnographic shows or anthropo-zoological exhibitions. What colonists who had the benefit of "experiencing" outside the mainland, they sought to bring home for their societies to witness. The packaging, exporting and concretising of the gaze not only limited how people in these societies viewed non-Europeans who did not possess a physiological and social constitution similar to themselves, it established a particular idea of the environments that these indigenes resided in and how they interacted with them that prevented Europeans from perceiving and understanding the dynamics of this relationship any differently. In fact, such exhibitions (representations) also served to cement the legacy of this idea. Contemporary popular western stereotypes that "lions still roam the streets in Africa and its people hunt wild animals" not only distort present reality and are considered demeaning since they reinforce the notion that Africans are still primitive, it is a historical invention that trivialises the complexity of cultures and relationships between these communities and the natural world.

It was not uncommon, for example, within these staged natural settings for impresarios working in conjunction with scientists to comment on those characteristics of hunter-gatherers that supported conceptions of the relative superiority of some groups compared to others in the context of the hunt. For example, the San's use of poisoned arrows and adornment of natural camouflage to simulate animals that they hunted, like ostriches, represented their cunning brutality reflected in their latent crafty and dull expressions, whereas the Zulus were considered to be braver hunters, who used spears and assegais, which was evident in their noble disposition affirming their superiority over the San (Qureshi, 2011: 174-175). The parochial and pejorative conception of the San, however, as insensitive and indolent hunters that disrespected their prey is not only untrue, but the complete opposite. In a documentary, "The Great Dance: A Hunters Story" (2000), certain significant attributes of the principles of sustainability and respect behind the San hunting in the Kalahari Desert are revealed. Whilst the San do use aids, such as poisoned arrows and camouflage to disable and get close to their prey, they often go through an arduous process before a hunt is successful. For example, through an astute understanding of the anomalous behaviour of specific animal species, the San are able to identify and target the oldest and/or weakest individual. The poisoned arrows only serve to slow the animal down. Thereafter, the hunters employ their intimate knowledge of the animal and its interaction with the surrounding environment to track it down.

They pursue the injured animal on foot for days with the intention of enabling the poison to take effect and to tire it out. After the animal is located, the kill is completed using a spear. Once the kill is made, the San rub their spit into the sand and place this mixture over the eyes of the animal as a sign of reverence to the animal for giving its life to sustain them and in acknowledgement of the interconnectedness of all the earth's components. The actual San hunt and its depiction in the ethnographic shows, however, portrayed their oneness with nature as a form of savageness and cunning comparable to wild animals rather than a demonstration of rationality, respect, and spirituality which reflect human virtues.

This is a vindication of Chika and Arnaut's (2013: 667) claim that, within these heavily dramatised, regimented, and policed locations, natives were expected to perform stereotypes of themselves stylising their culture and body techniques. These were not authentic and comprehensive representations of their cultures. In other words, the practice of "staging and caging" epitomised by the human zoo served the function of what anthropologists refer to as a "conceptual distancing apparatus". This "invented space" was an intersubjective medium used to reinforce alterity, enabling the European viewer to recognise her/his superiority through the technological achievements/successes and cultural advancements of her/his own society by observing the primordial state of the subaltern object. It follows that the very idea of living close to, or being one with nature as natives did, constituted a cultural death antithetical to the fundamental human desire for progress. Ironically, the imposition of a derisory misinformed perception of what the relationship between natives and their unique ecosystems was in reality, bolstered the ego of western scientific episteme, thus restricting the possibility of identifying and learning from certain principles, practices, and ideas that were ecologically sustainable. As Blanchard et al. (2009: 15) argue, the human zoo was not a product of western imperialism, instead it was one of the cultural conditions which made it possible because it justified the oppression and exceptional treatment of natives, as well as the appropriation and control of natural resources.

Whilst there were subtle shifts and differences in the scientific approaches used to understand the relationship between humans and nature, they served the same purpose of consolidating the cultural conditions required to master, dominate, and control non-Europeans and their ecosystems. The gaze may have been concretised through the representation of the wilderness and artificial reconstructions of this space; however, this was shaped by a perception informed by a particular experience of nature that was authenticated using scientific reasoning. This is evident when analysing the evolution of ideas about the relationship between the natural environment and social change and development explored within the canon of sociological thought. Up until the nineteenth century, this relationship was understood primarily through two approaches; geographical and biological. The geographical approach posits that, as a product of nature, human society is susceptible to natural explanation. Since humans exist and function within a natural climate, this inevitably has a bearing on their physical, emotional, and cognitive traits and, subsequently, their overall level of social development. For instance, whereas the impact of the environment is most profound on "primitive" societies it depreciates in proportion to the advance of modern culture. Popular sociological works at the time, such as *The Character of Races: As Influenced by Physical Environment, Natural Selection and Historical Development* by Ellsworth Huntington and *The History of Civilisation in England* by Thomas Henry Buckle, attempted to draw a correlation between climatic and ecological conditions and the level of health, psychological processes and productivity, and social decorum of specific races (Hannigan, 1995). According to Huntington, at lower temperatures people are most likely during the day to engage in creative thought and be inventive and possess the mental fortitude to overcome harsher cold weather conditions. In places, however, where humidity is high and temperatures soar in the day, people are naturally prone to lethargy and are cognitively less industrious, engaging in minimal activities aimed at securing their immediate survival rather than striving for a higher order of intellectual advancement. Hence, this is the reason that the Nordics, and Europeans in general, living further north in temperate climates could produce more sophisticated technology, demonstrating a greater degree of genius and intelligence than Africans that lived in the tropics. Buckle, however, focused more on the aesthetic rather than physical dimension, arguing that awe-inspiring beauty of wild nature does conceal its deceptive mind-altering power (ibid: 2). In other words, people exposed to such environments would most likely be of a capricious disposition, succumbing to their bestial passions unbridled by a moral consciousness or reason. On the other hand, the British countryside with its gentle rolling hills, domesticated animals, and manicured fields was conducive to a calm contemplative character, which is why the British were rational and, therefore, more superior.

Darwin's theory of evolution was the foundation on which the biological approach was formulated. It used key ideas, such as the "survival of the fittest" to draw a parallel between the domination of pioneering plant species and the success of Europeans in conquering hostile inferior people and their environments. This would continue to form the kernel of thought that lay at the heart of a fascist nationalistic philosophy in Western Europe in the Second World War that promoted genocide. Prominent environmental sociologists, such as John Bellamy Foster and John Hannigan, have attempted to rescue the radical sociological thought of Marx and Durkheim, for example, from their perceivable silence or implicitness in accommodating the natural environment within a broader conception of social justice and human development. They have done this by drawing parallels between biology and key concepts in Marxian and Durkheimian thought, and the implications this has for dealing with the ecological crisis. Foster (2002) uses Marx's idea of "metabolic rift" to emphasise that at the interstice of unchecked decimation of the earth's resources and its diminishing carrying capacity, is the problem of the commoditisation of nature and labour, which are mutually reinforcing processes that are unsustainable for restoring natural balance in society. As alluded to in Chapter Two, Foster pays no attention, ironically, to the cultural, social, and spiritual value people attach to land and nature. Reliance on the biological with no consideration of the ontological, advances a material utilitarian form of ecological consciousness endemic to a western liberal capitalism, which is at loggerheads with a cosmological interpretation of human-nature relations in indigenous communities.

Hannigan (1995: 6-7), on the other hand, emphasised that Emile Durkheim, when compared to his contemporaries, made a greater effort to elevate issues of low societal fact such as the biological and psychological to a higher status in sociological thought. Durkheim's concept of "organic solidarity", for example, explored the interdependence between the different divisions of labour as a direct response to the ecological problem of exponential population increase in the context of the scarcity of resources (i.e. Malthusian threat). Using Darwin's theory of evolution, Durkheim argued that increases in occupational specialisation will bring about complementarity between heterogeneous groups and lessen competition over land. This would increase dependence on those involved in agriculture who would be able to meet demands of a growing population through the employment of technology. In turn, the industrial proletariat that are responsible for producing such technology stand to benefit from the increased demand, which contributes to higher incomes and an enhancement of their creative potential. According to Hannigan, this constituted an erroneous interpretation of Darwin's biological theory of evolution since competition through specialisation is a strategy used to trump a rival rather than obtain mutual co-evolution, as Durkheim suggests. The reason for this misinterpretation, according to Hannigan, was that the field of ecology did not exist by then and was far from the consciousness of intellectual reasoning at the time.[25] For example, Durkheim would have realised that supposedly symbiotic relations, even in nature, are not always mutually beneficial; sometimes, they benefit one more than the other or leave it unharmed (commensalism). Furthermore, Durkheim would not have foreseen the multiple centres of power amongst labour that would invoke antagonism rather than solidarity between them; the so-called return to a "natural balance" or homeostasis that informed Parsonian logic has subsequently been knocked out of kilter with the evolution of the market system.

Once again Hannigan, like Foster, in attempting to demonstrate an ecological essence in Durkheim's work, reproduced the exclusion of alternative non-western and non-scientific ways of understanding ecology. Hannigan failed to recognise that alternate discourses of ecology assume a more egalitarian, spiritualistic, and ethical approach to rationalising human-nature relations. The reason for the oversight is not because the idea of ecology was not fully developed. The problem is that it was centred on a biological conception of the interrelationship of entities in the natural environment (including humans) that was anthropocentric. In other words, it subscribed to a hierarchical conception of value across and within the spectrum of living organisms and other inanimate objects in nature. Anthropocentricism is intrinsic to western-scientific paradigms because it is rooted in the idea that human rationality prevails over the material world. This paradoxically coincides with a conservative interpretation of Judeo-Christianity that promoted human domination over nature, which conveniently ignores the ethical caveat emphasising human stewardship that is ironically endemic to these belief systems. Approaches within environmental philosophy that challenge traditional scientific interpretations of ecology and which try to re-spiritualise and re-sacralise nature, subscribe to the logic of Cartesian duality, which reinforces anthropocentrism. Nature is simply reduced to bits of dead matter that humans – the superior rational and spiritual beings – manipulate to suit their own ends. This dominant mode of thinking underpins the Promethean ethic espoused by advocates of ecological modernisation who argue that

[25] This claim by Hannigan is problematic, as Ernst Haeckel – a German zoologist – had presented ideas on ecology in terms of ontogeny recapitulating phylogeny where individuals (ontogeny) are biologically connected in a repeated cycle to ancestral communities (phylogeny) that itself emerged from a single cell. Interdependence between humans, other living organisms and the surrounding environment demonstrated that humans are of, and in nature, rather than separate from it. This was published in a text entitled, *Anthropogeny: Or, the Evolutionary History of Man* in 1874 almost twenty years before Durkheim's *The Division of Labour in Society* where the idea of "organic solidarity" was introduced.

the ecological crisis can only be remedied within the existing scientific, technocratic, and capitalist order (Kirkman, 1997: 194).

The fact that human needs are seen as distinct from, and as taking precedence over, the needs of other sentient and non-sentient organisms, is not only unsustainable but makes little sense in terms of interdependency. For example, the need of an urbanised modern upper-class person living in London to breathe clean air cannot be valued in isolation from the need of a poison dart frog to subsist in a biosphere within the larger Amazonian rainforest ecosystem. And, neither can the protection of the Amazonian rainforest be understood separately from the needs of the indigenous people that not only inhabit and depend on it for their material survival but also their cultural, social and spiritual existence. Since trees in the Amazonian rainforest produce 20% of world's oxygen, their preservation is necessary not just to organisms directly dependent on this ecosystem, but to every living organism on earth. In this interconnected web of life, Durkheim's idea of an organic solidarity, not just within and between social groups but also the natural world, appears more viable. Hannigan did acknowledge that Durkheim could possibly have been alive to such an interpretation had he been privy to modern ideas around ecology. More crucially, Hannigan overlooked one key aspect in his criticism of Durkheim. Although Hannigan rightly pointed out that Durkheim did not foresee how power differences between people would compromise solidarity between them, he failed to adequately qualify the terms of such differences, as well as its form, nature and trajectory. Like most social theorists, Hannigan did not fully engage the question of *ontological* difference and how this determines how human society has come to see itself in relation to one another and the implications of how we see ourselves in relation to the natural world. A more nuanced investigation would reveal that the term "ecology" is a product of a scientific tradition that, whilst attempting to demonstrate the interdependence between humans and the natural world, still advanced an idea of hierarchy that was intrinsic since its inception. For example, though Ernst Haeckel – the German zoologist credited with coining the concept ecology – identified interdependency as its core pillar; he subscribed to an idea of racial difference without seeing how this could break the chain of interdependency. On one hand, Haeckel, in *The Riddle of the Universe* (1905), advances a kind of egalitarianism emphasising the problem of the Anthropos ego, which fails to see the miniscule place humans occupy in the cosmos:

> … as our mother earth is a mere speck in the sunbeam in the illimitable universe, so man himself is but a tiny grain of protoplasm in the perishable framework of organic nature…. It not only clearly indicates the true place of man in nature, but it dissipates the prevalent illusion of man's supreme importance, and the arrogance with which he sets himself apart from the illimitable universe, and exalts himself to the position of its most valuable element (Haeckel, 1905: 14-15).

On the other hand, whilst Haeckel recognises that humans are superior to nature (animals in particular) due to the former's capacity for reason, he made the revolutionary claim that, in terms of ontological constitution, they are indistinguishable:

> For man is not distinguished from them [the animals] by a special *kind* of soul, or by any peculiar and exclusive psychic function, but only by a higher *degree* of psychic activity, a superior stage of development (Haeckel, 1905: 201).

Although the above quotes open vistas for a range of debates within environmental philosophy, some of which have already been touched on and others still to be explored, Haeckel, in *The History of Creation Volume 2* (1880) did not see natives as "human" enough and, therefore, capable of conceptualising their own and humanity's place in the larger universe; let alone offering viable ideas on living with, managing, and protecting the natural world:

> Now, if instituting comparisons in both directions, we place the lowest and most ape-like men (the Austral Negroes, Bushmen, and Andamans, etc.), on the one hand, together with the most highly developed animals, for instance, with apes, dogs, and elephants, and on the other hand, with the most highly developed men—Aristotle, Newton, Spinoza, Kant, Lamarck, or Goethe—we can then no longer consider the assertion, that the mental life of the higher mammals has gradually developed up to that of man, as in any way exaggerated. If one must draw a sharp boundary between them, it has to be drawn between the most highly developed and civilized man on the one hand, and the rudest savages on the other, and the latter have to be classed with the animals (Haeckel, 1880: 366).

Interdependence, as indicated in the earlier hypothetical example, does not only imply a recognition of the congruence of human needs across cultural, spiritual, developmental, national, gender and economic differences, or the fact that this is unified in the protection of nature beyond our immediate domains; rather, it also requires a mutual recognition between people. Solidarity between the London urbanite and the Amazonian tribes unified by the protection of a natural space that is mutually beneficial for our survival in Hegelian recognitive terms (as a material object), is insufficient. To develop a respect for the Amazon forest, there must be a willingness to recognise the value and role that Amazonian people have played in the propagation and survival of this ecosystem. For this to be possible, they also have to be seen as human. The long-established view that others simply subsisted and interacted at a very basic level with other organisms since they were like animals, as Haeckel alludes, eliminates the possibility that native peoples have, in some way, played a positive and active role in shaping the natural world. And not because they were unburdened by progress, but that they possessed more intimate knowledge and respect for nature from which the rest of humanity can learn.

The Epistemic Divide: Western Science and the Power of Indigenous Myth

Gathering and documenting information about natural things (non-human) was a key feature of the colonial enterprise. Empires funded explorations into the New World in anticipation that they would "discover" exotic flora and fauna. The main purpose of the epistemic project was two-fold. The first was to find precious commodities and identify hidden properties of natural biota that could contribute to advancing imperial commercial interests. The second, which was less explicit but equally significant, was to consolidate western science's monopoly and epistemic authority in articulating the "natural" that denied non-Europeans ecological historicity. It is the latter phenomenon that will be explored below.

Non-Europeans were considered passive participants (rather than participant-observers) that were part of the *wilderness* subjected to random natural processes and interacting with other creatures and biomes at a survivalist level. This reading has both structural and agential implications. In terms of the structural dimension, non-Europeans were not rational observers of nature capable of producing veridical knowledge about the natural world. The agential dimension infers that indigenous knowledge had no practical use-value when it came to manipulating landscapes for the benefit of ecological sustainability (human benefit and conservation of unique biomes). Given the expansiveness of these dimensions, the veracity of each will be explored in separate sections.

In addressing the first dimension (i.e., structural), this section speaks directly to how non-western indigenous folklore was firmly placed in the lower echelons of the hierarchy of knowledge. Western science, on the other hand, was portrayed as a relatively more veritable source of knowledge. This was not only because it was produced by bona fide knowledge producers, but by virtue of a major canonical shift that was taking place during European colonisation. For the longest time, folklore was endemic to knowledge produced by European naturalists of the likes of Ulisse Aldrovandi and was, therefore, itself devoid of objective truth value based on astute first-hand observation and applied research (i.e., employing quantitative methods and theories to calculate population sizes, age and distribution and determine dietary preferences and behaviour etc.). As Foucault (2002) portends, signs and symbols were very much part of things in themselves up until the mid-seventeenth century when significant scientific breakthroughs resulted in the purging of myth from the discourse on nature. What came before this period of "purification" was simply natural history and not the natural sciences. With the advent of this revolution, western scientific episteme was imbued with the language of fact without fiction. Knowledge about the natural world had to be informed by the two primary dimensions of first-hand observation and document (written) to obtain scientific validity. The superiority of the natural sciences over myth as a universal mode of knowledge resulted in two assumptions: i) that before scientific discovery there were no truths about nature just unproven beliefs and, ii) that scientific language was purged of fable, insinuating that discourse (subjective meaning) was no longer attached to natural things. Both assumptions emanate from Foucault's claim that, before the emergence of the biological sciences, "life itself did not exist" just a "grid of knowledge constituted by natural history". It stands to reason that living things, especially in New World ecologies, would not have "existed" before the biological sciences were established. This is certainly far from the truth. Not only did life exist within these environments, but the indigenous mythology as the dominant mode of representing the natural proved profoundly accurate.

Pacific Northwest cultures of America, such as the Tlingit and Haida, have legends about the killer whale – their totem animal – which indicate that they were rational observers of nature. Closer scrutiny of these indigenous myths, as will be demonstrated below, produced fascinating insights about the killer whale across two planes of knowledge: i) knowledge about the species itself, and its disposition, resemblances and relationship with humans and, ii) similitudes with other creatures in different biomes.

The Tlingit legend of Natsilane – an origin story of the "Blackfish" – provided insight into the natural disposition of the animal and its relationship with humans, as well as its anthropomorphic proximities. Natsilane was a sea lion hunter and carver, who was abandoned on a hunt by his brothers-in law because they were jealous of his success.[26] Whilst alone and sullen, he was awoken by a sea lion that looked like a man calling his name. He was taken into the underwater kingdom of the sea lions where he was asked by the chief of sea lions to remove a broken spear tip embedded in the body of his son, which Natsilane did. In gratitude, the chief of sea lions bestowed on Natsilane even greater skills, arranged for his return to the village to be reconciled with his wife and made a promise to assist him in his time of need. As an act of vengeance, Natsilane carved a large blackfish from yellow cedar that came to life as he launched it out to sea. He instructed it to seek and destroy the boat his brothers-in law where in and drown them but spare the youngest. The blackfish executed Natsilane's wish. After this, a blackfish with teeth was seen near the shore leaving seals and fish for the villagers and was instructed by Natsilane never to harm humans again; only to help them. While there are multiple interpretations of the legend of Natsilane, a brief foray into modern scientific research exploring the behaviour of killer whales (orcas) reveals the amazing insight of the Tlingit.

Until the middle of the last century, the discourse around killer whales (orcas) was heavily influenced by the random encounters of European expeditionists and whalers. In his popular book containing a journal of his experiences travelling with Robert F. Scott's expedition to Antarctica, Hebert G. Ponting recounted occasions when his compatriots and dog sledge teams were stalked and relentlessly pursued by hungry killer whales (Pitman, 2011). Working in unison, they broke through thickets of sea ice and created waves to wash them into the sea where they could be devoured. Ponting (2013: n.p.) articulated the primal fear he felt in these moments; "I seemed to visualise the two hundred fathoms of water below me, infested with those devils, and wondered how long it would take the sledge to drag me to the bottom. Would I drown, or would an Orca snap me up before I got there?" Whilst Ponting included other significant insights, such as the fact that the orcas mistakenly confused the bark of the sledge team dogs for that of seals – its major prey – his projection of orcas being cunning blood-thirsty killers is more myth than fact. This interpretation of killer whales as leviathans that would use their intelligence to actively hunt, kill, and consume humans, is consistent with popular western tales, such as *Moby Dick.*

Other accounts by whalers reflect a similar motif lamenting how killer whales often mauled, stole, and ate harpooned whales alive, as they were towed into shore. Such pejorative conceptions of the killer whale, as enemies of humans whether as man-eaters or brutish pests threatening human enterprise, were attached to the animal itself. In 1964, scientists had an encounter with a killer whale along the Pacific Northwest coast of America – ironically in Tlingit territory – that changed this image. The capturing of the juvenile killer whale that was corralled in a floating net pen for observation and public display would mark a seminal moment for modern science. Much to the surprise of the ordinary public and scientists alike, they found the creature to be "gentle, inquisitive and cooperative" (Ford, 2011: 16) – attributes one would not commonly associate with a wild predator. This led to scientists naming the animal "Moby Doll" in contradistinction to "Moby Dick". From the Tlingit legend, after the blackfish had tipped over the boat and drowned Natsilane's brothers as vengeance, he had instructed the creature never to harm humans again. Not

[26] From the First People of America and Canada website. *Natsilane: A Tlingit Legend*. Available at: https://www.firstpeople.us/FP-Html-Legends/Natsilane-Tlingit.html (Accessed on 15 May 2017).

only is this consistent with the calm and affable disposition displayed by Moby Doll, but it eliminates the unwarranted fear instilled by popular western myths about killer whales, in general. This is further corroborated by the fact that there have been no known human fatalities caused by killer whales in the wild except minor injuries incurred during rare cases of mistaken identity. In other words, once identified, a killer whale never actively hunted humans for food or game.

