Studies in Curriculum Theory Series

COLONISING AND DECOLONISING

CONCEPTS, LEARNINGS, AND PRAXES

David Scott, Sandra Leaton Gray,
and Rita Chawla-Duggan

Colonising and Decolonising

Colonising and Decolonising argues for a decolonised and ethicised curriculum. Grounded in an interdisciplinary approach, it draws upon the fields of history, sociology, education, anthropology, philosophy, indigenous studies, and more, to allow a nuanced and multifaceted exploration of the subject matter.

Focusing on the concepts and practices of coloniality and decoloniality, it uses this focus as a framework for positioning concepts as acquired dispositions in the way we live. Philosophical topics addressed include: concepts and descriptors, knowledge, facts and values, free will and volition, coloniality, decoloniality, curriculum, sapience, strong normative evaluations, pedagogy, rationality, freedom, ethics, learning practices, thinking, ecology, imaginative possibility, and inclusion.

A robust and erudite exploration of the imperative of decolonisation, this volume will appeal to scholars and researchers across a broad range of disciplines, including specialist fields of education research, decolonial theory, sociology, epistemology, and philosophy of education.

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David Scott, Sandra Leaton Gray, and Rita Chawla-Duggan

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Foreword

David, Sandra and Rita offer us a demanding and necessary engagement with the enduring legacies of colonialism and the complex work of decolonisation. Through careful argument and sustained inquiry, this book challenges readers to confront the ways in which colonial structures continue to shape knowledge, identity, and institutional life. This book does not offer a simple roadmap or fixed solution; instead, it presents a space for deep questioning, critical reflection, and ethical responsibility.

At its core, this book engages in a philosophical and psychological inquiry into the colonial/decolonial dyad that is as unsettling as it is enlightening. It explores how colonial logics shape knowledge, identity, power, and pedagogy and how these logics are reproduced, resisted, or reconfigured across both national and international contexts. The book invites readers to consider not only the structural and historical dimensions of colonisation, but also the existential, affective, and ethical. These frameworks are not simply added on for complexity's sake – they are deeply woven into the text, grounding its inquiries and elevating its insights.

This is not an easy book. Nor should it be. This is not a book that simplifies or dilutes the educational concerns it seeks to engage. You will encounter conceptual vocabulary for stretching the imagination. The richness of this language mirrors the complexity of the subject matter and honours the depth of thought required to grapple with colonial inheritances and decolonial futures. You must be prepared to pause, reflect, reread, and resist the impulse for easy takeaways. You have to stay with it. As you move through its chapters, you will find yourself returning to earlier passages, rethinking previously held assumptions, and confronting uncomfortable truths. In conclusion you will emerge with a deeper, more nuanced understanding of what it means to decolonise, and why that project is neither linear nor complete.

As a work situated within education, it holds particular resonance for those invested in curriculum, pedagogy, and learning. Yet it is not confined to traditional disciplinary boundaries. Instead, it speaks to the broader project of reimagining how we live, learn, and relate – across institutions,

identities, and generations. David, Sandra and Rita are not merely charting out a critique of the colonial, they are modelling a decolonial response attentive to complexity, grounded in relationality, and open to transformation.

This book is both timely and timeless. Timely in the sense that it responds to urgent global calls to confront the colonial legacies embedded in our systems and ways of knowing. Timeless in its philosophical commitment to enduring questions: What is freedom? What is justice? How do we unlearn harm and rebuild otherwise?

I offer my sincere thanks to David, Sandra and Rita for their careful and considered contribution to the field. This book offers valuable insight into the ongoing work of decolonisation and will no doubt prompt further reflection, discussion, and engagement among scholars, educators, and practitioners alike.

Marlon Lee Moncrieffe
President of the British Educational Research Association (2024–2026)
June 2025

Preface

What is a decolonial and decolonised curriculum? A recent attempt by the university in which two of us work identified five curriculum design principles:

1. Cutting-Edge Content – content is research-led and up-to-date, providing students with a future focused and challenging curriculum that is aligned with sector benchmarks and meets the needs of a diverse society.
2. Coherent Choice – programmes are designed to provide academically coherent, practical and realistic choice. Students have a range of study choices, curated as appropriate to degree stage and award requirements. Choice in programmes supports diversity in ways of learning and a variety of modes of assessment.
3. Aligned Assessment – there is a clear programme assessment strategy that supports progression and is in line with UCL's Feedback and Assessment principles. There is stretch and diversity in the design of assessment tasks, and student choice where appropriate.
4. Structured Progression – the programme design enables student learning progression through appropriate ordering of core and optional modules and assessment activities at each stage of the programme, in alignment with UCL's credit and levels framework. There are clear exit routes leading to interim qualification.
5. Optimised Engagement – the programme optimises student learning engagement through diverse learning opportunities offered across the academic year. Creating cohort community and belonging through student partnership and high-quality academic support and resources, empowers students to succeed during and beyond their time at UCL.