Scientific “discoveries” affirming the orca’s affable nature and vast capabilities led to it becoming a star feature of marine menageries like Sea World. Sacrificing the freedom of a few captive killer whales in order to transform public attitudes for the benefit of conservation of the species seemed viable. However, recent cases of captive killer whales purposefully drowning and killing their trainers mark a return to its darker representation. As recent documentaries, such as “Blackfish” (2013) which tells the story of the captive orca, Tilikum, these animals share more in common with humans than domesticated pets. Like humans, they are gregarious, intelligent and specialised animals that depend on constant interaction and communication with their own kin. Isolation, routine and break from culture (such as what diet they are fed), is extremely traumatic. Being held captive and denied the basic freedom of living the life a killer whale is intended to live, as is the case with human-beings, is bound to manifest in some form of neurosis resulting in erratic bouts of violent and irrational behaviour. This further illustrates that anthropocentrism is intrinsic to the modern scientific episteme. The scientific discovery of anthropomorphic proximities of the killer whale was a justificatory basis for taming this wild animal rather than extending mutual recognition.

Tlingit and Haida communities, on the other hand, take these proximities to view the killer whale as equals. Through observation, they were able to identify clear resemblances between themselves and orcas. For example, Tlingit and Haida, like orcas are matrilineal with each family relying on a matriarch to transfer skills, knowledge and wisdom to younger generations. A killer whale matriarch was observed training her calves on how to hunt seals. Seal pups were used to demonstrate the process of capture and were tossed around with the slap of the tale to disorientate it, which reduces the risk of injuring and being injured by the distraught prey. After this exercise, the matriarch gently marshalled the seal pup to shore using her beak. This behaviour can be construed as an act of sustainability – not consuming more than what is needed. The matriarch was therefore not just teaching her young how to master the hunt, which involves learning to evaluate sensitive environmental conditions and niche areas that could be beneficial to them and techniques of disabling prey items that could potentially be dangerous. This was a lesson on the ethics of hunting that is reflected in the Tlingit legend. Killer whales, like Natsilane, were seal hunters with a specialised skill who are constantly mastering their craft. Although Natsilane was saved by the chief of the seals, he, together with the killer whale, was not banished from hunting seals. The act of getting Natsilane to remove the spear tip he had projected into the seal (the son of the chief of seals), was to recognise the significance of not harming without purpose and to establish a respect for the animal on which one depends. Affording the killer whale kinship status (“subject”) opened the possibility of learning from other creatures about a shared reality rather than nature and its constituent elements simply being a part of human experience.

It is only within the last couple of decades that scientists have come to discover that killer whales are even closer to humans than originally thought. They share more with us than just a congenial attitude (temperament) and basic intellectual competencies in an artificial Pavlovian setting of stimulus-response whereby the prime motivation for the animal to comply by mimicking human action or reacting to affection is to satisfy the fundamental desire for food. Orcas are complex animals with specially defined dietary preferences, hunting strategies, and modes of communication. Anthropomorphic references to the orca have recently been included in the lexicon of modern science. Marine biologists now refer to killer whale pods as “cultures” with distinct lifeways. Certain behavioural traits have also been labelled in human terms. For example, orcas exclude individuals or groups that do not belong to their own community, which is referred to as “xenophobia”. They also communicate using clicks, whistles, squeaks, shrills, and bodily gestures that are entirely unique to individual pods, and that scientists call “language dialects” (Barret-Lennard, 2011: 49).

Tlingit and Haida folklore do not only provide insight into the relationship between the killer whale and humans and knowledge of the thing, but how it fits into a larger complex ecology. They viewed the killer whale as a fellow hunter co-existing and relying on the same resources in a larger ecosystem. This was reflected in the actual naming (or classification) of natural organisms. For example, the Haida referred to killer whales as “wolves of the sea”. Amidst the myriad of stories about the killer whale in Haida culture is that it is a descendent of coastal wolves. As Zodiac Skipper Laas (2021),[27] a naturalist and female Haida, narrates, a man once had two wolf pups and, as they continued to grow bigger and bigger, they would swim out to sea to hunt whales, which they would regularly bring back for dinner. One day a heavy fog rolled in and they were lost at sea and eventually turned into killer whales. Another story is that killer whales turn into wolves in the winter months and wolves become killer whales in summer.

The Haida were able to identify nuanced similarities between both species and the connection of the distinct biomes in which they lived that is as deep as it is wide. They had long established that wolves and killer whales are both astute pack hunters that operate within clearly defined social structures working in unison to devise and execute sophisticated and unique hunting strategies to bring down various prey items. What was most profound is that there are embedded meanings in indigenous myths and language, which give an indication that tribes, like the Haida, witnessed rare characteristics of both species that revealed their fluidity (and adaptability) across marine and land biomes. The belief that wolves turn into killer whales in the summer is consistent with the fact that they also employ a coordinated hunting strategy based on clear division of functions determined by age and skillset. Less experienced and juvenile whales scare and herd young seals towards an embanked area of the shoreline before an experienced whale (mainly a matriarch) beaches and then drags the pup to open water in order to make the kill. This only takes place between August and September when the pups are fully weaned and getting ready to venture out to sea to fend for themselves (Baird, 2011: 55). Such behaviour among Pacific Northwest transient Biggs Killer Whales that primarily hunt marine mammals (viz., whales, pinnipeds, dolphins, sea birds etc.) was

[27] Killer Whales and Haida Culture. Springtide Whale Watching Eco-Tours. Published on 2 February 2021. https://www.victoriawhalewatching.com/killer-whales-and-haida-culture/ (Accessed on 02 April 2021).

first observed and formally documented by scientists as recently as 1981. Anecdotal evidence captured in reported sightings by fishery officers and marine scientists suggests that killer whales opportunistically prey on land mammals like moose and caribou crossing rivers and lakes closer to land biomes (viz., coastal forests and woodlands). These also happen to be popular prey items of inland grey wolf populations that used to hunt in these areas during winter months before their numbers dropped significantly.

Extensive marine research indicates that transients migrate over vast ocean expanses and are never domiciled in an area for a long period of time like their cousins the resident orcas, which primarily prey on fish. In fact, they are known to frequent different regions along the Pacific coast at specific times (seasons) of the year to exploit an abundance of different prey items. This is consistent with Haida folklore: "wolves being lost at sea when the fog settled", is synonymous with the arrival of winter when transient killer whales, having hunted seal pups on the shoreline during the summer months, would go off-shore in search of other prey.[28] Clear links can also be drawn to wolves that inhabit the Pacific Northwest coast of America. It was only towards the middle of the twentieth century that the famed naturalist, Edward Alphonso Goldman, identified wolves occupying this coastline as a distinct sub-species of grey wolves. Coastal wolves' (aka British Columbia sea wolf) possess certain idiosyncrasies in terms of their behaviour and diet. They are exceptional swimmers and spend considerable time in the ocean, and their food sources are almost exclusively marine-based (Merrill, 2021). Like transient orcas, they actively hunt seals along the shoreline and scavenge on beached whale carcasses. In terms of diet and behaviour, the coastal wolf has more in common with the killer whale than it does with its cousin the inland grey wolf. Even though studies on convergent evolution analysing correlations in mammalian taxa across aquatic and terrestrial species proves that the killer whale, at a molecular level, is more closely related to the cow than the wolf (Foote et al., 2015: 273), these facts are abstracted from human experience. While the scientific evidence is irrefutable, illustrating the genomic linkages between species that did not exist in the same space and time, it does not reveal interesting facts and insights into unique ecosystems. The Haida lived among and observed killer whales and coastal wolves in the Pacific Northwest for close to 20,000 years whereas cattle were only introduced by European settlers to the region in the late 19th century.

The Haida origin story of the killer whale being the "wolves of the sea" in the context of this complex ecosystem at the interstice of land and marine biomes demonstrates the importance of holistic thinking. If western scientists were able to work more closely with the Tlingit and Haida and embrace their myths, not with the view of proving or disproving this alternate knowledge but a willingness to learn from it, they would have arrived at key discoveries of the different species and ecosystem much sooner. Juxtaposing and cross-referencing scientific research on orcas and Tlingit and Haida myth demonstrates that there is more to gain by bringing these epistemes together to establish an ecological consciousness than keeping them apart. However, breaking the barrier between different modes of knowledge is just one dimension. The other is the overemphasis on specialisation within the natural sciences itself. Marine biologists studying orcas will less than

[28] From the First People of America and Canada website. *Wolf and the Sea: A Haida Legend*. Available at: https://www.firstpeople.us/FP-Html-Legends/WolfandtheSea-Haida.html#:~:text=Once%20a%20man%20found%20two,and%20it%20began%20to%20spoil.

likely be interested in engaging a wildlife biologist focusing on coastal wolves or an ichthyologist studying Pacific salmon or a pedologist exploring soil quality in woodland forests along the river system, yet all these elements are deeply interconnected in this ecosystem. Disciplinary fragmentation in the natural sciences creates boundaries that do not exist in nature. The partitioning of knowledge was congruent with the separation of animal life histories and related natural processes from ecology. Researching biota as individual entities, rather than in a context of a larger dynamic ecology, places limits on knowledge. To obtain a deeper understanding of Pacific Northwest killer whales, one must also learn about coastal wolves, as well as the common creatures and biomes on which they both depend for their survival.

The truth-value of indigenous myth when it comes to the life history, ecology and behaviour of the killer whale in the Pacific Northwest coast, highlights the major flaws in Foucault's argument that fact must be separated from fiction in order to produce veridical scientific knowledge. Scientific knowledge about non-European biota was being produced by scientists whose experience of these ecologies was very limited compared to indigenous communities whose collective experiences date back generations. In fact, arguably, even a lifetime of scientific work could not shed enough insight into the workings of these unique networks of life. Therefore, much of the scientific knowledge about orcas was ironically shaped by western folktale until their recent "discoveries" eventually debunked them. Foucault (2002: 140) places value on observation and document as the distinguishing elements of scientific knowledge making. However, he does not acknowledge that fable, especially in non-western civilisations, was primarily a mode of articulating the observed (the real) that was embellished with deeper spiritual and ethical meaning. It was, therefore, not abstracted from reality or based on a single fleeting experience of an ecological outsider, nor was it imposing a metaphysical meaning onto a physical reality that people did not encounter first-hand. Ironically, these characteristics are inherent to western scientific episteme. The main reason for this is that Greco-Roman mythology, which is a universal referent for classifying nature, continues to be embedded in the actual meaning of things. For example, in the case of the killer whale, its scientific name (in terms of classification) according to genus and species is *Orcinus orca*. Orcinus means of Orcus, who was the Roman God of the underworld eponymous with the Greek God Hades, who went around spreading misery, punishing evildoers that broke promises and oaths. Orca is the Latin term referring to the shape of the belly or cask of a whale and is synonymous with that genus of animal even though we now know that the killer whale belongs to the family of dolphins (Delphinidae). Combined, these scientific terms infer that the orca is a whale killer[29], which proved only partially true for transient sub-species that specialise in hunting sea mammals, but not residents that feed exclusively on fish. The initial name was based on the experiences of whalers. Even though scientists changed its conventional name to "killer whale" to correct this parochialism, we discovered that it is more than just an efficient killer. Since a name evokes meaning, inherent limitations in the name disfigure and place constraints on how we come the know, understand, and relate to the thing itself. As alluded to in the previous chapter, invoking Fanon, to use a language is not only to embody the culture of an entire civilisation, but,

[29] Information about the killer whale taxonomy and mythology was obtained from *The MarineBio Conservation Society* webpage on "Orcas (Killer Whales), *Orcinus orca*". Available at: https://www.marinebio.org/species/orcas-killer-whales/orcinus-orca/ (Accessed on 10 March 2017)

in this instance, also an ecology (Molosiwa, 2016). The fact that Latin continues to be the universal language for naming things beyond the geography of Western Europe and remnants of Greco-Roman mythology continue to imbue them with meaning, is problematic. Firstly, it constitutes a dismissal of non-western indigenous peoples as documenters of nature and, secondly, it erases the uniqueness of non-European ecologies.

Another aspect to Foucault's claim about the purification of scientific knowledge from myth was that technological inventions such as the microscope made visible the invisible. The assumption being that before this "discovery" we did not have a clear understanding of natural organisms at a cellular level. Based on what was experienced at the point of consumption, certain signs and values were associated with these things. In other words, people did not possess full knowledge (i.e., an understanding of molecular processes and chemical constitution) of things. Whilst this is true, it discounts the significance of trial and error, knowledge handed down through generations and what humans learned by observing the behaviour of other animals. Key to living off and from nature was understanding the multiple uses of organisms within an ecosystem in order to optimise their chances of survival and ensure a meaningful existence. Precolonial non-European societies did not have to identify the specific chemical molecule endemic to an organism that was responsible for producing a desired health or spiritual property for it to have value. Long before Dr David Livingstone and other European expeditionists eponymously named the acacia trees, that abundantly propagated riverbanks and swamplands of Eastern and Southern Africa, the yellow fever tree, wrongfully associating it as a cause of the dreaded tropical disease, indigenous African communities were harvesting the bark in order to treat malaria and other fevers. Ironically, Dr Livingstone pinned his hopes on supplies of quinine harvested from the Peruvian *Cinchona* c*alisaya* plant exported by Spanish colonists in South America to treat ailing personnel (Barret and Giordani, 2017: 1655). Yet, a local source of the prophylaxis was readily available in the very same ecosystem that bred the parasite-bearing mosquito vectors.

Endemic to the early evolution of the biological sciences, which the likes of David Livingstone embodied and Foucault argues set it on a path of objective fact finding and truth producing, was an attitude of scepticism. Insinuating that certain plants had healing properties without "knowing" exactly what it contained that was useful in treating certain human ailments, except the thing as it appears in its crudest form, could lead to the production of false knowledge. Since indigenous knowledge was based on myth, it did not fall within the ambit of an authentic source of knowledge. The fact that many native myths about the animals, plants and ecosystems they resided among, and interacted with are proven to be true without being able to "see the invisible", challenges the monopoly that western science has over truth. Advancements in scientific knowledge have brought humans closer to nature, but, as Heidegger alluded, it has increased the "distance" between them. Why, if indigenous myths around nature are able to communicate meaning (language) that better captures the essence of this relationship, are they not foundational to scientific knowledge? To advocate a discourse on nature conducive to invoking a moral consciousness to value and protect it also requires a fundamental change in mainstream language – one that facilitates intercultural communication. The purpose of creating a myth of "emptiness" was to prepare an epistemic terrain for the imposition of a particular way of knowing, understanding, and, eventually, interacting with nature that created a "glass window" between *us* (humans) and *it* (nature).

Settler Conservationism and the Making of Ecological Deathscapes

The second dimension of the epistemic difference was that indigenous knowledge had limited to no practical use-value in successfully conserving and protecting nature. Following the establishment of settler colonies, many indigenous agricultural and hunting practices were construed as ecologically destructive. Settler ecological consciousnesses formed in a "home" (ecology) on the other side of the world was confronted with foreign environs that they had little knowledge and experience of, which led to adaptation in some cases, and in others, resistance. Like their predecessors, however, they also turned to western scientific paradigms to assist them in the process of acclimatisation. Depending on a scientific discourse based on a particular conception of nature would serve as a universal frame of reference to understand geographies beyond Europe's borders, which had dire consequences for local ecosystems. The source of these ecological deathscapes lay in the sustained belief that native people were ignorant and had no agency in shaping their environments. This pejorative conception culminated in a colonial conservation discourse that vilified indigenous peoples as destroyers of nature and portrayed white settlers as defenders of it (Beinart, 2000: 271). Conservation thinking was therefore informed by an authoritarian racial discourse. This constituted a reproduction of the "hubris of zero point", a particular arrogance endemic to western science, which proclaims its superiority and epistemic authority by virtue of its adherence to neutrality. Colonial scientists, upon witnessing indigenous people utilizing fire for hunting and agricultural purposes based, their judgements on scientific discourses on the use of fire and its impact on ecology from the European experience. As Stephen J. Pyne (1997: 25) argues, the use of fire by peasant communities in Europe was a heretical practice as it was seen to deplete soil nutrients and encourage desertification and species extinction.

Hence, when early European explorers came across unfamiliar ecologies and witnessed what, from their standpoint, appeared to be destructive practice, such as the use of fire, it was based on a wilful ignorance of the landscape and ecologies and, more significantly, the knowledge that indigenous people had of them. When John Croumbie Brown, the Scottish missionary and colonial botanist was assigned the task of establishing the botanical gardens in Cape Town, South Africa, he misread the unique ecology of the region and ignored the agency of the indigenous San, who frequently employed slash and burn techniques for hunting purposes in shaping this ecosystem. He implemented draconian conservation policy measures banning the use of fire by the indigenous San. Through his later research, Croumbie Brown "discovered" that the unique flora in the Cape region, the fynbos, was a fire-propagated biota that relied almost exclusively on anthropogenic fire (Grove, 1997b: 149). Contrary to the "scientific facts" disseminated throughout the empire by early European colonial botanists, scientists and naturalists that associated fire-burning practices of indigenes with desiccation in the colonies, later scientific evidence illustrated how unique biomes, such as the Cape fynbos, evolved over millennia to adapt, and, subsequently, rely on indigenous people for its survival. Indigenous "fire communities" were, therefore, agents of conservation rather than destruction. Curiously, it was the broad-based introduction of exotic plant species, such as hakea and eucalyptus, as part of the forestry conservation efforts by colonial botanists to prevent desiccation, that invaded and threatened to decimate the indigenous fynbos and not the traditional fire practices of the San (Beinart & Coates, 1995: 41).

Conservation practice in the colonies governed by an inherently racist logic was perpetuated by settler communities between the late 18th to early 19th century. In the process of establishing a national identity, settler communities, such as the Afrikaners (*trekboers*) in South Africa as part of their liberation from colonial dominance, emphasised the need to form cultural ties with the land. The demarcation of national game reserves, such as the Kruger National Park, and the implementation of draconian hunting and gathering laws under the auspices of the Afrikaner republics and, later, the apartheid regime, were used as instruments of appropriation, separating indigenous blacks ontologically from nature. Jane Carruthers (1994: 268) argues that the creation of the game reserves was essentially based on political considerations rather than an ingenuous commitment to protecting wildlife and nature. The proposed demarcation of a game reserve area under the auspices of Paul Kruger in South Eastern Transvaal in the gorge of the Pongola River containing seven small farms, at the confluence of the Swaziland, Transvaal, the New Republic and Tongaland borders, was portrayed as the primary solution to preserving diminishing wildlife; however, it served strategic interests of the Transvaal government – providing access to the sea through Tongaland – which gave them greater control over access to the territory, and the authority to evict Africans from the land (Carruthers, 1994: 268).

However, the national parks and nature conservation served an even bigger purpose as an ideologue of Afrikaner nationalism (Carruthers, 1997). Whilst Afrikaners were undergoing an "indigenisation" process forming symbolic cultural relations to the South African environment, precipitating a rich frontier and conservation history, it simultaneously led to the "disindigenisation" of black communities. Indigenous blacks were forcibly removed from designated nature reserve areas and relocated to native reserves or Bantustans as their primitive hunting and gathering and farming practices were perceived as being inimical to natural flora and fauna (Cock & Fig, 2002: 132). Besides being denied material access to certain plants and animals pivotal to their livelihoods, the memory of natural landscapes and cultural identities defined by their experiences and interactions with the natural world were also being erased. Even within the extremely limited confines of the Bantustans, the agricultural practices of blacks were often the subject of blame for soil erosion and subsequent loss of biodiversity (Beinart, 2000: 298).

In most instances, indigenous traditional animal husbandry methods, notably open veld (field) or rangeland grazing combined with overstocking, were cited as the primary cause of soil erosion. As Yngstrom (2003: 177-178) illustrates, "Africans were constructed as 'unscientific exploiters' with a poor understanding of the local ecology and production techniques, in contrast to colonial agricultural knowledge generated from its own modern 'scientific' research base". Agricultural practices following the normal European farming model forcefully implemented through Betterment schemes in the 1930s, such as straight-line cropping, was meant to protect indigenous flora from the perceivably pejorative mound-cropping and shifting agricultural techniques of black farmers. However, scientific research conducted at the time proved that traditional methods of farming using fire as a catalyst for soil rejuvenation was far more effective than straight-line agricultural methods relying on the application of organic and chemical fertilisers (Tilley, 2003: 120). White administrative officers managing the Native Reserves or Bantustans failed to acknowledge the impact that policies ensuing from legislation, such as the Native Lands Act of 1913 and 1936, that were implemented in South Africa, had in contributing to environmental degradation (Beinart & Coates 1995: 66). Prior to European colonisation and the imposition of land as private property based on European legal convention contrary to the indigenous understanding of land as commons, there was an abundance of grazing land available for African pastoralists, such as the Khoisan, to exploit. Open veld or rangeland grazing techniques employed by indigenous pastoral communities in a context where land was sparsely populated and could support large herds of livestock, promoted conservation of landscape and sensitive ecologies. The constant movement of cattle over vast areas ensured that land was never overgrazed, and that indigenous flora recovered quickly. In fact, this technique assisted the propagation of biota rather than contributed to the denudation of the landscape (Beinart, 2000: 279).

Interestingly, agricultural scientists that undertook their own research in native reserves often found scientific evidence indicating the superior effectiveness and ecological relevance of indigenous agricultural practices compared to modern scientific techniques which, in certain instances, led some colonial scientists to question the wilful ignorance of modern science in recognising indigenous people as primary authentic knowledge producers. H.R. Hosking, a botanist in Uganda's Department of Agriculture, stated that "the question of improving native food crops is beset with difficulties. With long established crops it is probably true to say that the native can teach us more than we can teach him" (cited in Tilley, 2003: 116).

Sustainable Development and the Non-Ethics of Ecological Justice

The Euro-American viewpoint continues to dominate global discourses on the environment and human development. International multilateral frameworks, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and institutions, like the World Bank (WB) and Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), remain steadfast in pushing an agenda of sustainable development as the only viable strategy to mitigate the threat of climate change. This despite overwhelming evidence suggesting to the contrary that economic and technological interventions have done the opposite of what they have claimed. Finding solutions within the established capitalist order and logic of modernity has proved to be counterintuitive rather than visionary in achieving planetary justice. Asymmetries of power in the formulation and application of international law and its non-binding nature, foments exceptionalism as dominant state actors repeatedly refuse to commit to global carbon emission targets and standards.

The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) outlined in Article 12 of the Kyoto Protocol – an extension of the UNFCCC – that came into operation in 2006, introduced market-oriented carbon sequestration strategies such as "cap and trade". This incentivisation system to reduce pollution, allowed for the distribution of carbon credits to polluters based on historical production levels that were above the newly implemented carbon emissions "cap". Companies whose carbon production was below or that met the established emissions ceiling could trade their remaining credits to other industries. The value (price) of carbon credits was determined by fluctuations in the market that was a lucrative means for capitalisation. High-polluting monopoly industries, such as energy corporations, automobile manufacturers and agri-businesses, jumped onto the "green" bandwagon by moving to renewable energy sources and producing eco-friendly alternatives. The greening of industries in the Global North drove up the value of carbon credits, which they "sold off" to carbon intensive industries (many of which were their subsidiary companies) located in the Global South. More carbon credits meant that polluting industries could expand production, increasing Green House Gases (GHG) in the process. Instead of capping the carbon emissions ceiling, the credit system contributed to breaking it. The ecological debt produced by cap and trade was therefore transferred onto workers and communities in the developing world that are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. As a result, “cap and trade” turned out to be a “dirty” rather than a clean development mechanism.

Additional carbon credit incentives such as the creation of “carbon sinks” – promoting afforestation without making a clear distinction between indigenous slow-growth forests and plantations – enabled these companies to capitalise on producing monocultures for biofuels and other commercial food crops, like palm oil. Carbon sinks resulted in massive displacement of vulnerable communities, clearing of vast expanses of natural forested land rich in biodiversity, and exploitation and pollution of scarce resources, including water and arable soil.

Ecological modernisation strategies advanced by global development institutions, such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and World Bank (WB), however, did not fare any differently to its market-based counterparts promulgated by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The gene revolution in the last decade of the twentieth century ushered a promise of a new dawn in agricultural production (Witt, 2010: 300-301). It was touted as the “second wave” of the green revolution that was implemented five decades earlier, but a new and improved version. Advocates of the gene revolution, such as philanthropist, Bill Gates, zealously stated that the gene revolution provided a sustainable alternative to its progenitor (Schnurr, 2019: 4). The first green revolution marked an initial shift towards agricultural modernisation promoting heavy mechanisation, monoculture, the use of chemical pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers, and the use of hybridised drought resistant seeds that would ensure higher yields and dramatically improve the livelihoods of small-scale farmers. However, it proved to be a double bind for developing societies. As pests and weeds built greater resistances to the pesticides and herbicides, farmers had to protect their depreciating crop yields by applying a higher volume of chemicals. This ratcheted up the costs of production, eventually resulting in chronic indebtedness. On one hand, the loss of income from lower crop yields triggered by pests and disease and the unscheduled costs of chemical inputs meant that farmers had to take out more loans to purchase seed packages for the next cycle of production, whilst still paying off debt from the previous year. On the other hand, the excessive use of chemical fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides destroyed local ecosystems through poisoning of water systems and indigenous biota.

While the gene revolution was expected to have a different and better outcome, it led down the same dark road of economic dependency, death and misery. Developing countries latched onto the new hope provided by biotechnology and rolled out elaborate agricultural programmes distributing genetically modified (GM) maize and cotton seed packages produced by the agribusiness biotech corporation, Monsanto. These so-called “miracle seeds” became ubiquitous, penetrating remote rural communities, offering the guarantee of higher yields and, with it, improved livelihoods and a sustainable solution to the perennial problems of hunger, poverty and malnutrition. Genetically modified (GM) maize and cotton seeds were designed to contain Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) gene

– a natural pesticide – that would serve as an effective measure of pest and disease control, thereby lowering the economic and ecological costs of chemical intensive high-input agriculture associated with the green revolution. In practice, however, Bt crops proved to have the opposite effect. As natural pests developed stronger immunity to Bt*,* they mutated into "superbugs", which resulted in more frequent and destructive infestations (Witt et al., 2006). Contradictorily, Monsanto prescribed the use of chemical insecticides to minimise extensive crop losses caused by the pink bollworm (*Pectinophora gossypiella*) that decimated Bt cotton crops in Andhra Pradesh and the African stem borer (*Busseola fusca*) that affected Bt maize production in South Africa. The increase in input costs triggered financial indebtedness that was compounded by the presence of "terminator seed technology" that was integrated into Bt crops. By muting the reproductive capability of the plant, thus rendering GM crops sterile, Monsanto was able to create a state of dependency. Whereas farmers historically propagated, collected, and stored seeds for future cycles of production, the terminator technology took away their control over household reproduction of capital (Chataway et al., 2000). Furthermore, GM Bt seeds were transgenic, which meant that they could transfer their inherent properties to other plants through a natural process of cross-pollination. Once the terminator technology spread to traditional crop varieties (strains), farmers had no recourse to subsistence agriculture, which had a drastic impact on food security and food sovereignty. Farmers were therefore caught up in a trap of chronic indebtedness. They had to pay loans taken to offset financial losses caused by low yields, while taking new ones to finance the purchase of GM Bt seeds in order to continue production: there was no way out, at least within the existing agricultural and financial system. Chronic indebtedness precipitated by failed biotechnology resulted in a worrying rate of farmer suicides across India (Tokar, 2001).

In addition to economic and social costs, GM Bt also had profound ecological and cultural costs. Indigenous farmers created these strains over generations through trial and error and astute observation of natural environments. They carefully and purposefully selected for characteristics that were not only desirable in terms of productivity, but ecologically relevant. Traditional crops were designed to withstand unique soil conditions, specific pests, drought and floods: they were climate adaptable. Before the green revolution delineated farming in the developing world by creating a dependence on outside sources for capital inputs, such as pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers, traditional agricultural production functioned within a "closed-system". Indigenous farmers looked for local solutions and resources that were readily available within their immediate environments. Relying on indigenous knowledge passed down through generations, they produced pesticides concocted from a myriad of plant-based matter and animal by-products. They also employed natural pest management systems, such as mixed agriculture and intercropping. This involved planting a variety of crops and other plant species that possessed unique pest repellent, weed-suppressing and nutrient-fixing properties that were mutually beneficial. Indigenous crops are therefore attuned to other natural organisms within their unique biomes. As such, their seeds were an embodiment of an "ecological memory" and culture. The transfer of transgenic terminator technology from GM Bt crops to indigenous crops erased what took the interaction between communities and nature millennia to produce (McNeely & Scherr, 2002).

Besides erasing cultural and ecological memory, genetic engineering has also enabled agro-monopolies to assume proprietorship of traditional seeds, which are direct products of indigenous knowledges. Most items produced through the agency of indigenous knowledge are still not legally acknowledged and commercially rewarded in the global economy; except, however, for the recent landmark ruling in South Africa involving the patenting rights for rooibos tea. In 2010, Khoisan representatives wrote to government arguing that they were by law entitled to a share of the profits in the tea industry because rooibos was "discovered" through traditional knowledge of their ancestors. Rooibos is endemic to the Cederberg region, which the Khoi and San communities occupied. They harvested it for medicinal and health purposes long before European colonisation. In 2019, the rooibos tea industry was ordered to compensate these communities R12 million (US$ 799,000) – the equivalent of 1.5% of the "farm gate price" that agribusinesses pay for unprocessed rooibos (Nordling, 2019). The agreement was branded as a historic achievement and serves as an example of restorative justice for native people in cultural, epistemic, financial and legal terms. However, this case is a rarity when it comes to recognition of indigenous rights.

Biotech companies and individual scientists have capitalised exceedingly on intellectual property rights not being issued to non-western indigenous communities. In addition to manipulating the genetics of traditional crops in order to claim ownership of what is essentially a product of generations of indigenous people on the basis of their minor intervention, they have also used molecular technology to appropriate desirable properties from indigenous plants. An example of this, pertains to the patenting of rooperol – an antioxidant present in the chemical compound hypoxoside – contained in high concentrations in the African potato plant (*Hypoxis hemerocallidea*). Whilst the African potato has been used extensively by generations of Xhosa, Zulu and Khoisan to treat a host of ailments from skin conditions to diabetes and infections, it has recently been afforded even greater prominence as a frontrunner in the fight against HIV/AIDS and cancer. These African communities, however, are not credited with this "discovery". Inventor status issued on the official patent is to an entrepreneur R.W. Liebenberg and a former chemist at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, S.E. Drewes. It was only at the point that they identified ("discovered") rooperol and other useful derivatives through biochemical research that the status of the African potato shifted from being *muthi* (a magical plant with healing properties) to an actual medicine used to treat illness. In fact, the term "*muthi*" is used by Drewes (2004) himself and his co-author Khan in an article where they describe the traditional uses of the African potato by African communities. Using patents (intellectual property rights) as an instrument to "legitimise" the epistemic authority of scientific knowledge without duly recognising indigenous people (and traditional knowledge) as the original source (inventor) constitutes biopiracy. Ironically, African people belonging to these ethnic groups purchase modern healthcare products derived from the African potato, yet the royalty accrued from the discovery belongs to scientists rather than their communities. This, coupled with the fact that racially discriminatory education policy implemented during apartheid prevented the creation of a fraternity of black scientists from emerging and having the opportunity to build on ancestral knowledge, and be afforded a scientific patent, highlights the structural dynamics of misrecognition.

Consumers of GM foods are also victims of the "play God" mentality of genetic engineering. Food containing genes from different species poses serious ethical concerns in terms of potential health risks, religious and ideological beliefs. The fact that a maize plant may contain a gene of soybean or potatoes and vice versa implies that a person, who has an allergy to any of these plants, without knowledge that there is genetic cross-contamination can fall ill or even die. Similarly, a vegetarian by faith (e.g., a Hindu) or an animal rights activist eating a tomato may be surprised to discover that it contains animal genes. The violation of individual choice (and therefore freedom) is tied to the more fundamental question of whether humans have the right to alter the genetic integrity of other life forms. Genetic engineering erases and distorts the identity of entities formed through natural processes since the beginning of life itself.

Biotechnology is not just responsible for causing ontological and ecological death. In a nod to the ecocidal-genocidal colonial past, it has turned nature into an instrument of war. Whilst western (modern) science has contributed to the demise of agricultural systems, food regimes and ecologies in the Global South, it has now, paradoxically, been assigned the added task of finding "natural" solutions to national security threats. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security identified bees as a key instrument in enacting a Presidential Directive to defend local agricultural and food systems from terrorist attacks and other emergencies (Kosek, 2010: 651). After conducting intensive research into the honeybee genome, a team of geneticists, toxicologists and insect pathologists were able to identify and isolate viral strains (chemical compounds) that could possibly serve as indicators of an "environmental terror" attack. However, the department soon realised that, if honeybees were going to serve this purpose, the collapse of honeybee populations had to be placed high on its agenda. In his work, *Ecologies of Empire: On the New Uses of the Honey Bee*, Jake Kosek (2010) postulated that few researchers exploring the crisis of the collapsed state of honeybees, whatever its cause, actually situated it within historical, political and economic relationships between people and nature.

While he went on to provide an insightful exegesis of how the changing relationship between humans and bees made bees vulnerable to new threats, he inadvertently pointed to how the Occident consciously employed nature as an "instrument of war, genocide and torture". Nature became central to the perpetuation of the coloniality of power which confined the subaltern to the "hellish zone of nonbeing" where ethics, law, and rights do not apply. During the Korean War, the U.S. dropped plague infested fleas in North Korea and used mosquitoes and bees to torture the Vietcong in Vietnam. More recently in the war on terror, due to their sensory capacity, bees have assumed a more sophisticated role serving as intelligence and surveillance instruments gathering evidence on potential terror threats. Hence, they can enter spaces too dangerous for human investigation and gather evidence without being detected. Bees have been conditioned to associate food (nectar) with nuclear trace elements and their behavioural patterns have been analysed as indicators of radioactive material (ibid: 657-658). However, exposure to high levels of radiation, manipulation of their genetic structure, crop monoculture, excessive use of pesticides and diminishing biodiversity, has had a dire effect on global bee populations, which are the most essential propagators of natural ecosystems. In fact, the extinction of the honeybee is the single most profound event that would mark the death of humans. The example of the honeybee does not refer exclusively and parochially to the need for an environmental ethics to protect nature from the destructive practices of humans. Nor does it imply that we naively call for a revision of the ethical practice in war (*jus in bello*) whereby countries with superior scientific knowledge of nature should not gain an unfair advantage in war or undermine individual state sovereignty with the aid of environmental non-human agents. Or, for that matter, merely challenge the "inhumanity" of using animals as instruments of torture. Rather, it points to the discursiveness of the ecological crisis and illustrates why it is interwoven into a broader nexus of injustice and oppression of people and nature that cannot be disentangled.

Conclusion

It is clear from the above discussion that the coloniality of nature is a major cause of ecological injustices. The hegemony of the Euro-American viewpoint on human-nature relations was imbued with the mantle of being universally relevant and applicable. This resulted in the exteriorisation, erasure, and distortion of other ways of experiencing, thinking about, and relating to the natural world. More crucially, this dominant viewpoint accompanied complex interrelated processes of colonisation (and western imperialism) and capitalist modernity, which permanently altered subaltern relations with nature. The outcome was the ontological separation of humans from nature. Attempts through ecological modernisation to mitigate the dual threat of underdevelopment and ecological destruction exacerbated this condition. Rather than exploring how humans should alter their attitude with the natural world, emphasis was placed on finding rational technocratic solutions that reified the logic of mastering and controlling nature. Ironically, efforts to forge an empirical environmental ethic through conservation management became an instrument of oppression of subaltern people. The effect was that subaltern people lost their affinity for nature. It follows that the only way to resolve the ecological problem is by establishing a kind of ecological ethic that enables subaltern viewpoints to re-establish their connection to nature. In order to achieve this objective, the subaltern must first find a way of negating the negation of the western world, which denies them the status of knowledge-producers, while duplicitously appropriating traditional knowledges; thus, maintaining the separation of non-western ontology from epistemology. Secondly, a focus must be placed on creating the conditions for self-reliance by recuperating the value of lost and distorted indigenous knowledges and eco-agricultural practices that would re-locate subaltern people in nature within their own ecologies. And finally, demonstrating how these two processes can come together to create an authentically inclusive ecological ethic that recognises subaltern people and nature. The objective of Chapter Five is to demonstrate how such an ethic can be realised.

CHAPTER FIVE

Making the Decolonial Turn: Justice as Recognition in the Ecological Community

Extant recognitive justice frameworks, as demonstrated in Chapter Two, reduce claims of misrecognition of the subaltern in relation to nature to the denial of material, psychological and cultural needs. By restricting nature to an instrumental utility function in obtaining social justice for the oppressed, these frameworks fall short on three interrelated fronts (some of which were illustrated in the previous chapter). Firstly, they downplay the dynamic agency between humans and nature in pre-colonial non-European societies, which extends beyond the satisfaction of human needs. The interconnection between all organisms served a broader teleological function, which was interpreted through multiple cosmographical meanings of life. Secondly, the extent to which these relations were altered with the onset of western modernity and affected how humans subsequently interacted with nature, is ignored. Consequently, these two oversights (in terms of agency and structural historical change) limit the possibility of forging an inclusive universal mode of recognition within conventional paradigms of justice that is mutually beneficial to oppressed people and nature. Therefore, this raises the question of whether alternate analytical frameworks are available that address these limitations and do not succumb to a moral tokenism in ecological-ethical reasoning, which reproduces a strict anthropocentricism and material reductionism.

The radical tradition of environmental philosophy and ethics seemingly meets these criteria by advancing an ecological communitarianism derived from Aldo Leopold's seminal essay, "The Land Ethic" contained in his classic work, *A Sand County Almanac* (1949). Recent proponents of this ecocentric approach, such as J. Baird Callicott (2005), have expounded on core Leopoldian ideas like "how to turn the whole soul" to love and respect nature. This lofty ideal is achievable through a universal objectively oriented education that relocates humans in nature. It aims to induce an ethical sensibility and moral obligation towards other living and non-living creatures in the biosphere by employing a combined strategy. Such a strategy entails: (i) promoting more frequent physical exposure to wilderness (or settings that are more natural, and (ii) emphasising the evolutionary-ecological origins of an egalitarian ethics espousing values of sharing, nurturing, love and co-dependency that we share with primates and other pack animals, for example. Although Callicott endorses the primacy of an experiential and scientific basis for inspiring this spiritual shift ("turning the whole soul") towards a global environmental ethic, he acknowledges that this objective is esoteric. What is required is an intermediate complementary process that is more pragmatic and responsive to the contemporary political climate. According to Callicott, for Leopold's land (or environmental) ethic to be progressive, it must, in the present context, take "cultural conflicts" into consideration. The solution he proposes is that there should be a remediation of popular worldviews. such as Judeo-Christianity and Islamism.

Whilst critical introspection and reflection of popular worldviews – in general terms – represent an important aspect of this chapter, they expound upon and differ from Callicott in a subtle, yet significant manner. Evoking social ecologist Murray Bookchin's (2001: 436) visionary statement, "that nearly all our present ecological problems arise from deep-seated social problems", this chapter (and thesis), therefore, posits that the central social problem that needs resolving is coloniality. This phenomenon resulted in the Judeo-Christian/western/white/male-centric worldview on human-nature relations assuming a hegemonic (popular) status, in the first place. To undo the hierarchy between humans and nature, social hierarchies determined by a particular conception of superiority/inferiority between humans (coloniality) must also be addressed. We (humans) cannot expect to forge ethical relations with nature without resolving the moral exceptionalism that exists between ourselves, and recognising that these elements are mutually inclusive and reinforcing.

Considering the above, the objective of this chapter is to conceptualise a mode of recognition that dismantles coloniality with the view of building an ecological community where ethical relations are established among humans and between humans and nature, as co-dependent rather than independent processes. This *mode of recognition* is premised on the Fanonian method of decolonising introduced in Chapter Three, which is contrary to common misinterpretations of Fanon's work as an angry display of a dangerous racial militancy that is non-reconciliatory. It attempts to construct the world of the *You* not the *I*, *We* or *Us* – one where historical disputes and differences between peoples (the idea and practice of coloniality) does not hinder establishing a dialogic and convivial platform to resolve common issues like the ecological crisis. For us to realise this world, subalternised voices that have been exteriorised from the mainstream environmental discourse, must find just expression and meritocratic status within the lexicon of global ecological thought, conscientisation and practice. However, this must be done through their own viewpoints and on their own terms without the risk of these unique subjective relations, experiences and knowledges about nature within local ecosystems being subsumed into a universal, capitalistic and western epistemic and political framework. This could lead to a *re-colonial turn*, which entails a dilution of subaltern contributions to green innovation, a distortion of meaning and, paradoxically, can perpetuate ecological injustices under the guise of a Promethean drive to "progressive" environmental change. In order to prevent such a scenario, a set of guiding ethical principles governing social interactions in spaces and processes involving deliberation and action on ecological issues is required. As this chapter will demonstrate, pluriversality, border thinking (or gnosis) and transculturalism comprise the ideal set of principles. Centred on a decolonial love that is subversive and radical yet non-hegemonic, self-critical, humble and committed to authenticity, these ethical decolonial principles will be employed to demonstrate how a decolonial ecological future is possible.