In this book we argue for a decolonised and ethicised curriculum, and what this implies is that any curriculum and any set of curriculum design principles should have some universal elements, which, in turn, means that these elements should be applicable to every curriculum that has been designed, is in the process of being designed, or will be designed in the future.

In this curriculum or set of curriculum design principles, meanings that we can give to key terms (curriculum, diversity, choice, assessment, progression, engagement, quality and more), foundational elements of the curriculum (contents, values, pedagogy, relationships between summative and formative assessment and the like), and epistemologies and framings of key concepts that are being used (decoloniality, pedagogy, validity, truth, assessment, bureaucracy and so on) are put to one side. For example, central to the argument being made in this book is that in our preferred model of a decolonial curriculum a clear distinction has to be made between those evaluative or assessment-related activities which contribute to learning and those which allow an evaluation or assessment of what is happening or what has happened in an education system, within an institution or with a particular learner. Learning and assessment practices on a programme of study, such as a curriculum, can be regarded as formative if evidence is provided of a learner's achievements in relation to knowledge, skill and dispositional acquisitions, and this evidence is used by the teacher, the individual learner, and their fellow learners, where the intention is to make decisions directly related to their subsequent programme of learning. Assessment is used formatively, then, when it directly influences the learner's cognition – their learning affordances. A learning programme or curriculum consequently needs to make a clear distinction between summative and formative assessment. If these two functions are conflated, then the curriculum is likely to be distorted; and indeed, this is one of the principal defects of many curricula round the world, and of international assessment systems such as the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

Curriculum in its most fundamental form represents a site of power and knowledge production, where the limits of what constitutes legitimate knowledge are set. Marlon Moncrieffe (2020) provides a useful lens for examining these processes, particularly in his work on decolonising the curriculum. He argues that the legacy of colonialism persists in educational practices that marginalise indigenous epistemologies while presenting colonial narratives as universal truths. His study of the representation of Black histories in British schools reveals that curricula often either trivialise or entirely omit these perspectives, thereby perpetuating a *selective tradition* (Williams, 1961) that privileges dominant cultural narratives. This selective tradition shapes what is remembered and what is forgotten, creating what Moncrieffe describes as a silencing of alternative histories. In this way, the curriculum acts as an instrument of power, entrenching epistemic hierarchies that favour certain worldviews over others. Such dominance is not merely peripheral or marginal but systemic, embedded in the policy frameworks, pedagogical approaches, and institutional structures of contemporary education systems. Decolonising the curriculum is, therefore, not simply about including indigenous perspectives but comprises a radical

rethinking of the epistemic frameworks that underpin education systems. To this end, Moncrieffe calls for a *recentring* of marginalised voices, and this requires a critical pedagogy that interrogates the assumptions embedded in curricular contents and forms.

In this book, we also make the case for values, valorisations and norms (personal, epistemic, social, political, dispositional, spatial, temporal and ethical) as being centrally implicated in our descriptions of the world, in the curricula that we are attempting to design and in our life-choices. There are two dimensions to this claim. The first is a claim that objects in the world and human beings are valued in relation to each other and to other object-types. A second dimension is that values are epistemological. If we accept that value-free knowledge is an impossibility, that we inevitably make pre-judgements about the world in our investigations, then being in the world is understood as a practice, primed for investigation, but resistant to algorithmic and value-free methods for describing it. Knowledge as a concept and as a practice has ethical, political, social, discriminatory, decolonising and human consequences and implications.

It is too easy to describe a decolonised curriculum as just being against misogyny, racism, genocide, homophobia, and the like, although in this book we do pay attention to these important types of knowledge (see Chapters 9, 10 and 11). We also have to enframe these disfigurements and lacerations in a general theory of learning, identity-formation, knowledge and ethics. Learning as coming to know, then, has two principal forms, as a linguistic descriptor and as an event or episodic series of events in the world. There are connections and relations between them, however, and these will be central to the argument we are making, as will be the notion of enframing or framing in a Heideggerian sense.[1] Any claim to knowledge or any utterance made by a person is enframed, and this requires us to articulate and give expression to this enframing as it relates to all those issues, utterances and occurrences (and never more so than with curriculum matters) that we might want to place within ontological, epistemological and methodological domains; and, consequently, any knowledge claim is enframed by a meta-epistemic theory, the type of object or objects it makes reference to, and how it can be justified. This incorporates a theory of mind and, therefore, a theory of the relationship between mind or minds and the world, and conversely between the world and mind or minds.