The chapter starts by defining decolonial love, which provides the context for establishing an authentically inclusive ecology whereby multiple interpretations of human-nature relations – particularly those that have been subalternised – can coexist and flourish by learning from other experiences, spiritualties and knowledges. This includes firstly sketching the normative conditions enabling effective exchange of ideas and practices that prevent homogenizing ecologies and enforcing a hegemonic conception of a just ecological ethics. The next part of the chapter attempts to illustrate how to construct the ecological pluriverse, which is divided into two sections. Section one deals with the ontological dimension; demonstrating the importance of recovering lost memory of human-nature relations within and between subaltern cultures through transcultural dialogue across and within spatialities. It will achieve this by drawing on personal experiential knowledge and relevant ethnographic works some of which is also influenced by individual experiences.

The subsequent section focuses on the epistemic dimension advocating for the adoption of an inter-transdisciplinary and inverse approach to ecological education in more formal institutional settings. The rationale behind this education-centred approach towards recognition has an integrated dual purpose. First, it posits that the probability of turning humanity's soul (at least the vast majority) to ultimately love and care for nature is only possible if individuals as well as the social groups to which they belong can find nature embedded in their life story closely associated with visceral feelings of suffering, despair, anger, hope, success and the sublime. Unfortunately, not everyone has the privilege nor inclination to have and, necessarily, internalise a momentary existential encounter with the wilderness experienced by the likes of Aldo Leopold, John Muir or Arne Naess. This is especially true for the subaltern whose relationship with nature was permanently altered by the coloniality of nature, the darker side of western modernity. Affording nature greater animacy in the larger project of re-constructing subalternised historical and cultural narratives, increases the chances of initiating wider spiritual, attitudinal and behavioural transformation. Nature thus assumes a more prominent role in a deeper struggle for self-esteem and self-definition (recognition). This is different from approaches in environmental ethics, which rationalize certain organisms in nature possessing intrinsic or inherent worth (in terms of biological egalitarianism) separate from us (humans). Or, for that matter, arriving at its worth through a universal ecocentrism whereby humans recognise other entities in the biotic community because of their constituent teleological function in sustaining the larger system to which we (humans) are just another component. And, second, by exposing people to an inclusive episteme representative of different histories, cultures, languages and cosmographies (both subaltern and dominant), individuals and collectives would be able to identify a common ecological thread, which generates recognition across human communities and towards nature.

Defining Decolonial Love for an Ecological Community

Changing human attitudes towards nature is the key to resolving ecological injustices. Eco-philosophers have turned to biocentric (teleological life-centered) and ecocentric (natural systems oriented) approaches to develop an ultimate moral attitude and respect for nature and provide solutions on how to manage conflicts between human and non-human interests. Although these approaches take different paths to establishing an environmental ethic with biocentrism positing that all living creatures possess intrinsic value and qualify as moral subjects, and ecocentrism claiming that animate and inanimate creatures have relative value in contributing to the flourishing of the larger ecosystem, they share the same theoretical premise. Both approaches are predicated on the following scientific axioms; i) that *Homo sapiens* are a biotic community formed through random processes of natural selection and experienced species drift like any other, ii) humans are on par with other members that belong to the earth's larger community, and iii) following from the previous two theses, given the complex interconnectedness of life, humans, like other species, are dependent on other natural entities for their survival and well-being (Schrader-Frechette, 1996; Engel Jr, 2008: 302-303). To countenance the strict anthropocentrism of mainstream western philosophy and the misanthropic views of ultra-radical greens agitating for ecofascism, environmental ethics turned to elementary factors that connect humans to nature. Since humans are essentially part of a broader nexus of life – members of an ecological community – it means that we (humans) have a moral obligation to nature that is not determined by ranked anthropocentricities (sentience and rationality). Using universal scientific truths as a philosophical bedrock to generate an ultimate attitude of respect and care for nature seems the most effective route to establishing an environmental ethic. As alluded to in the previous chapter, such an approach is problematic on two interrelated fronts: i) it assumes that there is just one conception of ecology and mode of articulating the "natural" – that which is defined by western science – and ii) it fails to acknowledge that scientific discourse and associated processes of western modernity – European colonisation and capitalism – were major instruments in the process of dehumanising non-Europeans. For an environmental ethic to resonate with people whose ontological worth was reduced to the point that they were often compared with animals rather than humans and whose livelihood interests were denied in favor of environmental preservation and conservation, an alternative strategy is required; one which creates the social conditions for subaltern groups to rediscover, re-establish, and rethink their relationship with the natural world within their own localities and contribute towards constructing a universal environmental ethic that is representative of a plurality of experiences, logics, spiritualities and practices. The problem of misrecognition, however, is a major obstacle to realising this objective. Intersubjective relations are determined by a metaphysics of race that reproduces the coloniality of nature. Misrecognition continues to disrupt contemporary political life sowing social discord, hatred, and injustice that hinders humanity's ability to resolve big problems. As discussed in Chapters Two and Three, misrecognition largely stems from the subjugated experiencing feelings of exclusion, indignity, and anger brought about by coloniality. But these emotions are triggered (and often challenged) by retaliatory feelings of denialism, antipathy, and moral exceptionalism (an overall sense of superiority) on the part of those on top of the ontological hierarchy. As argued in Chapter Two, the intersubjective reality of misrecognition demands a subversion of the Hegelian recognitive dialectic of the master-slave that duplicitously maintains such a morally degenerate order. This affliction of humanity can only be broken through a special kind of love that was captured whole by Fanon (2008: 28) in *Black Skin, White Masks*:

> … the fact remains that true, authentic love – wishing for others what one postulates for oneself, when that postulation unites the permanent values of human reality – entails the mobilization of psychic drives basically freed of unconscious conflicts.

Joseph Drexler-Dreis (2019: 74) describes this uncomfortable and vexing praxis as a decolonial love whereby the "slave" asserts her/his self-worth by refusing to see and treat the "master" as s/he wishes to be seen and treated without expecting the same of the "master" (negating the negation). And the "master", is compelled to understand her/his privilege and confront her/his ignorance that contributes to feelings of the denial of respect and indignity experienced by the other. In a world built on decolonial love, recognition is no longer a dynamic condition confined to an asymmetrical power relationship between two or more self-conscious beings. The notion of "master" and "slave" does not exist in this world. Any attempt to re-calibrate this dialectic by either reducing recognition to a "slave-slave" or "master-master" intersubjective model is equally problematic. A slave-slave dialectic breeds internal dissonance with both self-consciousnesses focusing outward, which is unrealistic since it discounts the innate need to be affirmed by another. In crude terms, giving love is contingent on reciprocation: being able to receive it in equal parts.

Perhaps more problematic, is the proposition of a master-master dialectic; mainly, because it reveals the persistent presence of an outwardly destructive force, which is narcissism. The constant desire for a subject to want to be recognised in terms of how one views oneself without having to extend the same to another (irrespective of historical relations) leads to a perpetual state of paranoia and conflict. Crucially, it places limits on the moral conscience to want to be and do better, not in and of itself in terms of a Kantian categorical imperative, but for achieving a unification of an externally projected ideal with an internal conception of right. Alternatively, a dialectic centred on a decolonial love appeals to the human rather than "master" consciousness with the *self* finding itself in *other,* and *other* rooted in *self*. For this to be possible, dual "mirrors" must be "held up" that reflect outward onto another to reveal its weaknesses and prejudices, but is also reflexively inward, demanding every subject to simultaneously introspect on one's own subjective consciousness. Put differently, to arrive at this new dialectic the master must be willing to search her/himself to determine how s/he contributes to misrecognition of the slave, which perpetuates coloniality. However, this does not imply that the mirror be placed in front of the master, only. The slave also has an obligation besides revealing the master's insensitivity or deceitfulness to rediscover itself in order to examine whether s/he uses this just cause to conceal her/his own ignorance, prejudice and moral shortcomings. There is no room for the slave to wallow in a perpetual state of victimhood or assume the high seat of moral authority. Decoloniality does not advocate undoing coloniality by adopting an imperial hubris that replaces one form of domination with another. On the contrary, it places higher value on humility as instrumental in dismantling power relations.

Whilst the burden of social transformation lies heavily on the dominant subject (master) – in the long struggle for recognition – the psychological and physical demands placed on the *damnés de la terre* (the slave) are extreme. Fanon (2008: 208) posited that, when confronted with resistance (or negation) of its subjective certainty, a subjugated self-consciousness "undergoes an experience of desire", which is the "first milestone on the road that leads to the dignity of spirit". At this juncture, the self-consciousness accepts that the risking of life through physical confrontation with the other (who resists recognising her/his subjective certitude as an objective truth), is a necessary precondition to obtain freedom. Consequently, the ensuing conflict with the other represents the desire of the subjugated consciousness for something more than the expanse of bare existence. Simply having life without an affirmation of the thingness of the self (what and who one is) is insufficient for achieving universal recognition. If life for the subjugated is equivalent to an ontological death (as discussed in Chapter Three), then the desire for a fuller life is worth literally dying for. Fanon's approach to extending recognition to a subjugated self-consciousness coincides with the dominant theological approach to decolonial love since both advance an eschatological reading of recognition – achieving salvation through martyrdom (death) for a greater cause.[30] Extending respect and moral value (recognition) to living and non-living nature, apart from those that directly depend on it for their livelihood and cultural needs or suffer the disproportionate effects of its destruction, hardly registers as a "greater cause" for the majority of subjugated people that is worth "dying for". They are preoccupied with fundamental struggles for recognition: to be free of structural injustices, gaining access to basic services and securing their social status. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, there are endemic structural elements that prove to be more significant obstacles to non-Europeans embracing "green environment issues" within a broader conception of a liberatory justice beyond the satisfaction of immediate material needs. Larger processes, such as European colonisation, capitalism, and modernity, did more than reduce nature to a mere resource (commodity). It resulted in nature being separated from non-European societies' conception of self, community and the universe. Their sense of belonging to nature and role in ecology were made inferior, thus, permanently altering their perception and relationship with the natural world. Against this reality, trying to establish a moral attitude and respect based on either a biocentric (teleological life-centered) or ecocentric (natural systems oriented) approach represents a vain attempt at affording nature moral status.

What is required is an ethical approach predicated on a decolonial love that enables the "master" and the "slave" to introspect, understand and constructively engage with how their relationship with nature evolved relative to one another. And crucially, why and how it was fundamentally influenced and transformed by larger historical processes that lead to both the master and slave perpetuating ecological injustices. The following is an attempt to promulgate a basic decolonial framework for ecological ethics, which arguably creates the normative conditions at both an individual (self-reflective) and intersubjective level that has a greater potential for obtaining an all-inclusive planetary justice:

[30] Decoloniality proposes a different idea of eschatology compared to both mainstream theological interpretations of the significance of suffering and death and radical critiques of this view. It does not subscribe to the inert convention in Christian theology that justifies the telos of suffering and death as a means to get to paradise (or heaven). In other words, being a "good" Christian does not imply adopting a docile attitude of forgiveness and blind love towards one's persecutor. Rather, it requires the victim to confront and challenge the perpetrator of her/his suffering and death without losing faith in the latter's humanity and the possibility of her/him having a turn of heart and soul through constructive dialogue. Whilst this may appear similar to Marx's critique of religion as the "opiate of the masses" that prevents the oppressed from seeking justice in the material world by getting them to accept their dire fate on earth in the hope of a blissful after-life, the decolonial option does differ in key respects. For instance, living a life free of suffering where justice and fair treatment are paramount, is a corporeal experience (that is both material and spiritual). Following from this point, spirituality – contrary to Marx's critique – can inspire the subjugated to act against oppression. This alternative hermeneutic in the context of Christianity focuses on the life lived by Christ himself that culminates in the moment of his suffering and death – one that was revolutionary in the pursuit of a just and true humanity.

Guiding Conditions for Introspection for the "Master"

General Condition:

Recognition of her/his privileged position and status in determining the discourse on nature and how this contributed to the climate crisis and why and how this is coterminous with the oppression of non-Europeans that distorted the latter's relationship with the natural world

Derivative Conditions:

1. *Possess a critical consciousness that can identify and reflect upon the paradoxes of her/his own and group environmental attitudes, ideas, and practices that reproduces coloniality*

   Example:
   I recall a personal experience in July 2014 during a whale watching tour in Sodwana Bay located along the Northern KwaZulu-Natal coastline in South Africa, which is a protected marine reserve that is part of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park – a designated World Heritage site. Our tour guide, a middle-aged white upper-class woman (owner of a local resort, self-proclaimed conservationist and custodian of this marine reserve), whilst driving her 4x4 with a boat in tow onto the shoreline (which was one of many tour operators on the day), lamented the fact that the young "locals" (black children) were responsible for the poaching of rare, delicate leatherback and loggerhead sea turtle eggs that nest on the shore. Had she introspected, the tour guide would have realised that:

   a) Even though she may have had a legal permit to drive a vehicle on the coastline according to Act 107 of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) as a tour operator, driving a 4x4 (or any vehicle for that matter) presents a major threat to this sensitive biome which is critical to the survival of these sea turtles and the larger marine ecosystem of which it is a part. In addition, large 4x4s, as far as automobiles are concerned, are amongst the highest emitters of CO_2 that exacerbates climate change, which poses an even greater threat to sea turtles. The memories of sea-turtles are imprinted with a magnetic map of the sea shore on which they hatched, which serves as a "signal pole" enabling them to find their way back to the same small patch of shoreline to reproduce their lifecycles after years traversing thousands of kilometres across the vast expanse of the Indian Ocean.[31] Rising sea levels and more powerful alternating currents caused by climate change increase the erosion of the shoreline, which erases the memories of sea turtles and limits their ability to propagate and ensure the survival of their species.

[31] Sea Turtle Conservancy. "Information About Sea Turtles: Threats from Climate Change". Available at: https://conserveturtles.org/information-sea-turtles-threats-climate-change/ (Accessed on 30 December 2021]

b) More crucially, youth unemployment (between the ages of 18 and 35) from 2012-2020 in the uMkhanyakude District Municipality – the jurisdiction under which Sodwana Bay falls – stood at 51.2% and the general unemployment rate was around 42.8%, which was 17.4% higher than the national unemployment rate between July – September 2014.[32] The actions of the youth were driven by poverty. What would it have taken for her (the tour guide) to create more employment opportunities for the youth that were sustainable, which could have been run in conjunction with an environmental education programme? Furthermore, turtles and other marine life have been a source of food for surrounding communities for generations long before boat tours for whale watching and sport fishing and scuba diving ensued. Yet, marine life was not hunted to extinction by these communities.

This is a microcosm of a larger attitudinal problem that foments an antagonism towards non-whites as being *against nature*, which reproduces a cognitive dissonance that prevents many white people from seeing the limits of their own perceptions and actions. Crucially, the lack of a critical self-consciousness proves detrimental to both the natural world and vulnerable social groups. There are many examples like the one above, such as the debate on rhino poaching which has resulted in this animal being on the verge of extinction. The majority of poachers are black, who belong to a larger syndicate and sophisticated network of local and international elites (white, black and Asian) ironically fueling a market driven by the allure of the supernatural properties of the rhino horn desired in Asian markets. It is somewhat ironic that the *Save the Rhino* organisation is a UK-based company at the forefront of saving this volatile species, especially when it was discriminatory draconian conservation policy implemented during British colonialism in South Africa that forcibly removed black communities from what became designated game reserves. This denied them an opportunity to accumulate material, cultural, and social benefits from natural fauna and flora. Rather than reintroduce these communities into wildlife reserves and incorporate them as joint stakeholders, they remain on the periphery. Conservation programmes that recognise communities as major stakeholders, such as the much-celebrated Zimbabwean CAMPFIRE (Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources), illustrate how viewing wildlife as a renewable natural resource and entrusting local communities with managing wildlife, that they control and utilise, enhances environmental stewardship. Wildlife security is, therefore, mutually inclusive of food and livelihood security and maintenance of cultural integrity since their relationship with nature and conservation practice is very much centered on indigenous knowledge systems, which they are also able to preserve. That rhino conservation is split along racial (and to a lesser degree class) lines, as well as the divide between the Global North (rhino protectors) and the Global South (the rhino poachers), is no coincidence.

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[32] Youth unemployment statistics for the *uMkhanyakude District Municipality* for the period 2012 – 2020 was sourced from *Municipalities of South Africa* web page: https://municipalities.co.za/demographic/121/umkhanyakude-district-municipality (Accessed on 30 December 2021) According to Stats SA Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Quarter 4, 2014, the national unemployment rate in South Africa between July-September 2014 (I visited Sodwana Bay in the middle of July of the same year) was 25.4% (Refer to Table 2. Labour force characteristics by sex – All population groups, on page 2).

2. *Understand and respect the fact that non-white groups speak, think about, and value nature from a different locus of enunciation*.

   In other words, their experiences of nature (from European colonisation onwards) are from the darker underside of the modernity/coloniality binomial – the coloniality of nature. Exploring living in the wilderness and revelling in the beauty and grandiosity of natural creation – at least for most colonised people – as an Emersonian expression of self-reliance was not an option. They were preoccupied with contemplating their "bare existence" and the immediacy of the struggle for liberation. Reflecting on the ephemeral and titular nature of modern life that ferments inauthenticity and places limits on individual freedom by escaping into the wilderness for relief and self-discovery was very much the exclusive preserve of white radicals. Apart from some communities that maintained their cosmological connection to the natural world and those exceptional individuals that found their own path to green consciousness and lifestyle shaped by unique experiences and socio-economic contexts, the vast majority of urbanised non-whites are socialised and absorbed into modernity (itself a product of Euro-American subjectivity). As such, they are caught in the vice of capitalist accumulation and, more crucially, continue to focus on their own struggles for recognition against structural racism. Whereas self-reliance is the entry point for green consciousness among whites, relative deprivation is the basis of the general apathy non-whites have towards the natural environment. Non-whites are, therefore, not only *too poor to be "green"*, but also *too dark to be "green"*. For non-whites to turn "green", whites have to recognise why the former remain fixated on "brown" issues and be part of a process that reconnects them to nature. There also must be greater understanding and respect for the unique cosmographies of those non-white groups (mainly indigenous communities and those that depend directly on niche environments for their livelihoods), who subscribe to non-scientific conceptions of nature informed by myth and spirituality, which not only contain elements of truth value but contribute to ecological knowledge and effective conservation and preservation.

3. *Break from the geopolitical strictures and hubris of epistemic frameworks for conceptualising environmental and ecological issues that assume the mantle of being universally relevant and applicable*

   This entails coming to terms with the fact that knowledge about nature is not exclusive, and identifying and breaking from western subjectivities inherent to dominant frames of thought and demonstrate a willingness to learn from other non-western traditional knowledge systems. The attitude that mainstream epistemes and methods are inherently superior must be abandoned. In other words, there needs to be an elimination of hierarchies of knowledge within and between academic disciplines that are western-centric and between academia (including the larger knowledge community) and the knowledges of ordinary people. For example, the natural sciences and associated subjects (viz. biology, geography, paleoecology, botany, medicine, pharmacology, conservation management and environmental economics etc.) cannot assume dominance over the social sciences and humanities, especially political ecology, development studies, anthropology, social, economic, and environmental history, archeology, literature, linguistics, environmental ethics and philosophy. In addition, academic disciplinary knowledge should not supersede nor possess supreme authority over the experiential, generational and situated knowledges of non-western communities that have other ways of understanding, communicating, and engaging with nature. Removing the barriers between these different types of episteme, from modern and traditional, scientific and supernatural, and academic and conventional, is also necessary. It will allow individuals to realise that non-western people have made important discoveries in nature, which contributed to the advancement of humanity and protection of the natural world (Harding, 2009). This does not entail a meek integration of the "ethnosciences" of other cultures into western science, but also recognises that they have intrinsic epistemic worth and that the producers of this knowledge are experts in their own right; and more crucially, that these communities possess certain values, ideas and practices that are not only best suited to their specific contexts, but which everyone can learn, apply, and benefit from in order to mitigate the larger threat of climate change. This is not a simple matter of advancing cognitive diversity – the idea that other non-scientific, non-western epistemes coexist and have equal status – nor does it emphasise a unification of different knowledges. Instead, it is about *knowledge sharing* within participatory spaces that is not dominated by a particularity and in which no one episteme has a monopoly on truth and assumes the mantle of universal.

Guiding Conditions for Introspection for the "Slave"

General Condition:

Understand how her/his inferiorised position and oppression are tied to the destruction and exploitation of the natural world and, therefore, view environmental concerns as an integral non-antagonistic component of their individual and collective struggle for recognition.

Derivative Conditions:

1. *Identify hypocritical reasoning and actions that perpetuate the climate crisis and undermines the struggles of subaltern communities in other parts of the globe.*

   The main objective of this condition is to identify why certain actions, perceptions and goals that perpetuate the climate crisis ostensibly undermine obtaining social justice for other subaltern groups. Many non-whites who experience class mobility are prone to crude materialism (not even becoming false "greens") compared to their white counterparts. It is this enlightened middle to upper class who advance ideals synonymous with decoloniality (exposing coloniality) that succumb to hypocritical reasoning. For example, on one hand, they call for the restitution and reformation of land (including in designated conservation areas) to indigenous and black populations. Yet, on the other hand, they desire greater accumulation of wealth and luxury items that are ironically produced by western capital in parts of the globe that exacerbates climate change and is responsible for the social displacement and exploitation of labour of other oppressed groups. Such consumer decisions and actions hinder the ability of these vulnerable local communities from optimising the production potential of the land and manage non-renewable natural resources because they must contend with the effects of climate change from erratic weather conditions that result in soil erosion and aridification to water scarcity and disease. Moreover, these choices undermine the social justice struggles in other parts of world and limit the establishment of a network of global solidarity among oppressed groups. They are blinded to how core environmental values from recycling, supporting local production and consumption of goods, promoting ingenuity and effective use of technology, and reducing their carbon footprint by adopting a "small is beautiful" philosophy of living, is crucial to obtaining larger liberatory goals for historically disenfranchised people. Rather than the "green economy" representing an instrument employed by whites (both green socialists and progressive liberals) to stifle the material advancement of non-whites, it should be construed as a genuine instrument for addressing the problem of underdevelopment in the Global South and "third world communities" in the Global North.

2. *Avoid romanticising non-western cultures and dismissing western epistemes in addressing ecological injustice.*

   By adopting a decolonial approach that emphasises the positionality of the subjugated in relation to issues on ecological justice, there are the following dangers:

   a) romanticising the commensurability of non-western cultures to ecological sustainability, and

   b) being completely dismissive and pessimistic towards western epistemes in mitigating the threats associated with modernity

In terms of point (a), there are certain changes, paradoxes and limitations in non-western cultures that lead to environmental destruction. A case in point, returning to an example mentioned earlier, is the popular discourse around China's insatiable appetite for rhino horns and the implications for rhino conservation in Africa. Whilst, in Chinese traditional medicine rhino horns were historically used to treat a myriad of illnesses from fevers, infections, arthritis, high-blood pressure to hallucinations, in recent times it has been more commonly associated with possessing aphrodisiacal properties (Hübschle, 2016: 124). Without discounting that sexual health demands in Asia do threaten conservation efforts to some extent, critics such as former World Wildlife Fund (WWF) lead scientist, Eric Dinerstein (2003), posit that this narrative is associated with anti-Chinese sentiment spun by western media and is misleading, as there are other more significant contributing factors. These include newly-constructed urban legends that rhino horn can cure cancer and, when powdered and mixed into expensive alcoholic beverages, reduces the effects of a hangover. Rhino horns are also sculpted into elaborate ornaments which are coveted as status symbols by a growing Chinese bourgeoisie. Subscribing to ancient tradition and culture, they believe that they possess mystical powers that enhance wealth, status, and physiological well-being. This points to an interesting phenomenon: although China remains firmly rooted in culture with traditional medicine maintaining its status and appeal in society, it has been distorted by capitalist development.

Scientific studies carried out to determine whether rhino horn possesses specific properties that are useful in treating ailments from infections to sexual dysfunction illustrate that it is only marginally, if at all, effective (Hsu, 2017). Dispelling the exaggerated medicinal value of rhino horn, however, is a minor intervention in curbing rhino poaching. In fact, a policy implemented in China in 2018 that permits domestic trade of horns from only captive bred rhinos ((i.e., farmed, not zoos animals), which was initially well received, has revealed major loopholes that have a far more devastating effect on conservation in South Africa (Cheung et al., 2021: 2-3). The rhino horn value chain from its source to destination, and subsequent purpose/use is poorly monitored and recorded, and the information on South Africa's trade database as the exporting country is incommensurate with that of China (the importing country). This makes it extremely difficult to establish whether a horn is legally acquired from a farmed' or a wild rhino in South Africa before it is sent to medical facilities in China that have legal accreditation from the National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine to import it for medical research and to distribute the product locally. Furthermore, the mysticism of a "rare" wild rhino horn commands a much higher premium in illicit markets, which makes poaching a lucrative enterprise for destitute Africans and opportunistic criminal syndicates that hire them. In such a scenario, the proportionality principle advocated by animal rights philosopher Paul W. Taylor, which serves as a "moral device" to rationalize the conditions under which killing a wild animal is justifiable whilst ensuring long-term species protection, is an oversimplification. The proportionality principle states that basic non-human interests should always supersede non-basic human interests when it comes to managing environmental conflicts. Taylor (1986: 274) cites a relevant example positing that "killing rhinos so that their horns can be used as daggers" is incompatible with respect for nature. What constitutes "non-basic human interests", however, is highly contestable, especially in the context of rhino poaching. From the perspective of African poachers and the Asian buyers, killing rhinos represents a basic, and not, necessarily, a non-basic human interest. For the former, as alluded to earlier, the classification of rhino horn as a basic need is more reasonable as it represents a form of livelihood in a context of job scarcity. In terms of the latter, it is more complicated, as a rhino horn constitutes a cultural need, albeit one that has been distorted. While these are hardly reasons enough to hunt an entire species to the verge of extinction, it forces us to ask what can be done to change the attitude of wealthy Asians that appear to be impervious to conservation and completely insensitive to the plight of this animal. In the absence of a strong legislative intervention coordinated at national and international level, the obvious response is to promote cultural introspection. Upon reviewing their cultural beliefs in toto, Asian societies would realise that the power of myth, while crucial to preserving a cultural identity, can also contradict and undermine other fundamental cultural principles and values. For example, the ancient Confucian teaching of "*tian ren he yi"* advocates humans living in harmony and ecological balance with nature as a cardinal truth (Hou, 1997: 488). Killing rhinos to the point of extinction to fulfil a "cultural need" that has deviated significantly from its original meaning and purpose, is paradoxical, and contrary to the natural order of living espoused by "*tian ren he yi*" (Hung, 2019: 1074).

In terms of point (b), as highlighted in the preceding discussion, recent scientific research has assisted by revealing the limitations of the mythical claims surrounding the medicinal potency of rhino horn. In this instance, such research cannot be viewed as assuming a superior status to traditional medicine with the intention of dismissing the value of myth in non-European culture. Scientific research exploring more effective methods of rhino farming and environmental management must work in conjunction with rural communities. This approach, combined with cultural introspection within Asian societies and ecological justice in South Africa can, alter the trajectory of rhino conservation.

3) *Eliminate casting a generalised notion that the discourse of environmentalism is essentially misanthropic.*

As an intellectual project and a social movement, environmentalism is often associated with misanthropic tropes. Since the birth of the modern environmental movement at the first Earth Day celebration on 22 April 1970, environmentalism has become synonymous with the claim that "green" issues are the exclusive preserve of privileged middle- to upper-class whites who care less about matters of social justice affecting people of colour. As discussed in Chapter Two, the closest civil rights issues have come to converging with issues of the environmental degradation was with emergence of the environmental justice movement (EJM), which was a response to environmental racism. However, the EJM was a pluralistic umbrella organisation that was layered (stretched across global, national and local spheres) and it accommodated multiple particularities related to environmental justice struggles without imposing a dominant ideology on its affiliates. The non-hierarchal social organisation of the EJM was its most significant attribute. There was no central governing authority, it was decentralised with horizontal networks, and structures were flexible – what Arturo Escobar (2008: 109-110) described as "meshworks". This organisational design was replicated within the Environmental Justice Networking Forum (EJNF) of South Africa and considered an ideal strategy in a post-apartheid dispensation where social redress for past racial discrimination was paramount.

The EJNF was celebrated for its "rainbowism" because the movement included an eclectic mix of white conservationists and intellectuals ("greens"), labour union representatives ("reds"), and local black community organisations ("browns"), each group with their own ideologies and struggles fighting under a single banner of environmental justice. Connecting "green, red and brown" issues within the EJNF, however, was extremely difficult as the discourse of environmentalism remained racially fragmented. Efforts to promote egalitarianism and racial transformation within the movement by ensuring greater representation and election of a majority of black members to prominent positions, could not bridge the intersectional divides and prevent the eventual demise of the EJNF. As environmental justice scholar and activist, Jacklyn Cock (2004), attested that the majority of black members were community activists that steered the movement towards a developmental social transformation agenda focusing on immediate local needs from having better housing, sanitation, and water to improved healthcare. They were less concerned with engaging the more nuanced aspects related to environmentalism; they, therefore, had little inclination to familiarise themselves with "big matters" like asking why poor communities of colour are more prone to disposing of their garbage in rivers and streams and struggled to make the complex connection between social justice and environmental protection. Furthermore, they were less amenable to the individual and collective benefit of adopting a green lifestyle (at least one not appropriated by modernity and commercial capitalism). Whilst the "browning" of the EJNF in both a literal and ideological sense ostracised white "greens" (some of whom were genuine allies) and reinforced the racialisation of environmentalism, it spotlighted a much deeper problem: the tendency to succumb to the false notion that environmentalism is inherently and essentially anti-black/brown, anti-transformation and anti-human, and, therefore, misanthropic.

While it is undeniable that these elements exist in both literary and activist circles and are very much part of mainstream environmentalism, it is dangerous to cast it as a generalised condition. The main reason is that subversive meta-discourses – though not championed – have always been present in environmental thought and activism. In fact, they are responsible for exposing the racial authoritarianism endemic to mainstream environmentalism. The more conspicuous concern is that such narratives, especially in academic arenas, are dominated by white scholars. Therefore, there is a need for black intellectuals to insert their voices and experiences into radical environmentalism and, more pertinently, for black activists to make the link and recognise that "green issues are not separate from brown issues". In fact, the emphasis should be less on issues that represent particular groups and more on incorporating different lenses within the environmentalism discourse. This would only be possible through a decolonised form of education that highlights the centrality of the environment in the broader lexicon of social justice struggles of the marginalised that transcends geographic, developmental, economic, national, epistemic and social divides. Instead of jumping onto the decolonial bandwagon from an "un" and misinformed position and adopting radical intellectual trends that completely denounce and dismiss environmentalism as a totally misanthropic racialised discourse, non-whites need to first understand, then contribute, and, eventually, change its trajectory.

General Conditions for a Decolonial Ecological Dialogic:

1) Break from a *monocultural, monotheistic, monolinguistic* and *monological* form of reasoning that privileges one way of experiencing, valuing, expressing, relating and thinking about nature over another. The objective is not to ascribe to any single episteme, belief or culture an absolute monopoly on ecological knowledge and practice, whether scientific or non-scientific (philosophical, theological, legal and/or mythological). In other words, shift from the parochialism of establishing a universal knowledge of ecology towards an *"ecology of knowledges"* (de Sousa Santos, 2007: 27-28). This constitutes the principle of pluriversality whereby a plurality of viewpoints co-exist and interact with one another to arrive at a universal conception of ecology that is inclusive and fluid. Contrary to social choice theory, pluriversality does not advocate for the simple aggregation of ecological knowledges or identifying the most suitable option (or preference) from a sub-set of global best ideas and practices. Instead, it prioritises local realities, postulating that all communities (especially, subjugated ones) have the freedom to borrow (according just recognition where it is due) the most viable element/s from different (and other) knowledges and experiences to resolve their unique problems. There is no fear or risk of

adopting the "ontological baggage" attached to dominant epistemic frameworks, which could potentially dilute and/or subsume subaltern cultures, histories, knowledges, and experiences into western (marketed as "universal") discourses.

2) Avoid moral exceptionalism when it comes to rationalising and participating in ecological justice struggles and managing ecological conflict. A hubristic disposition undermines the process of critical reflection and introspection. Demonstrating an openness and willingness to learn from other people will allow for the realisation of an ecological pluriverse.

3) Criticism of other viewpoints must be from an informed position. There is the tendency to succumb to lazy reasoning by dismissing and denigrating alternate ideas, beliefs, cultures, and experiences contrary to our own, without possessing a decent knowledge and understanding about what they entail. Thus, we lose the opportunity to find value in other ways of *knowing, being and doing* that could benefit local communities. Seeing nature through the lens of *an*other, demands a reconceptualization of "think global, act local". We need to not only first *think, and then act locally, but to think about other localities and how, where, and why they fit into the global*. Very often individuals and the communities to which they belong are ignorant of their own alienation from nature and how this was shaped by their unique social, political and economic environments. For these people to act in an ecologically sustainable and viable manner locally, they need to forge a connection to natural environments in closer proximity. This requires a deeper engagement with the politics (and dynamics) of the local ecology, which is also shared and experienced differently by other groups. We cannot think about and act on an issue like climate change on a global scale if we cannot find cultural, spiritual, material, and social resonances with other entities (both human and non-human) that we co-habit and interact with in local ecologies. In other words, in the context of decolonial love – on which this and the preceding general conditions are predicated – it is difficult to extend love to another human being without loving oneself and understanding why nature is at the heart of this process. There has to be a greater commitment to understanding how nature manifests in the various facets of people's lives and influenced identity construction within various social groups.

Constructing the Ecological Community

PART I: Transculturalism

The concept of transculturalism has its origins in the work of Fernando Ortiz first published in 1940 entitled, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*. In this seminal work, Ortiz (1995: 97) coined the neologism "transculturation" to demonstrate how the expansion of the sugar industry in Cuba as a result of European colonisation and slavery brought an influx of a variety social groups that underwent a transmutation of culture. Through an intermeshing of diverse national, ethnic, linguistic, religious, economic and racial backgrounds, aspects of individual cultures were lost, reconfigured, and adapted (deculturation) to create a new *mestizo* cultural identity constitutive of a complex blend of people. This represents a positive conception of transculturalism employed by postcolonial theorists to highlight how, out of the midst of political inequality and civilisational disarticulation that was synonymous with European colonisation, people were able to forge a syncretic collective identity and sense of belonging that transcended all kinds of social barriers.

Cultural miscegenation, not only in Cuba, but in many parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, exposed and enabled people from different backgrounds to understand, respect and accept (and often embrace) other beliefs, value systems and knowledges. This allowed them to see the value of alternate viewpoints, that were historically inferiorised, in resolving much bigger problems such as climate change. For example, in countries like Bolivia and Columbia (and more recently, Ecuador), the indigenous cosmovision of *buen vivir* (or *sumak kawsay* in the Andean Quechua language) that emphasises a way of living in harmony with other human beings and in relation to nature that is "community centered, ecologically balanced and culturally sensitive", received formal recognition in the constitution as a principle governing state action in 2009 (Selibas, 2021). This eventually culminated in the ratification of the Law of Mother Nature in 2011, as national legislation. It represented a landmark ruling, as this was the first time that equal rights were afforded to nature. The law is based on *Pachamama* (an earth deity) in indigenous culture around which all life is centered. This worldview is an anathema to the conventional market-oriented capitalist approach that views nature (such as rivers, forests, streams and mountains) as natural capital to which monetary and exchange value can be afforded. It factors in the natural lifecycle of plants and animals, as well as ecological processes, and demands the sustainable use and protection of rivers and forests from any harm caused by large-scale industrialisation (Mignolo, 2011: 310-311). That this belief system was adopted without much resistance from other sections of the society within the context of a representative democratic government, is a possible indication that other (non-indigenes) have also recognised the significance of this alternate worldview.

However, Bolivia can hardly be heralded as the ultimate example of a plurinational state (representing and legally incorporating diverse worldviews) that afforded just recognition to both inferiorised (oppressed people) and nature, which demonstrates the success of transculturalism in practice. The main reason is that indigenous people, many of whom still live close to nature, represent the majority of the population, which is why there were not many dissenting voices in opposition to this constitutional revision. The true litmus test is whether transculturalism can be effective in more cosmopolitan and demographically diverse societies where the majority of the marginalised people have been alienated from aspects of their own culture that articulates similar values espoused by *buen vivir*. In other words, the question is: Can transculturalism have the potential to transform how these subaltern communities relate to one another and the natural world to contribute to the realization of planetary justice? In the discussion that follows in this section, I argue that transcultural dialogue within and between subaltern communities across global and local spatialities is a viable answer to this question.

a) Intra-Subaltern Dialogue

As Wangari Maathai (2010: 160) so poignantly articulated, "the importance of African's cultural heritage to their sense of who they are still isn't recognised sufficiently by them, or others". Colonisation and modernity removed Africans from their sense of being and denied them the richness of culture as an instrument of self-reliance and as a moral compass used to navigate human and human-nature relations. The ramifications of cultural disinheritance culminated in the permanence of low self-esteem triggered by dominant modernist tropes that demonised and rendered Africans primitive. They lost their collective power and responsibility and succumbed to not only a western God, but the gods of materialism and commercialism for self-affirmation. Through a process of "self-discovery" (*kwimenya* in Kiswahili), Maathai found that generational knowledge passed down through oral traditions enabled her to reflect inwardly and turn to the past (pre-colonial history) to find inspiration for how to live in the present and realise a different future. For example, she found that the older generation never measured their wealth (or richness) in monetary terms and according to the standards of western modernity. These were not deemed as basic needs. Having goats, a piece of land on which to farm food crops for subsistence and some for exchange, and access to a diversity of wild plants and animals for medicine, was not considered poor. Furthermore, it was her experience working with rural women in the Greenbelt Movement that helped her discover the linkages between environmental degradation, the loss of culture and poverty. In fact, it was the loss of culture that lay at the centre of ecological injustice. Maathai realised that it was not only the rural poor that were uprooted from their culture, but the political elite responsible for perpetuating the coloniality of nature by enacting policies that facilitated the handing over of land, indigenous forests and other natural resources to political supporters and corporate interests for exploitation. Drawing from her own journey, Maathai (2010: 171) emphasised that subaltern African communities must first undergo a process of re-culturation (find value in her lost and defamed culture). Only after acquiring enough knowledge and understanding about their culture, would these communities be able to then find contradictions and limitations that precipitate environmental degradation and social injustices that undermine their own quality of life and that of other communities. In other words, contrary to the experiences of Latin America and the Caribbean, in Africa, deculturation as a major stage in transculturation, is only possible after first re-discovering and reclaiming tradition and culture (i.e. re-culturation).

Using existing social platforms as spaces for collective reflection to deliberate on questions such as why communities have gotten on the "wrong bus" by engaging in self- and environmentally-destructive behaviour, is the primary instrument for obtaining self-knowledge. By adopting this approach in seminars held in the Green Belt Movement, Maathai proclaimed that members were able to "see" how the loss of tradition and culture led to social problems such as alcoholism, mental illness, abuse, dependency, an overall inferiority complex, fatalism, and environmental exploitation. In fact, social and environmentally destructive behaviour were tightly connected because people turned to western modernity and capitalism as the archetypal model for successful development rather than finding solutions from within.

It is plausible that, had this process of *kwimenya* (self-discovery) been followed by small environmental and community organisations in black communities in South Africa before striving for the ideal of establishing the EJNF (i.e., a racially diverse environmental movement) soon after the end of apartheid, it would have contributed to the possibility of shifting the environmental discourse in South Africa. However, drawing from Maathai's example, this process of intra-subaltern dialogue probably would have had a greater chance of success had it been driven by enlightened, educated black persons: people who had themselves experienced the same cultural disinheritance that alienated them from a sense of being and the natural world and had the ontological proximity to the inferiorised community and knowledge to influence a collective change in attitude. However, given the gulf between races in terms of education and experience and the fact that there was little room, if any at all, for green politics within the discourse of political struggle for black people, this would have been far-fetched. Nevertheless, the point being driven home here is that, after establishing a sense of self-worth and dignity predicated on an understanding of culture and how they can chart a new path, would blacks be able to constructively engage their white conservationist counterparts? Only when blacks can *think, speak, and act* on environmental issues from a position of knowing and being themselves, can an environmental justice network that is truly "intermeshed" and transcultural be consolidated.

b) Global Inter-Subaltern Dialogue

In the case of South Africa (mentioned above) where there is extreme material inequality and government is driving a strictly modernist developmental agenda, the resistance and challenge of stimulating intra-subaltern dialogue, is particularly difficult. There are not enough examples, locally, that illustrate how a process of *re-culturation* can lead to an improved quality of life and self-reliance. In such an instance, global inter-subaltern dialogue can serve as a useful instrument to fill this void. Subaltern communities that have already reclaimed their cultures and found a way to be self-sufficient and co-exist with, and fit into a modern system, through sharing their ideas and experiences with culturally disinherited communities, would be able to trigger lost memory. In other words, these spaces for inter-subaltern dialogue become conduits for the revival of indigenous knowledge and recovery of cultural norms and practices that are ecologically beneficial. I witnessed the effectiveness of this model first-hand in early 2009 when I accompanied a group of small-scale farmers from Northern Maputaland, South Africa, on a visit to the Medak District in Andhra Pradesh, India, to experience and interact with the Deccan Development Society (DDS).[33] My role was to document this inter-cultural exchange.[34]

The objective of the project was to expose the cohort of South African farmers to the benefits of returning to indigenous eco-agricultural methods of growing traditional crops. Most of these farmers were exclusively growing Bt maize and cotton on their smallholdings with increasing difficulty. This was an outcome of an agricultural restructuring programme implemented by the newly elected South African government from the mid-1990s, which was a continuation of economic ownership and planning structure established by the apartheid regime. Trade deregulation, privatisation and corporatisation of the agricultural sector were identified as major catalysts in shifting the land reform discourse towards commercial agricultural productivity (Bayley, 2000). As a result, agribusiness began to have greater influence in shaping agrarian development, which ostensibly undermined the transformation agenda illustrating a clear disjuncture between agricultural policy and the redistributive justice objective of land reform (Greenberg, 2013: 15-16). The penetration of agro-monopoly capital in the rural hinterland in the

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[33] Refer to the Deccan Development Society (DDS) website: http://www.ddsindia.com/www/default.asp.