Our previous work on curriculum and educational sapience is useful here. We view curriculum not merely as organised knowledge, but as a formative relationship, a structured encounter that cultivates moral discernment, epistemic responsibility, and wisdom. We take, and indeed have taken, in our previous work, a position that does not set up an intellectually dubious opposition between colonialist epistemologies and ethics *and* indigenous ways of knowing and being. Indeed, we have been, and will be in this book,

attempting to treat concepts such as coloniality and indigeneity as complex and far from just being known by what they are not. In addition, colonising and decolonising are concepts and they are also practices of various types. As concepts, they have multisemic, semantically contested, networked, interactive, powerful and dynamic qualities attached to them.

Every concept, then, including those being used here, has a referential structure, in that every conceptual (and thus semantic) activity is framed and then reframed in relation to the possibilities that inhere in the concept and in a network of other concepts. This means that we are committing to the idea that the meaning of a concept, including concepts such as colonising and decolonising and their contents, rests with three primary networks or constellations of meaning: a framework which is past-oriented and thus refers to the antecedents of the concept; a framework of other and contemporary concepts where a key concern is the notion of relevance; and a framework of how the concept we are concerned with is used, or can be used, in the present. These three frameworks correspond to the three foundational elements of any social theory: the genealogical, the semantic and the pragmatic. In colonial epistemic framings – and there are many of them – these three elements are generally neglected or misused in their application. The genealogical is transposed into a conventional event-orientated framing. The semantic element is ignored or distorted to fit the demands of a scientistic or colonial economy. The pragmatic is illegitimately conceptualised as irrealist and ethically relativist. All three of these elements are necessary for a full or complete social theory.

This is heady stuff, and we should be clear that in trying to give expression to what coloniality and decoloniality might be we are also engaged in transforming society and emancipating ourselves. Several forms of epistemic decolonisation have been developed. A first form is that decolonial forms of knowledge are simpliciter oppositional constructs to that which they sought to replace. A decolonised construction of knowledge and its justification is essentially oppositional and reactive. A second form that an epistemic decolonisation can take is to understand colonising epistemic practices as wholly misguided and false, and thus the solution is a cutting out, an erasure (in history and over time), of these malignant constructs. This has to comprise a reversion to what was there before colonisation. A third form of epistemic decolonisation is not to reject in total those eurocentric stories, narratives, histories, justificatory principles, that are in the history of these colonised peoples, but to build on them, to develop them in local contexts and environments; to create, in short, new epistemic models out of old ones, both indigenous and colonial. These generative decolonising mechanisms may be resistive, oppositional, adversarial, etc., and they comprise a state of affairs which is in opposition to another state of affairs. There is a plethora of such mechanisms or apparatuses: counter-conductings, emancipations, textual

readings, decategorisations, absentings, praxis(ings), trans-framings, reflections and textualisings (see Scott, 2021; 2024; 2025[2]), to name but a few. This is what this book has to offer.

David Scott
Sandra Leaton Gray
Rita Chawla-Duggan
12.04.2025

Notes

1 In the German that Heidegger wrote in he used the word *Gestell*, which translates as frame, positioning, underpinning, stand or enframing; see Heidegger, M. (1962) [1927] *Sein und Zeit*, translated as *Being and Time* by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
2 Scott, D. (2021) *On Learning: A General Theory of Objects and Object-Relations*, London: UCL Press; Scott, D. (ed.) (2024) *On Learning: volume 2, Philosophy, Concepts and Practices*, London: UCL Press; Scott, D. (2025) *On Learning: volume 3, Curriculum, Knowledge and Ethics*, London: UCL Press.

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1 Introduction

Decolonising as a concept and as a practice can be thought of as being in opposition to the concept and practice of colonising. It is an undoing, a cancelling, a transformation, a going beyond. In short, control over the lives of a people is shifted from one national body, the coloniser, to what we might want to call the indigenous people of that nation, the colonised.[1] These colonising and decolonising processes operate within political, social, cultural, epistemological, temporal, geographical, categorising and semantic framings and settings. The process of moving from the one to the other is not straightforward and is usually fragmentary and gradual, and generally does not involve a going back to an imagined utopic view of the past. A new sense of nationhood and nationality is being developed. It might also involve an ongoing critique of eurocentric worldviews and the prioritising of First People's or indigenous knowledge.

Decolonisations of knowledge or epistemic decolonisations – a discursive configuration comprising discursive objects and discursive relations, that has the potential to persist over time – take as their central opposition (they are not this or that…) the perceived universality of eurocentric knowledge systems. They seek to construct and legitimise alternative epistemologies and epistemological framings. The presumption is that knowledge systems, curricula, categories, etc. are colonised and need to be decolonised. The universality that it is opposed to is replaced by a more apt and convincing sense of universality. Colonialists determine what can count as legitimate knowledge, and, in effect, exclude, marginalise, and dehumanise those with different forms of knowledge, expertise, and justification. The colonisation process, long or short, extensive or restricted, resulted in a repression of indigenous forms of knowledge production, of meaning systems, of different symbolic universes and of notions of indigenous subjectivities and agencies. In 1999 Linda Tuhiwai Smith[2] characterised this process in the following way:

> Imperialism and colonialism brought complete disorder to colonized people, disconnecting them from their histories, their landscapes, their

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languages, their special relations and their own ways of thinking, feeling and interacting with the world.