[34] This visit was part of a farmer exchange between Bt cotton farmers from Mboza and Ndumo in Northern KwaZulu-Natal and farmers from India facilitated by the African Centre for Biosafety in partnership with the Deccan Development Society (DDS). I had the task of documenting these exchanges between the farmers and our daily experiences. I captured all these experiences in a document entitled, "A Reflection of Maputaland Farmers' Visit to India".

form of stimulus "miracle" GMO seed packages for cash crops provided by Monsanto and distributed by government agricultural centers, initially promised much, as farmers enjoyed bumper yields in the first couple of years. However, as discussed in Chapter Four, GMO seed technology had a series of pejorative effects that resulted in a state of dependency. Farmers were caught in a cycle of chronic indebtedness because they had to finance the purchasing of new seed packages including chemical pesticides and herbicides on an annual basis, which undermined food security and sovereignty (Witt et al., 2006: 499).

By this time, the Indian farmers had already endured the financial, social, psychological, physical, and cultural costs of agricultural modernisation for close to four decades. To countenance these ill-effects, the DDS, composed mainly of Dalit women, were already tapping into indigenous knowledge and culture and renewing traditional agricultural practices in pursuit of an alternate ecologically-centered solution to sustainable development. The benefits they accrued from this process, however, were not only material (or economic as illustrated below). For women that belong to the lowest caste and find themselves at the bottom-end of Indian society, the initiatives and structures created by the DDS enhanced their self-esteem and restored a sense of dignity. For example, the DDS worked closely with women-based traditional village level associations for the poor called *sanghams*, which served as minor centres of knowledge-sharing and -production emphasising conservation of traditional crop varieties through the establishment of village seed banks, experiences on natural pest management systems, and mixed-pattern intercropping.[35] Within these village structures, women assumed the responsibility of the primary curators and distributors of seed banks and closely documented their experiences using modern technological aids. They established local radio stations in their villages dedicated to creating a community-oriented communication platform sharing information on eco-agriculture, as well as social and political issues affecting women. The DDS also coordinated annual biodiversity festivals across the different villages celebrating and connecting cultural, spiritual, and material dimensions of human-nature relations. In these festivals, sacred animals, such as cows and elephants, were venerated through the adornment of gifts and dress, poems about nature and traditional crops were recited, and testimonies of the successes of returning to indigenous lifeways and traditions were also shared. In addition, mobile farm stalls selling traditional food crops in city centres, operated by women from local villages, were set-up. Prices for the respective crops were collectively determined by farmers, eliminating competition between them and mitigating against the vagaries of the market. These systems and practical initiatives transformed the social status of Dalit women in Andhra Pradesh. They went from being "untouchables" having to contend with denigration and ridicule in society, and even domestic violence and abuse, to being producers and disseminators of knowledge, keepers of culture, and defenders of nature. Through this programme, women discovered that scientific knowledge was not superior, and they did not have to rely exclusively on outside expertise to prescribe how they should relate to the natural world in order to survive and thrive. However, this did not imply that scientific knowledge is no longer useful. Furthermore, by working *with* nature and within existing natural systems and processes rather than *against* them

[35] Refer to the Deccan Development Society (DDS) website: http://www.ddsindia.com/www/default.asp.

(as is the case with agricultural modernisation), they realised that the process of restoring human dignity and maintaining the integrity of nature is mutually inclusive.

Rekindling lost culture, tradition, and knowledge, did not just empower Dalit women and improve overall food security, it constituted a shift beyond a utilitarian conception of the role that nature plays in recognitive justice. Dalit women gained recognition not just because what they produced was a means to a better quality of life for another for which they received material reward. Rather, how they produced it in relation to the natural world and other humans – re-establishing the connection between culture and nature – was integral to generating feelings of self-worth and dignity. Crucially, the recovery of culture for this subaltern social group was fundamentally tied to the revival of local ecologies that restored "ecological memory". By applying generational knowledge and undergoing a tedious process of trial and error over hundreds of years, they were able to select for the best properties (mutations) and combination of crops that enabled these dryland strains to adapt to fluctuating soil and weather conditions. The kernels of indigenous crop strains were, therefore, containers for the cultural, social, and ecological history of Dalit communities. Through the process of sharing their experiences and successes of returning to culture, the DDS evoked the "memory' of South African farmers who managed to find similitudes with their own agricultural history. This was captured at a cultural exchange meeting on 14 January 2009 during the Biodiversity Festival in Tekur when one of the South African farmers, Mrs Manukuze, shared her reflection on the day's events:

> … I have seen a path of farming. I recall our traditional methods of farming in South Africa. Young girls when scattering seeds would sing to the princess of the heavens. In those days, there was community involvement in agricultural production. Everyone helped the other; this is how people would gain profit. People would work on each other's farms without being paid. Instead, after a day's work, people would drink sorghum beer and celebrate. They even built houses together. I am glad to see that people in India are keeping their culture and I would like a similar event back home to celebrate our traditional crops and farming practices.

The programme demonstrated the effectiveness of global inter-subaltern dialogue highlighting the benefit of sharing and learning from each other's experiences in intellectual, social, and cultural spaces that are established, influenced, and managed by themselves. This approach to transculturalism allows subaltern groups to independently draw from the experiences of others to articulate their own realities. It emphasises a mode of learning based on the renewal of memory, which invokes the power of testimony and sovereign interpretation.

c) Local Inter-Subaltern Dialogue

Whilst engaging with subaltern communities in other countries that function within a similar context (e.g., rural) is crucial, it is more important, especially in highly fragmented cosmopolitan societies, to facilitate dialogue between subaltern communities across and within local spaces. Drawing from experiential knowledge, I refer to practical examples that reveal the dynamics of such a dialogue and why it can establish the foundations for holistic learning that could enhance environmental consciousness. Firstly, I focus on inter-subaltern dialogue across localities; namely, the rural-urban divide. Between 2008 and 2009, I was part of a community engagement joint learnership project conceptualised and run by Harald Witt – an academic in the Economic History and Development Studies Programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. It brought together high-school learners from Ndumo (a predominantly black rural community in Northern KwaZulu-Natal) and Wentworth (an urban, coloured community located in the South Durban Basin). Learners from each community spent a week living in the other's community interacting and learning from their counterparts about their community history and the kind of environmental conflicts and developmental challenges they encounter. Each community harboured certain misconceptions about the other. In fact, the probability that they could identify the interstices of their respective struggles and experiences, and establish where nature fits into this narrative, was negligible.

For the Ndumo youth, who had to confront rampant poverty, unemployment, hunger, disease, and indebtedness from depreciating crop yields, experiencing modern urban living in South Durban was alluring, as it held greater prospects for economic success for establishing a better quality of life. They were not aware of the health and livelihood risks of living in South Durban, which was the result of segregationist apartheid policy. Furthermore, they were less conscious of the fact that their desire for modern amenities, such as owning a luxury automobile, increases the demand for fuel, which heightens production in petroleum industries in South Durban that is directly proportionate to higher emissions of toxic carcinogenic gases (including CO_2). This not only increased the risk of South Durban communities getting cancer and the surrounding marine ecosystem, on which subsistence fishermen depend for their livelihoods, being polluted, but also exacerbated climate change, which local farmers in Ndumo were most susceptible to. Crucially, being deprived of development (basic needs and services) and caught in the poverty trap, the Ndumo youth appeared to focus almost exclusively on what they did not have rather than what they had at their immediate disposal (i.e., seeing the natural environment as a major capability). They turned to outside entities to solve their problems and many left the community altogether draining it of essential knowledge and skills.

By the same token, students from South Durban considered an agrarian lifestyle to be backward. Residents of Ndumo were viewed as lackadaisical and poor; showing no ambition to advance. They were unaware of how legislation such as the Natives Land Act of 1913 and 1936, respectively, and separate development through the creation of Bantustans placed constraints on such communities and denied them ownership and access to natural resources. Crucially, surrounding conservation areas (game reserves) were perceived by the students from South Durban as a holiday getaway rather than spaces of political contestation from which rural black communities were excluded. They failed to understand how the protection of biodiversity in places like Ndumo is a key mechanism to off-set the costs of pollution experienced in their own community. Both groups of students had a romanticised conception of modern living and lacked a basic understanding of how their past and present were intertwined despite them being from very different spatialities with their own unique social, economic and political dynamics. In terms of their pasts, both communities were refuges for anti-apartheid activists during the liberation struggle. In the present, the fact that Northern Maputaland, of which Ndumo is a sub-region, was a key area for cotton production synonymous with the drive to modernise agriculture in black communities meant that it was a major input in locally produced commodities that was distributed and consumed by urban communities like Wentworth. At the same time, SAPREF and Engen, which are among the highest producers and distributors of petroleum in South Africa, have their refineries in South Durban. Since development in Ndumo is not possible without transportation, this implies that what happens in South Durban affects fuel supply, costs, and availability that has a direct bearing on people in Ndumo. Such conversations enabled the students to understand the limitations of modernity (and modernisation) and the paradoxes of development and the implications this has for their own lives and relative to the other. Crucially, it sensitised them to how issues such as climate change are at the epicentre of social justice issues.

The second dimension focuses on inter-subaltern dialogue within the same (or a shared) spatiality. Arguably, this is more complex and difficult to navigate, especially when it comes to building solidarity between subaltern communities in pursuit of a common objective such as environmental justice – a classic case being the two racially intermediate South Durban communities of Wentworth (which is predominantly Coloured) and Merebank (mainly Indian). As a former resident of Merebank, who spent much of his life observing and participating in community interactions, being involved in environmental activism in structures like the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA) that represented the environmental interests of both communities, and researched environmental racism, I believe I am in a position to shed critical insight on this issue. Wentworth and Merebank share the same location between oil refineries interspersed among a mosaic of industry and residences and are separated by a single main road. Whilst, in geographical terms they are literally within walking distance of each other, ontologically they could not be further apart. As Sharad Chari (2006: 116) surmised in his work exploring the making of space and race through the life histories of two prominent residents from the respective communities, each community had different histories of dispossession, labour and political imagination, and were shaped by "varied forces, legacies, ideologies and events".

The collective history of Indian residents of Merebank was confined to a narrow passage of time from 1860 to 1911 when their forefathers journeyed to South Africa on the ticket of indenture. Comparatively, Coloured residents of Wentworth had relatively wide and diffuse histories and could trace their ancestry to the pre-colonial period. Divergent experiences combined with structural inequality resulted in two very distinct social and spatial formations. Being in a foreign land away from "home", Indians focused on cultural affiliations, breaking from the shackles of casteism and forging stronger bonds among themselves through a process of introversion (Desai & Vahed, 2010: 33-34). On one hand, they went to great lengths to maintain an umbilical connection to the motherland by planting their cultural and religious roots – the Merebank Tamil School Society (MTSS) that was established in 1936 is a prime example of this (Gajan, 2001: 68). On the other hand, they created a new diasporic identity embracing a distinct lingua franca, social interests and values.

Coloureds, however, were more grounded in South African society, reflecting its variegated cultural, linguistic and racial identities. Possessing a miscegenated identity in a highly racialised society meant that Coloureds had to wrestle more intimately and intensely with feelings of racial impurity and social marginality (Chari, 2009: 524). Wentworth became the "dumping ground" for displaced Coloureds from regions as far afield as the Eastern and Northern Cape (and beyond), especially destitute young Coloured men. Many of them had to contend with self-alienation, social exclusion and material deprivation and fell victim to criminal elements and a sort of self affirmation and dignity in the dystopian world of gangsterism. Social ills like gangsterism became synonymous with Wentworth, which led to the construction of stereotypes and racial tension. The dialecticism of race and class in South Africa due to the institutionalisation of a hierarchical racial classification system, meant that Indians assumed a relatively more privileged status compared to Coloureds and, therefore, had better economic opportunities to own land and secure higher paying jobs (Posel, 2001: 89). Because very few Coloureds in Wentworth had access to land and could afford to build their own homes, they often rented accommodation from Indians in Merebank.[36] Such interactions between Indians and Coloureds in a setting of relative privilege/deprivation and superiority/inferiority exacerbated social fissures and produced (and subsequently reproduced) interracial stereotypes (Naidu, 1983: 136). Indians viewed Coloureds as violent, profligate and lazy, whilst Coloureds considered Indians to be greedy, conceited and racist. Contrary to the idea that stereotypes can only be construed as racist under conditions of formal institutionalized racism (apartheid), I contend that coloniality persists within a post-apartheid dispensation, which has dire consequences for galvanising both communities in a joint struggle.

While conducting a pilot study for my Honours Research project in the Department of Political Sciences at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) in 2006, I discovered that SDCEA appeared less committed to addressing the threats caused by polluting industries in parts of Merebank beyond the frontlines of Engen and SAPREF. This included, inter alia, the detection of alarming levels of chromimum-6 contamination of groundwater in 2004[37] that affected residences (one of which I lived in) opposite Bayer and LanXESS that was passed-off as "non-threatening", and minimal community resistance to the construction of an incinerator at Mondi Paper Mill. In both cases, SDCEA, which is domiciled in Wentworth and considered a hub of political activism in the South Durban region, had not done enough to conscientise and mobilise the community of Merebank. I also learned that residents of Merebank were not only unaware that SDCEA represented their environmental interests and that they belonged to its constituency, but that they were also not interested in the Wentworth community's struggles against the petroleum industries. At the time, poor resource mobilisation on the part of SDCEA and its subsidiary organisation, the Merebank Ratepayers Association (MRA), was identified as a major cause of the lack of environmental consciousness and mobilisation efforts in Merebank.

Now, however, I have come to realise that the *"not in my backyard"* (NIMBY) mentality of residents from both communities and SDCEA is tied to fundamental social differences that remain unresolved. They fixate on problems that directly affect them within their immediate vicinity instead of understanding how these minor issues fit into larger struggles of South Durban Basin communities. This blinds them to a very basic logic; the fact that their shared space has one of the highest concentrations of toxic polluting industries to residences in the world and that pollution transcends boundaries. Within such a limited area, what affects residents of Merebank outside the frontline of Engen is bound to have an effect on people from Wentworth and vice versa.

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[36] It was illegal to lease property to someone of a different race group under the Group Areas Act of 1950.

[37] The following online newspaper article provides a context and background to the incident: Carnie, T. "Fatal chemical found in Durban groundwater". *IOL* (Nov 12, 2004). Available at: [https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/fatal-chemical-found-in-durban-groundwater-226784.](https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/fatal-chemical-found-in-durban-groundwater-226784) (Accessed: 05 February 2022).

Establishing an environmental organisational structure that simply serves as an umbrella body for communities of colour based on the common experience of being victims of environmental racism is inadequate. Involving them in joint activities to raise environmental awareness and challenge environmental injustices does not automatically imply that the respective communities can understand and identify with the other. Without the disbandment of "cultural singularity", displays of solidarity are tokenistic and merely performative.

Accepting that Wentworth and Merebank have very different starting points in their histories that led to the former being a product of transculturation (albeit in a context of political oppression not liberation) and the latter resisting miscegenation and opting for the security of cultural homogenisation,[38] maintains the status quo. Postcolonial research which emphasises the bifurcation of ethnography within a shared space like South Durban risks valorising a form of cultural relativism that scaffolds pre-existing interracial stereotypes between the communities. Sharad Chari's (2006) research, mentioned earlier, epitomises this claim. The conclusion he arrived at was that Merebank is a peri-urban Indian village that enjoyed wider possibilities compared to Wentworth, which was insular, ghettoised and stigmatised. Although this is an accurate and insightful ethnographic account of the respective communities within the broader context of historical materialism, it ignores how the making of race not only made individual spaces, but permanently altered race relations in a "shared space". In other words, if we do not explore this interracial dynamic and focus only on differences that reflect social hierarchies, economic inequalities and moral exceptionalism as just a legacy of apartheid – not as an embedded pattern of racial superiority/inferiority that is reproduced – the opportunity for collective reflection will be severely compromised.

The role of grassroots environmental organisations, therefore, must extend beyond "bringing communities together" to engage key issues and confront a common enemy (or threat) since they are both victims of the same system of institutionalised racism. Platforms facilitating social dialogue between these communities should be created. Experts (viz. social, environmental and economic historians, political ecologists, human geographers, ethnographers and critical race theorists) and influential community members, who have experienced the evolution of their respective communities, can be invited to share knowledge (through testimonies) about their unique histories. As far as possible, experts should think, speak, and act from a positionality of the community. In other words, there should be a congruence between the biography and geography of knowledge. Even though a reputable scholar from outside these communities may be a more astute researcher when it comes to applying the correct methodologies in terms of data collection

[38] It is important to note that the "Indian question" (i.e., whether those that did not take-up the offer of a free passage back to India after their tenure of indenture expired would be deported or integrated into South African society) remained until the early 1960s. Those who chose not to be re-contracted into indenture worked in the railways, sanitation, and as street sweepers, were concentrated in town barracks' before they were relocated to designated Indian townships across Durban, which were initially racially homogenous spaces. This created a literal and quasi-metaphysical condition of being caught in "no man's land" – belonging neither here, in South Africa, among the rest of its racially diverse population, or there, in India where they were considered as deserters (cultural pariahs). Cultural introversion was a means of survival and creating a sense of self-worth. Unfortunately, the by-product of cultural homogenisation was a mentality of exceptionalism in relation to Coloureds and Blacks ranked lower in the ontological hierarchy that perpetuated interracial stereotypes and resulted in the peripheralisation of Indians as not being fully South African.

and codification and conducting a comparative ethnography, and share the same desire for justice, they do not possess first-hand knowledge and experience of the lived social realities of the affected communities and cannot recognise the factors that hinder dialogue from inside the locality rather than from the *outside in*.

The interpolation of expert knowledge in a disciplinary field, lived experience and community-centeredness will enable people from within their own community and from their neighboring community/ies to come to better understand themselves and one another. In addition, the structural dynamics (political, social and economic) that shaped race relations between the communities should be workshopped through a process of collective reflection and intercultural exchange identifying conflict, convergences, interdependencies and commonalities. Within this context, diverse experiences, understandings and conceptions of the shared space and the interstice of where the social meets the environmental can be explored. For example, the fact that subsistence fishing was pivotal to both the Indian and Coloured communities and how this is affected by pollution caused by surrounding industries (linked to climate change) serves as a focal point for identifying common interests and cultural similarities. In addition, Indian market gardeners were the major contributors to providing food security to the Wentworth community and the former depended on material support from the latter in order to grow their businesses. Artisanal labor provided almost exclusively by Coloureds to surrounding industries is what generated income that sustained local businesses in Merebank, such as market gardening. In this instance, consumers can physically interact with the producers, which eliminates the impersonal nature of recognition in terms of an instrumental materialist needs-based conception (see Chapter Two). In other words, the labourer who applies her/his skills and knowledge to produce the commodity (Indian market gardener), the land on which s/he applied their labour power (within the shared space) and the consumer (Coloured resident of Wentworth) who purchases the fruits of the other's labour, are tangible. Connecting the material and cultural dimension (in this instance, market gardening which is tied to indentured labour) creates the conditions for generating interracial recognition. Furthermore, it illustrates the centrality of nature (air, sea and land) in this process.

Therefore, the purpose of transculturalism, at least through the lens of decoloniality, is to facilitate a process of self-discovery among the subaltern through constructive dialogue, which increases the probability of achieving ecological justice.

PART II: Border thinking

Border thinking is a critical epistemic response by the subaltern to the Eurocentric project of modernity (Grosfoguel, 2008: 16). It draws on alternative epistemologies shaped by lived experiences, cultures and languages that were pushed to the margins (borders) of mainstream centres of knowledge production and dissemination. These "border epistemologies" predicated on spiritual beliefs (myths) passed on by previous generations and articulated using vernacular languages and other less conventional modes of expression, were not only rendered irrational but considered antithetical to human progress. Such knowledge was often the subject of formal study rather than a theoretical lens that could complement and work in tandem with established western epistemes to understand and solve the practical problems facing developing societies in the Third World.

Whilst the exterioristion of border epistemology began with European colonisation, the advent of modernisation after the Second World War resulted in the following changes to knowledge that pushed it further to the margins: i) an increase in specialisation and diversification that created new niche areas of knowledge, ii) the centralisation and social control of information, and iii) the institutionalisation of knowledge through a universal schooling system. In his revolutionary work, *Deschooling Society* (1971), Ivan Illich postulated that these changes disabled the poor and marginalised by confusing the process with the substance of education. In other words, the assumption was that, the more "treatment" a person has in terms of undergoing formal schooling and investment in education, the more successful and the greater the contribution s/he can make to societal development. For Illich, the effect, especially on the poor, was the opposite: the more "treatment" they received, the less independent and self-reliant people became. As specialised knowledge penetrated people's private and social lives, key functions, such as taking care of the elderly, the sick and the dying, managing births (midwifery) and deaths (burials) and building a home, could no longer be carried out by a member of the family or the community member that possessed the relevant knowledge and skill-set. These functions had to be outsourced at exorbitant prices beyond the affordability of the poor, who turned to increased credit and were absorbed into a cycle of debt in order to access basic services. Perhaps the most profound areas that were affected by this paradigm shift, were the ability of people to produce their own food, manage their own waste, find further use-value and preserve and conserve nature. In other words, as alluded to earlier, the proliferation of the various scientific epistemes from agriculture (and its multiple branches) to the natural sciences imposed a technocratic way of dealing with nature that was highly exploitative. Furthermore, it resulted in the inferiorisation and hierarchisation of the different epistemologies that culminated in the modernisation of poverty. Subaltern communities no longer had a frame of self-reference to govern their relationship with nature that could lead to an independent path of sustainable development.

The emergence of a cultural renaissance in the Global South in recent times, however, emphasises the importance of reviving indigenous knowledge systems that are compatible with the lived realities of subaltern people and, therefore, more accessible and meaningful. In South Africa, for example, there have been efforts to integrate indigenous knowledge within scientific disciplines, such as botany. This includes listing the vernacular name of local plants alongside their designated scientific *taxa* in Latin and indicating their multiple applications in traditional herbal medicine to treat physiological ailments, as well as their scientific value (Henriques, 2013: 3). However, such information is accompanied by caveats emphasising that the uses of traditional herbs as an effective treatment could be dangerous to one's health since they are not scientifically tested (proven) and that it should only be used after consulting a qualified medical doctor. Without dismissing the fact that the physiological disposition of people is different, and that scientific laboratory research is useful in detecting potentially life-threatening side-effects, these plants have been prescribed and administered by traditional healers (herbalists) as medicine long before pharmacopoeia.

Simply creating a parallel space for "border epistemologies" within mainstream platforms of scientific knowledge is perfunctory. It maintains the schism between modern science as fact and traditional modes of knowledge based on folklore and lived experience as fiction. Therefore, modern science which is still imbued with a western viewpoint assumes the mantle of a universal episteme and continues to enjoy a monopoly on the veracity of knowledge about the natural over other alternate epistemes. To address the problem of epistemic inequality, there must be a decentralisation and localisation of scientific knowledge, so that it has greater ontological resonance and practical applicability for subaltern people. This implies reconstructing epistemes about local flora, fauna and ecologies from the grassroots, whereby modern science works in conjunction with indigenous knowledge systems (Grosfoguel, 2008). For a dialogical approach to knowledge production and dissemination to obtain any lasting success, it must be governed by a set of ethics: i) a non-egotistical and prejudicial attitude toward non-scientific knowledge, ii) eliminating the rigidity of scientific dualism, iii) recognising that traditional healers, shamans and sages as knowledge producers are acknowledged within scientific discourse, iv) producing knowledge that is directly informed by the needs of the ecological community, and v) integration of cultural values, principles and language within the scientific lexicon, which makes scientific epistemes accessible to subaltern communities.

This establishes the conditions for border thinking where epistemologies (and the people that produce them), who were historically on the margins (or outside the mainstream), are central to a process that is driven by the primary objective of finding alternative methods of protecting the natural world whilst meeting the needs of the oppressed. Given the complexity of scientific episteme and the fact that there are many terms that are not directly translatable into indigenous languages means that a more nuanced approach to knowledge construction is required. Many indigenous languages have not been fully developed for academic disciplines. In other words, language and cultural experts need to work closely with the scientific community (particularly, those proficient in the language and who come from the relevant social group) to find terms that are compatible, develop new ones, and establish similitudes in meaning. There can be no constructive dialogue in knowledge production and sharing and, therefore, border thinking, if a common understanding cannot be found through and in language first. Crucially, this also entails recognising and including other modes of language in indigenous cultures used to communicate human-nature relations within scientific discourse. For example, music, dance, rituals, and other performative expressions, contain embedded meanings that shed new insights, confirm existing ideas or debunk them, which should also constitute an important component of scientific episteme – as a co-effective pedagogy rather than an object of scientific enquiry. This rationale is not confined to scientific epistemes only, but also other epistemes that fall within the social sciences and arts.

Another key aspect of border thinking is to dismantle disciplinary boundaries and formalise an inter-transdisciplinary approach to education that is ecologically centred. In other words, subjects from the humanities and social sciences that explore the history, politics, ethnographies, and ethics of subaltern people in relation to nature relevant to a specific scientific episteme, must form a significant part of the syllabus. The approach should be governed by addressing the ecological question, which is multifaceted. The fundamental question is why and how humans came to be separated from nature? Corollaries to this question include, inter alia: How do subaltern communities value nature? What have been their experiences and how do they relate to it within the context of local ecologies? How does scientific knowledge coalesce with other non-scientific epistemes outside the academic fraternity and across disciplines? And how can these localised epistemes fit into a universal one that creates the foundation for further dialogue? However, the success of an inter-transdisciplinary approach in 'rehumanising' the natural sciences in order to get people to reconnect with one another through and in relation to the natural world assumes that disciplines within the social sciences and humanities have already embraced and undergone a process of border thinking. Whilst there are disciplines alluded to earlier, such as political ecology, environmental history, environmental ethics and philosophy and human geography, that have dealt with the ecological question demonstrating a shift in geography of reasoning (situating their locus of thought to the marginalised), there needs to be a greater effort towards shifting the biography of reasoning. In other words, the expectation is that the more people from the "borderlands" that enter these fields as experts, the more chance there is for alternate viewpoints to shed different perspectives on ecological issues.

It is important to note that border thinking should not be confined to the theoretical realm of knowledge production and dissemination within institutions of teaching and learning, but practical arenas that are accessible to the wider public. Conservation and preservation areas (game parks and botanical gardens), arguably, have a much greater influence in terms of education. South African National Parks (SANParks) have taken initiatives that focus on "people and environment", creating "spaces" that reflect the historical "presence" of indigenous communities, and run sessions in which indigenous knowledge about the properties and uses of various local plants and stories about human interactions with animals are told (SANParks Annual Report, 2015/16). However, these indigenous communities remain outside the parameters of these designated reserves thus maintaining a state of being "absent-present". Establishing corporate responsibility programmes partnering with neighbouring communities to create a sense of ownership or extensive environmental education programmes that accommodate and insert a cultural narrative within the life-story of the park is a tokenistic attempt at ecological justice (Musavengane & Leonard, 2019: 141). Part of the game reserve experience should be also to educate the public as to why it is a contested space. This can be achieved through the following steps: First, game reserves must identify the historical and political context in which they were formed and what the socio-economic, cultural and psychological effects on indigenous communities have been. Second, they should be sensitised to the politics of conservation in South Africa. In other words, the public should be informed about the various policies that were implemented that led to the displacement of indigenous communities and why and how existing conflicts between game reserves and communities continue to be shaped by them. Third, programmes focusing on teaching the public how to live sustainably must fit into a larger process of restoring dignity by reclaiming elements of indigenous culture that are aligned to conservation, as well as engaging with those traditions and beliefs that are potentially destructive to the natural world.

This is a process that should not only involve park officials or affiliates, but communities that have a very different experience and perspective. In other words, the game park should become a space for constructive dialogue and criticism conducive to border thinking. The realisation of such an initiative is, however, contingent on reassessing the principles governing social cohesion and nation-building in a post-apartheid democratic dispensation that has implications for the approach taken towards restorative justice in South Africa. For example, dominant interpretations of principles of non-racialism and multiculturalism are counterintuitive and undermine border thinking.

The principle of non-racialism as it is understood and articulated in the South African Constitution (and in preceding influential documents such as the Freedom Charter) assumes a procedural egalitarian character that advocates for the elimination of racialism (Anciano, 2016: 198). The inference is that any form of discrimination that is less overt and projected through conscious and unconscious biases, stereotypes, and acts of exceptionalism which cannot pass (be proven) within the jurisdiction of law, is non-existent. The elimination of racialism, therefore, connotes the repudiation, expungement, and trivialisation of any claims of racial discrimination outside of constitutional convention. As illustrated in Chapters Two and Three, racism is a phenomenon that is entrenched in society and continues to manifest and operate across multiple spheres within a democratic context.

In terms of the environmental discourse in South Africa, the extent to which colonisation, and then apartheid, physically, culturally, and psychologically alienated blacks from nature and altered their perceptions, understanding and relationship with it, has not received the attention it deserves. Subscription to a form of non-racialism that hides behind a veil of procedural democracy relegates claims of racism in the context of environment and the subaltern to an issue of the rights of access to satisfy material and cultural needs. Being able to visit a game park, harvest indigenous plants for medicinal and spiritual purposes, and having the opportunity to represent culture, pass for political redress. Any reference to established continued patterns of the colonial matrix of power which maintains the separation of black people from nature – that they have access to the benefits of nature without having a real self-defined presence in it and where it constitutes a major aspect of their sense of being (reflection of self-worth and self-determination) – is construed as a *re*-racialisation of the environmental discourse. Border thinking does not mean an abandonment of the principle of non-racialism. On the contrary, it posits that the realisation of non-racialism would only be possible if the various manifestations of coloniality (misrecognition of the subaltern) are confronted rather than dismissed.

Multiculturalism advocates for the protection and toleration of a diversity of cultures. Creating a parallel space that simply includes exteriorised worldviews alongside the dominant one does not precipitate effective agential and structural change. Game reserves in South Africa continue to be imbued with contested meanings, imaginations and emotions. For white settlers (particularly, Afrikaners) it is a manifestation of cultural heritage evoking feelings of grandeur, triumphalism and belonging (patriotism). On the other hand, for blacks caught in the trappings of modernity playing catch-up, it generates feelings of primitiveness (cultural backwardness), dispossession and violent displacement. Within a context of multiculturalism, there is no compulsion directly to engage these divisive and destructive meanings. For the insertion of cultural narratives and knowledge systems to have any value in transforming people's (especially, the subaltern's) attitude to loving and respecting the natural environment, the extent and complexity of ecological injustice must be acknowledged and understood by the oppressed, as well as the privileged. Unless the various dimensions of misrecognition are stridently addressed through a spatial dialogism, ontological and epistemic borders that perpetuate the logic of the coloniality of nature will remain.

Ontological and epistemic borders do not just manifest externally, but also internally. The practical truth of intersectionality means that every individual possesses a multiplicity of identities and, therefore, is influenced by a unique and complex set of beliefs, experiences and values that determines their worldview about human-nature relations. Any desire to make sense of where nature fits into one's life prompts a person "to sift, sort, and symbolize [one's] experiences and try to arrange them into a pattern and story that speaks to [one's] personal reality" (Anzaldúa, 2002: 545). The following hypothetical example serves as a heuristic device to illustrate the point: An educated upper-class black South African transperson who is an avid supporter and member of the Rhodes Must Fall movement and embraces elements of her/his culture that have been lost, may also be a staunch Catholic. Whilst s/he may be conscious and have already renounced certain dogmas and hermeneutics that are at odds and constitutes misrecognition of *self*, others may be less obvious. For example, s/he may possess a critical understanding of the role played by the Church in terms of institutionalising racial oppression and demonising non-heteronormative expressions of sexuality and cultural practices and beliefs that involve the spirit realm, which is meant to be an exclusive domain of the Holy Spirit. In the same instance, while s/he may participate in certain cultural rituals that include the natural world, s/he may still embody the anthropocentricism endemic to Judeo-Christian belief systems without understanding how nature is fundamentally tied to other aspects of her/his identity, and, therefore, recognition. For her/him to develop a greater respect and moral obligation towards the natural world, it is necessary to find a radical hermeneutic within the Christian thought that presents an alternative to the anthropocentric utilitarian view. What this means is that s/he must be alert to the fact that there are interpretations of core beliefs within dominant epistemes which have been relegated to the borders (outside) of the mainstream that resonate with other aspects of self-identity, which can lead to a more complete idea of ecological liberation.

Agape love, which refers to God's unconditional love for humans, is a prime example from which a relational ethic between God and humans can be extended to humans and nature (Vena, 2009). The rationale of agape love is predicated on the belief that God chose to send his only son whom he made in his image and likeness to suffer and die in order to redeem humanity as the ultimate display of his eternal and unbounding love for them. The fact that the son of God assumed the physiological, mental and psychological disposition of humans, yet was able to overcome adversity and transcend the limitations of human body and mind to endure extreme mental and physical torture, was to illustrate that it is possible for humans to show the same kind of love for God and to their fellow human-being (Grant, 1996: 12). Since the natural world – like humans – is also part of God's creation, it is also deserving of being shown love and respect. Whilst it is obviously not the same because humans need to live off the earth – which inevitably involves the killing of animals and use of natural resources – there should be a moral conscience behind human action and a desire to minimise undue suffering and prevent unnecessary exploitation and destruction. Embodying a spirit of oneness between humans, nature, and God, therefore, constitutes an agapeic ecological ethic. If s/he has such an understanding, it is easier to find similitudes with traditional cultural belief systems. For example, the concept of *ubuntu* in indigenous South African cultures advances a principle of wholeness that encompasses human-nature relations. Whilst it does not subscribe to the creationist rationale espoused by an agapeic ecological ethic, it also appeals to an idea of *humanness* to generate an ecological ethic that is not anthropocentric. *Ubuntu* is centered on the belief that the open display of politeness and respectfulness (i.e., the normative characteristics of *humanness*) across multiple layers of interaction between all entities (i.e., both human and the physical environment) is intrinsic to the order of the universe. In other words, nature is not outside the realm of human morality, but deserving of the same consideration afforded to our fellow humans. As Ramose (2015: 70-71) opines:

> To care for one another, therefore, implies caring for physical nature as well. Without such care, the interdependence between human beings and physical nature would be undermined. Moreover, human beings are indeed part and parcel of physical nature even though they might be a privileged part of that. Accordingly, caring for one another is the fulfilment of a natural duty to care for physical nature as well. It is thus a constant strife to strike and then maintain a balance between human beings and physical nature.

Many African (and other indigenous) cultures also subscribe to the commensurability and fluidity between humans and other creatures, but in a more visceral manner. In other words, animals (not only primates) display anthropomorphic characteristics (emotions, values and reasoned judgement) and humans also embody traits (courage, valour, strength and hunting prowess) of animals. Therefore, animals are considered avatars and are adopted as totem creatures by people as a means of self-identification. This implies that s/he can still venerate nature as a creation of God without it being construed as idolatry and, therefore, a violation of the commandment. An agapeic approach to human-nature relations has greater practical value – representing a form of phronesis – beyond the moribund stewardship ethics within Christian theology which emphasise the hierarchisation of creation. It breaks from the idea that humans have dominion over the earth and its creatures and, therefore, have an obligation to manage, cultivate, and subdue it for its own long-term benefit (ensuring the survival of future generations). This analogy demonstrates that breaking down internal borders by finding ways to negotiate between contradictions without devolving into an existential crisis, that leads to misrecognition of self and others, can transform our relationship with nature.

Border thinking does not have to be purely abstract and confined to navigating between epistemes as the basis of inter-relational and self-reference. There is also a material dimension to facilitate this process except on a much wider scale. Few things represent the bridge between humans and between humans and nature, as definitively as food. What we eat is essentially who we are, not just in terms of our physiological well-being, but a reflection of our cultural identity. However, the tendency is to approach this issue in a superficial manner, which opens the possibility for false assumptions especially in the absence of sufficient knowledge and understanding of the history of food that is itself a product of complex political, economic, sociological and economic processes. For example, whilst maize has become a cheap staple across Africa and, in many communities, is considered a “cultural food”, it is fundamentally tied to a discourse of oppression and misrecognition. Maize is one of the few traditional staple crops that is completely human made, which means that it cannot propagate in the wild without human assistance (Standage, 2009: 5). It was born through a process of domestication of a wild variety of grass indigenous to modern-day Mexico. Proto-farmers in ancient Meso-America actively selected plants with genetic mutations that transformed the *teosinte* from a simple grass to a global staple food crop. It went from having two rows of small kernels covered by a thick almost inaccessible membrane, called glutes, that had almost no energy value, into the big-eared maize with multiple exposed kernels that are easily digestible with a high calorific return (Ranum et al., 2014: 106). As discussed earlier, maize was at the centre of the genetic food revolution from the twentieth century onwards that exacerbated rather than ameliorated food insecurity and agricultural dependency that had a devastating impact on the natural environment. However, prior to this, there were traditional varieties which were propagated by communities across Africa. These traditional varieties can be traced back to the Americas to original strains produced by native American proto-farmers that were brought to Africa through the transatlantic slave trade (Miracle, 1965: 41). In fact, African communities and societies across the globe (both North and South) where maize is a core feature of their diet, traditions and rituals, should recognise the role played by native Americans in the making of their own cultures.

In the same instance, however, other crops, such as sorghum and millet, were already domesticated in Africa long before the arrival of maize. Crucially, these cereals not only contain much higher nutritional value compared to maize (modern GM, not traditional varieties), but were born of a process of domestication that took place within local ecologies and was managed by precolonial societies that laid the foundations for civilisational development on the continent. Returning to these traditional food crops, therefore, is integral to reclaiming cultural identity and traditional knowledge. More pertinently, it could be a major contributor to mitigating climate change. As inferred in the previous section, a combination of traditional and modern eco-agricultural methods in producing local varieties can help restore local ecologies and consuming locally can drastically lower the overall carbon footprint. Reflecting on something as basic as what we eat has the potential to break down borders by facilitating mutual recognition, as the histories, intellect, traditions, and cultures contained in food are central to our own culture. In turn, this very essential component of our material existence was due to the interaction between our fellow human-beings and nature. In fact, without nature there is no basis for our material and ontological sustenance.

Conclusion

Through the application of the core ethical principles of decoloniality, the chapter proposed an alternate path to extending recognition to the natural world. It posited that a more elaborate process involving a commitment to pluriversality that emphasises transcultural dialogue and border thinking can constructively undo the effects of the coloniality of nature that separated humans (mainly the subaltern) from the natural world. Instead of reducing nature to an inanimate purely instrumental role in the extension of recognition to the marginalised that is tokenistic, the chapter illustrated that, rather than lying on the periphery of philosophical reasoning in the pursuit of justice, the natural world lies at the very heart of it. Moral worth and respect for nature are not predicated on whether it possesses intrinsic worth or relative value consistent with a teleological ecocentric logic. On the contrary, the chapter postulates that, by subaltern people rediscovering the centrality of nature in the broader narrative of self and collective recognition, the possibility of extending greater care, love and respect for the natural world will be greater. To establish an ecological community in which both humans and nature have moral worth, those humans that have been dehumanised have to first find themselves in nature on their own terms.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

The *struggle for recognition* has assumed a newfound prominence in critical political thought. This was sparked by the resurgence in national and religious populism and the proliferation of social movements representing the interests of marginalised social groups based on narrow identities (viz. race, language, ethnicity, gender, nationality and culture) across the globe. A series of events over the last decade epitomise the consolidation of this political phenomenon. This includes, inter alia, the election of Donald J. Trump as US President voted into power by predominantly white working-class Americans, the increase in conservative right wing political parties across western Europe, the rise of the East spearheaded by Russia protecting its cultural and political heritage against the encroachment of western liberal "secularism", and the formation of the Black Lives Matter and the MeToo movements. All of them have one thing in common. They point to a struggle for recognition between one group that finds itself and the "natural" order it created (within its own borders and globally) under threat and is willing to defend its superior status whatever the cost, and another group, who have long been inferiorised, that want their humanity restored. This phenomenon is the focal point of Francis Fukuyama's (2018) most recent work, *Identity: Contemporary Identity Politics and the Struggle for Recognition*. He argues that the problem of the *thymos* – the part of the soul that "craves recognition of dignity" – culminates in conflict (or convergence) between *megalothymia* (the subject that believes in its superiority) and *isothymia* (the subject wanting to be treated equally), which is the source of democratic regression in long-established, as well as relatively new liberal democracies.

Whilst Fukuyama retains a firm commitment to his earlier *end of history* hypothesis emphasising that liberal democracy remains the epitome of human development despite its recent vulnerabilities, he does not share the same enthusiastic optimism that it can resolve the problem of the *thymos*. His primary reason is that an individual or collective's conception of self-worth and desire for it to be recognised by another cannot truly be fully satisfied. Feelings of pride at achieving social recognition or anger and resentment in reaction to being denied the same, are endemic to the human condition and have continuously resurfaced through the course of human history and have manifested in identity-based conflicts. This is in keeping with Fukuyama's subscription to the Hegelian theory of history. Liberal democracy does not guarantee that each person will experience the respect they are seeking and that they will not be judged according to the social group to which they belong whether based on the colour of their skin, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, nationality, or cultural beliefs and values. However, according to Fukuyama, it is the only political system that can accommodate diversity and galvanise people across identity-differences because it is centred on the universal principles of constitutionalism, the rule of law, and a free market economy that maintains political order by ensuring a safe environment for the expression of individual and collective human freedom. In other words, "liberal democracy has its own culture, which must be held in higher esteem than cultures rejecting democracy's values" (Fukuyama, 2018: 166).

The problem with this view is that liberal democracy is acclaimed as universal but is essentially the product of a white/male/heterosexual/Judeo-Christian/Western-centric viewpoint. By design, the norms, values, and institutions that define a liberal democratic system are shaped by the historical experiences, culture, and vision of western Europe and America. Alexis de Tocqueville's approbation of democracy in America towards the middle of the nineteenth century is based on the fact that the "general principles which are the groundwork of modern constitutions – principles which were imperfectly known in Europe, and not completely triumphant even in Great Britain" were recognised and determined through laws that ensured the intervention of ordinary people in public affairs, the responsibility of authorities, the free voting of taxes and a trial by jury (Reeve, 2003). The evolution of democracy took the following trajectory: It began with Athenian democracy which emphasised civic participation in public political life, it then proceeded to the formation of the French Republic that was established on the Declaration of the Rights of Man, then to the promotion of universal suffrage in Great Britain, before culminating in its ultimate form – American liberal democracy. Unfortunately, the evolution of democracy from its ancient variations to its modern archetype of liberal democracy was built on the back of moral exceptionality. Certain social groups were not only denied the benefit of universal rights and freedoms because of *who* they *are* and *what* they *represented*, but were also considered sub-human, which rendered their mistreatment and social rejection acceptable. This mentality has become normalised within a liberal democratic order despite legal reforms that resulted in the inclusion of historically disenfranchised and marginalised groups within a constitutional framework. The assumption that liberal democracy remains outside and is, therefore, impartial to the struggle for recognition between the inner self and the broader society from whom it is searching for affirmation, is naïve. As discussed in Chapter Two, functionaries of the state are members of society and are also products of the same processes. They are not immune from dominant perceptions, beliefs, and ideals that govern social interactions and perpetuate misrecognition of others and of self. Put differently, liberal democracy is both a product and an instrument of hidden patterns of power that originated during European colonisation that naturalised a particular racialised order of superiority/inferiority that continues to undermine the application of a just ethics in intersubjective relations, as was argued in Chapter Three.

Depending on the socio-political, demographic, and economic context, coloniality manifests in multiple ways. For example, the ascension of Donald Trump to the presidential seat is often portrayed as the result of the majority of a poor working-class white population growing increasingly disillusioned with deindustrialisation, the previous governments' support of immoral financial institutions and elites at the expense of citizens, and profligate expenditure on anti-terrorism strategies and the advancement of human rights and freedoms through *pax democratica*. They have opted for Trump's authentic politics (speaking the truth) over political correctness. His bigoted remarks and anti-immigration policy resonate with the resentment felt by this cohort who believe that minority interests have taken precedence over theirs, yet they represent what makes America great. The feeling of resentment, however, is not grounded in fact. Whilst poverty rates among non-Hispanic whites as of 2019 stood at 7.3%, they were still significantly lower than the poverty rates experienced by Blacks and Hispanics which were at their lowest levels at 18.8% and 15.7% respectively, since 2018 (Creamer, 2020). Rather, the relative improvement (though marginal) of the economic status of Blacks and Hispanics is not the only threat to the more conservative working-class white America. The desire for these marginalised groups to be recognised as being equal in society and the workplace – that they are competent, deserving of a higher rank, can produce knowledge about themselves and the world, and make decisions about their own futures – poses a more significant threat to their sense of worth. By contesting and exposing the darker underside of American (and European) history, culture, nationalism, and religion that was complicit in their inferiorisation, non-white Americans appear to be desecrating and denigrating the heritage of their white counterparts. Growing counter-protests by white nationalist groups against movements that call for the removal of statues and memorial sites of controversial political figures in American history synonymous with acts of atrocities against non-whites, is aimed at defending those values, beliefs, and ideas that define who they are. The issue with this backlash to being disrespected is that it maintains the status quo of coloniality. At the same time, the open display of hostility and violence carried out by marginalised non-white groups reflects a deep-seated anger and resentment that can permanently destroy any chance for collective reflection and solidarity on a range of matters, which are influenced by this sociogenic condition.

Liberal democracy has not cemented itself as a system that can manage the problem of the *thymos*, as Fukuyama suggests it can. The middle- to upper-class white liberal elites that are driving the anti-Trump agenda and appear to be empathetic to a decolonial cause are simply using the latter as an instrument to serve their own narrow political interests by weeding out and distancing themselves from right wing politics. In other words, pointing to the conservative ideology advanced by the Trump regime deflects from the underlying problem of coloniality that was endemic to the American political system. Therefore, jumping onto an anti-conservative bandwagon to champion the rights of minority groups constitutes a form of false consciousness. This is somewhat ironic given that both the demise of the dignity of work for poor working-class white Americans and the structural racism that non-whites continue to experience as a result of police brutality and social prejudice, thrived under a pre-Trumpian liberal democratic order. Furthermore, the resistance to US-led *pax democratica* in the global arena whereby countries like Russia and China are looking to assert themselves by not only using force to defend territories that are of cultural significance to them (within and outside their sovereign borders) but are also taking control of their own future.

Both situations are the outcome of the dominance of a white/male/capitalist/secular viewpoint. In the first situation, the elite economic and political class trump the lower working class in a country where whites are demographically the majority. And, in the second situation, a secular political agenda advancing democratisation of state and society driven by a desire to retain a waning global hegemonic status, has replaced the traditional Christian-centric order that epitomised European conquest. As discussed in Chapter Three, the *dewesternisation* agenda of the East should not be conflated with *decoloniality*, which is not just a political, but an ethical project as well. For example, China argues that its economic relations with African countries are predicated on principles of mutual respect and friendship, which even predates their alliance during the anti-colonisation struggle in the 1950s. China claims that all its dealings with the continent have been non-exploitative, non-discriminatory, and politically non-intrusive and are directed towards mutually beneficial development, thus promoting political and economic autonomy in African countries. This is in contradistinction to the development cooperation between African countries and the West, which resulted in chronic indebtedness, political instability, and development dependency. However, an appeal to mutual recognition constitutes a soft power strategy employed by China to advance its own interest to the detriment of development in African countries. China's *resources for infrastructure* (RFI) strategy (or the Angola mode) has not translated into long-term development in African countries. In fact, many scholars claim that an influx of highly skilled surplus Chinese labour to construct elaborate infrastructure in African countries and implementation of favourable terms of trade for Chinese retailers, have led to deindustrialisation, deskilling, and signs of Dutch Disease (Bbaala, 2015). African countries, therefore, derive relatively less benefit from these cooperative development initiatives and continue to be exploited. China's relationship with African countries is no different to the developed Global North; it just assumes a different form. In this instance, China's claim of mutual recognition is disingenuous and reproduces coloniality. Therefore, dewesternisation is not decoloniality. The other misconception is that decoloniality endorses fundamentalisms within specific identity formations, for example, Islam. Oppression within social groups based on ideological, religious, and ethnic differences are equally reprehensible. The abovementioned examples emphasise the interpolation of coloniality, which maintains ontological and epistemic binaries (and borders). Therefore, the belief that liberal democracy would translate into the highest form of human development concealed the deeper problem of coloniality that perpetuates misrecognition under the guise of promoting intersubjective recognition.

Contemporary state and society were born of the global designs of coloniality that legitimised and reproduced the exteriorisation, ranking, erasure, and distortion of the beliefs, ideas, values, and approaches that did not fit into a conception of justice determined by the dominant Euro-American subjectivity. Human-nature relations are no exception in this regard. How this relationship panned out was also a construct of this God's eye view. This thesis revealed how the dominant viewpoint is embedded in epistemic frameworks that attempt to conceptualise an idea of recognitive justice that is inclusive of marginalised peoples and the natural world. And, furthermore, it explored why the oppression of nature is not separate from the dehumanisation of those groups that find themselves in the lower tiers of the ontological ladder. In fact, the thesis demonstrated why such processes peripheralised and reduced nature to a mere object in the subaltern's struggle for recognition. Apart from those groups that were able to retain their cultural connection to the natural world (that is undistorted), the rest of the colonised people were absorbed into capitalist modernity. They were secure in the belief that the onset of capitalism accompanied by liberal democracy would bring them the recognition they desired. Nature's function was to simply make this possible within an exploitative capitalist system that exacerbated the metabolic rift.

As illustrated in Chapter Four of the thesis, the mastery and destruction of nature were coterminous with the conquest, control, and extermination of non-Europeans. Hence, colonisation and modernity were responsible for not only separating non-Europeans from nature, but for generating feelings of hostility that desensitised them from caring for the natural world. Early environmentalism (i.e., nature conservation and preservation) in the colonies produced an inversely proportionate relationship: as white settler (frontier) societies forged closer ties to the natural world, the more non-Europeans were vilified and considered the enemy of nature. Non-Europeans had to compete with nature for the affections of the master who did not have to recognise him/her in return. Hence, this resulted in a strange paradox. Those responsible for spreading modernity that destroyed nature (through profligacy) became its greatest defenders. Radical revolutionary voices revealing the hypocrisies of human advancement calling for establishing a deeper spiritual connection and love and respect for nature emerged from within their own ranks. On the other hand, subaltern people became the greatest advocates for enlarging the destructive enterprise of modernity that offered relief from material suffering by embracing the discourse of development (modernisation), which compounded ecological injustices. Efforts to overcome such injustices by addressing the dual crisis of human underdevelopment and ecological destruction (i.e., climate change) had the opposite effect.

Naturally, calls for recognition that attempted to bring together the joint objective of promoting human health and livelihoods in communities of colour, while minimising the cost on the natural environment, began to grow. However, this initiative succumbed to its own parochialism. As demonstrated through a brief account of the Environmental Justice Movement (EJM) that emerged in response to environmental racism, the "environment" was confined to where people "lived, worked and played". Unfortunately, for people of colour deprived of green spaces having a biophilic experience was utopian. Nature did not feature beyond narrow interests of being free of exposure to toxic pollution and exploitation and having access to a material and/or cultural need. Nature was not part of their *species being*, as renowned biologist and promulgator of *biophilia*, E.O Wilson (1984) would have us believe. There was no visceral or "innate urge to connect to other forms of life" (apart from having a pet or appreciating a garden) that could trigger a desire to love, care, and respect the natural world beyond the satisfaction of an immediate need.

Indeed, the latter part of this thesis (especially Chapter Five) was an attempt at exploring how nature can be reinserted into a practical process of obtaining recognition amongst the marginalised. This was achieved by establishing a decolonial ethical framework that enables both the dominant and dominated subjectivities to introspect and see how they are complicit in perpetuating ecological injustices. In other words, it illustrates how a decolonial love can be used to break down an ontological asymmetry of power intrinsic to the master-slave dialectic, which, paradoxically, rationalises a kind of mutual recognition that reproduces misrecognition. That is, a universal conception of recognition that is genuinely mutual cannot be created if the idea that one being is superior (master) to another (slave) and that the freedom of the latter depends on the will of the former remains. The chapter then went on to demonstrate how the decolonial principles of transculturalism and border thinking can be used to enable subaltern people to rediscover nature in self and community and vice versa, instilling the idea that nature is at the very core of our existence and should be the essence of our struggle for recognition. This is in keeping with the Fanonian approach of building the world of the *"You"*. The logic is that, if the subaltern cannot find a deeper value and meaning in nature that resonates with their "sense of being", the realisation of a new global order of the ecological community – where humans interact with the natural world and are able to extend love, care, and respect to other living and non-living creatures – would not be possible.

Rather the objective was to highlight the fact that the only way justice for both marginalised people and nature can be realised is by restoring the self-esteem and dignity of people who lost their connection to the natural world. In fact, it goes a step further postulating that if the problem of misrecognition (the denial of dignity and respect) – the *thymos,* as Fukuyama calls it – is not resolved, the bigger problem of climate change will remain beyond reach. Recognising subaltern viewpoints on human-nature relations and pursuing revisionist interpretations of established dominant beliefs and ideas will allow and create the conditions to learn, respect, and use the experiences and ideas of another to transform local ecologies; thus, representing a grassroots approach to building an ecologically just community that is inclusive of other marginalised viewpoints. In many ways, this constitutes an attempt at breaking a fundamental human condition (attitude) that is the source of ecological catastrophes, which runs throughout the course of human history from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial era: that *"we"* know more and better about nature than *"they"*. As alluded to in Chapter Four, this conception of superiority/inferiority assumed a new, more expansive and destructive form with the onset of European colonisation and modernity; namely, coloniality. I, therefore, found it necessary to dedicate a separate chapter to illustrate why misrecognition in the modern world is a product of coloniality, which legitimised moral exceptionality and dehumanisation. It is the colonial matrix of power that produced the darker underside of modernity resulting in the tyranny of the coloniality of nature that thwarts the attainment of ecological justice.

Despite the intervention made by this thesis, there are limitations that stretch across several fronts. The first, more generic limitation, revolves around the decolonial claim of the entanglement of capitalism, modernity, and processes of European imperialism as mutually inclusive. In other words, the idea that race and culture cannot supersede class (in a pure Marxist sense), nor the other way around, which is symptomatic of the culturalist approach advanced by postcolonial thought. One could easily argue that the gravitas of capitalist modernity, as critical theorists such as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer submit, is so profound that it would be impossible to positively alter the attitudes of the vast majority of the subaltern towards nature. They argue in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944: 16) that humanity's re-enchantment with nature conceals the fact that disenchantment is the dominant outlook. Deeper scientific investigation and knowledge about nature does not evoke a memory and feeling of how we (humans) have inflicted suffering on other living and non-living entities. By transforming and altering their behaviour, biological constitution, habitat, and relationships, we have prevented other creatures (and the larger ecosystem) from fulfilling their specific telos and living the life they were designed to live.

In his later works, Adorno turned to aesthetics in natural art as a medium for developing a greater appreciation for nature by focusing on "constellation" – the idea that a picture of a natural object is not a mere representation of itself that exists outside of Being (space and time) but reflects a sedimented history of social relations. In other words, it symbolises an interconnection between a culture, the thing, and larger ecological, economic and political processes. This could trigger a form of recognition for nature that is channelled to the individual and the social group that s/he belongs to. This approach is problematic on two interrelated counts. The first is that Adorno assumes that everyone would be able to find themselves in the depicted narrative, and secondly, even if they did, that it would generate positive feelings, which would translate into care and respect for nature. Most crucially, there is little consideration that the history of natural art is dominated by a western-centric hermeneutic that is exclusive. The result is that western experiences captured in artwork romanticise and valorise Euro-American relations with nature, whereas non-Europeans are either absent or their relations with nature are distorted or depicted as destructive (this was reflected in a few analogies referred to in Chapters Two and Four). However, besides this shortcoming in Adorno's attempt at extending recognition to nature, the effects of modernity on subaltern people cannot be understated. Irrespective of social identity (in terms of race and culture) most people in the modern world fall victim to the forces of what social psychologist, Erich Fromm, calls a consumer culture that is all pervasive. Consumerism is a source of our banal existence because we are confined to a life of automated work, which stifles creative expression and is devoid of meaning and purpose. Ostensibly, it is also the primary source of human happiness and pleasure. As a result, for anything to have any significance in enhancing our sense of self-worth and dignity, it must be consumable. Therefore, for nature to have meaning it must possess an exchange value, whether in terms of its inherent monetary worth or connected to the saleability of a normative aspect (i.e., an emotion or isolated experience). If nature cannot fit into a capitalist consumer orientation of success and happiness, it is valueless. Such a view maintains the destructive dialecticism between humans and nature, which is antithetical to developing a moral attitude towards the natural world. Nature assumes significance in the context of recognition if it elevates or distinguishes our material position in society. It is, therefore, plausible – contrary to Fukuyama's claim – that one's desire to be treated fairly and to be respected for who they are based on non-material identity markers cannot displace the desire for economic success (i.e., class mobility) as the primary basis for recognition. In fact, Adorno (2002: 66) alludes to this dimension in *Aesthetic Theory* stating that "all naturalistic art is only deceptively close to nature because, analogous to industry, it relegates nature to raw material". Within this context, social signifiers, such as race, ethnicity, gender, and nationality, are all subsumed into class. The only path to recognising both marginalised people and nature is through post-materialism. In other words, creating the conditions that enable subaltern communities across the globe to experience class mobility in order to satisfy their material needs, which will eventually lead to their pursuing esoteric luxury needs like caring for nature. Unless living a "green", sustainable life can afford marginalised individuals (and collectives) greater social status – recognition in terms of their abilities and creative powers that is coupled with material reward – there is no incentive for the subaltern to change. Arriving at a situation where the subaltern can extend respect and care for nature is only possible through the accumulation of wealth and further commoditisation of nature. In other words, going green would have to be appropriated within a bourgeoisie class consciousness and become a status symbol (or fashion statement) to gain any moral traction that is translatable into practical solutions; thus, marking a return to a Promethean logic that underpins ecological modernisation, which is responsible for reproducing the cycle of injustice. Class mobility combined with another side-effect of modernity, namely, the neo-Malthusian threat of the "population bomb"' as described by Robert Ehrlich, means that Marx's self-destruct thesis is closer than expected.

The other significant limitation of this thesis pertains more specifically to the methodology of making the decolonial turn. Since decoloniality subscribes to the grand narrative of coloniality being the cause of injustices, there is the tendency to homogenise the experiences of the subaltern. Colonisation and its related processes played out differently across the different regions in the Global South (Pappas, 2017: 3-4). The struggles against injustice (for recognition) were unique and could not be mirrored by subaltern groups located in other parts of the globe. For example, the experience of environmental racism experienced in the American South and which became a model for pursuing environmental justice in a democratic South Africa had one commonality: the link between Jim Crowism and apartheid as discriminatory political systems that institutionalised racism, resulting in communities of colour being disproportionately exposed to toxic industries. As illustrated in Chapter Five, despite this commonality, racial dynamics (the relationship between Indian and Coloured communities in the South Durban Basin, for example) were distinct from communities of colour in the American South. The Coloured community of Wentworth shared social and cultural elements that were probably closer to coloured communities in the American South that were also miscegenated. The Indian community of Merebank that shared the same space with the community of Wentworth and were experiencing the same environmental injustice was racially homogenous. In other words, including Indians (as well as the surrounding predominantly black townships in the South Durban Basin) as part of the inclusive environmental justice moniker of "communities of colour" is problematic. Coloureds could not identify with Indians and vice versa. Apartheid spatial planning resulted in a situation where race groups could be opposite each other, and effectively co-exist, yet remain ontologically distant from one another. Drawing from my own experience as a resident of Merebank, it was not coincidental to discover that the struggle for environmental justice in the South Durban Basin was rooted in Wentworth and that it was easier to identify with the struggles of communities in the American South rather than one across the road. Racial tensions between Coloureds and Indians was exacerbated by the institutionalisation of the hierarchisation of distinctive racial categories in South Africa, which generated relative privileges and deprivations. This has ensured that racial stereotypes and subsequent feelings of the *thymos* continue to define our ecological future. Hence, my emphasis on also establishing platforms for transcultural dialogue within a spatiality. The probability of obtaining a broader ecological justice is far greater if solidarity is built between local communities that share a common viewpoint before searching for commonalities in other parts of the world. In this instance, there is always the risk that the decolonial can fall into the same trap of a western-centric viewpoint whereby one subaltern group ends up *speaking on behalf of another*.

Given the fact that the school of decoloniality emerged from critical liberation thought in Latin America (and later the Caribbean), and it is fairly new in terms of its development, there is also the proclivity to rely quite heavily on scholarship emanating from this part of the world. Using decolonial thought that developed in Latin America and the Caribbean to conceptualise and promulgate a philosophy of justice elsewhere in the Global South, such as Africa, is also problematic. There are certain assumptions in making the decolonial turn that are not universally applicable. For example, as highlighted in Chapter Five, the goal of building a plurinational state that affords constitutional recognition of a historically marginalised cosmovision of human-nature relations may work in a country where the majority of people share the same belief or had the time to embrace it as their own, but it is not as easy to establish in very racially diverse, cosmopolitan societies, like South Africa.

The final limitation of the thesis is based on the practicality of making the decolonial turn as suggested in Chapter Five. Scientific projections captured in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Assessment Report Six Working Group I quoted in a newspaper article

(Engelbrecht & Monteiro, 2021), claim that developing regions such as Southern Africa are warming at a rate twice as fast as the rest of the world and would reach the global warming threshold of 1.5 ºC by the early 2030s. This implies that there is very little time to implement educational programmes that would enable subaltern communities to forge a closer connection to nature through a process of self-discovery. Transforming the attitudes of people can take generations to implement and reap the relevant successes. This highlights the importance of such initiatives assuming a macro-approach. Decolonising of the mind to break from the coloniality of nature must happen at the level of both formal education (as a procedural policy-based initiative) within centres of knowledge production and dissemination and relevant public platforms, as well as at the grassroots within subaltern communities driven by local environmental organisations and movements. For this to be realised, public officials in developing states (i.e., leaders and functionaries) must have a grasp of some of the big questions that were explored in this thesis.

While I have highlighted the significant limitations of this thesis, I do believe that it does make three significant contributions to the discourse on recognitive justice when it comes to resolving the ecological problem. The first is its contribution to the theoretical development of the coloniality of nature. As alluded to earlier in the thesis, the coloniality of nature is the lesser developed among the other major analytics of coloniality. Second, the thesis presents an approach to affording recognition to the natural world without succumbing to the romanticised ideas espoused by environmental philosophy and theory, that are abstracted from larger political, social, and economic processes that shaped the present reality. To precipitate a change of attitude towards nature, there must be an appeal to an ethical approach to justice that is rooted in the practical experience of injustices that are felt by people. Nature must find expression and moral value in a felt desire for recognition. The final contribution, which is tethered to the second, is emphasising the prioritisation of an authentic inter-human ethics within recognitive justice theory as a harbinger to establishing a universal ecological ethic. Humanity cannot hope to extend recognition to nature, if we are unable to treat one another with dignity and respect and break the shackles of patterns of superiority and inferiority that prevent us striving towards the common goal of building an ecological community.

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