Colonialism is a form of exploitation and subjugation, and it exists and works in every crevice and fissure (material or discursive) of the person and their relations with other people and other things or objects.

Relational Knowledge

Both of these seminal concepts, colonising and decolonising, and the various relations between them are semantically enframed in three networks or nexuses of meaning. Our task in this book is to decipher some of those meanings and meaning-frames that these two concepts and the relations between them can be given, both in real-time and in future-time. Some of these meanings and meaning-frames then are imaginary and, consequently, they refer to the possibilities of the concept-in-use. Colonising and decolonising and the possible relations between them are conceptual and praxical, and therefore have epistemic and practical manifestations. In the first instance then we need to understand them as relational forms of knowledge.

Epistemology has traditionally been concerned with what distinguishes different knowledge claims; specifically with what the criteria are that allow distinctions to be made between what is legitimate knowledge and what is simply opinion or belief. Epistemology is supposed to answer the question: how do we know what we think we know? Historically, it is an aspect of the Enlightenment's dismantling of tradition and experience as sources of knowledge. With this dismantling came the question of how any knowledge claim could be considered valid or, indeed, how it was possible to know anything. What epistemology was essentially seen as doing was creating a set of rules for knowing by drawing boundaries and setting up mechanisms to police those boundaries. Through an application of the rules, only certain kinds of knowledge would be considered valid; the rest would be refused that status. Very quickly, the rules or grounds for this validity came to be found in the scientific method, in the form of measurement, in testability and in the use of reason.[3] Through empiricism, sense experience (rather than life experience) gained through observation and experiment became the given, the source or grounding of knowledge. Epistemological issues came to be seen purely in empiricist terms, with science as the privileged model of investigation.

Any encounter with the world makes knowledge claims and for that reason alone is implicated in epistemological questions. Indeed, it could be argued that every encounter we have in the world has an underlying epistemology, even though this is rarely made explicit – most of the time the epistemology is either unrecognised or taken for granted. It is simply assumed

that the knowledge learnt will be positivist and empiricist in its epistemology and therefore unproblematic: hence the power of quantitative methods most obviously located within its parameters. Nowadays, this taken-for-granted approach to epistemology is no longer considered adequate. For example, making a knowledge claim is not just a matter of appealing to universal rules of validity, since claims are justified within collectively held conceptions about the world and how to relate to it; rather, making knowledge claims is a social practice. It is the social conceptions that are embodied in an epistemology, the most powerful of which is the conception that holds up the methods and procedures of the natural sciences as the model for producing valid knowledge claims. The rules, then, for policing knowledge claims are themselves culturally located – epistemologies are as much about politics or power as they are about logic.

Positivism is an epistemological position which affirms the facticity of the world. Positivists and empiricists argue that, since the only possible content of true statements is facts, it is the scientific method that reveals facts about the world. The scientific method is the set of rules which guarantee accurate representation; a correspondence between what reality is and how it is represented in knowledge. There are fundamental laws expressible as universal generalisations governing both the natural and social worlds and discoverable through scientific activity. Positivism therefore equates legitimacy with science (albeit an idealised picture of science) and scientific method (in the sense of a set of general methodological rules). All this involves a number of assumptions. One is that the world is objective, in that it exists independently of those who seek to know it and that it has a material existence that is separate from the mind of the knower in a fundamental sense. Consequently, there is a clear distinction or separation to be made between subjects (knowers) and objects (the world). Facts are to do with the world and are therefore 'objective', whereas values and concerns are to do with the 'subjective', which must not be allowed to interfere with the process of discovering facts. Second, assertions about the world and hence the validity of knowledge claims are about observable measurable phenomena. Furthermore, different observers, given their possession in common of a reasoning faculty, should come to the same conclusions about what they observe. Third, the social world is not essentially different from the natural world. There is order and reason, patterns and cause–effect forms in the former just as in the latter. It follows from this that all the sciences share a common logic and method of enquiry.[4]

Although these assumptions are significant and need to be problematised, their very foregrounding can convey the impression that positivism is simply an abstruse epistemological doctrine without much purchase in the real world. This, however, is misleading, since positivism defines not only a way of explaining the world but also a way of theorising social reality and of

how we should behave – the ethical dimension; and this has important social consequences. It involves accepting the position that there is a set of logical rules of explanation, independent of the world and its social practices, which can distinguish between and judge all knowledge claims, and this implies, in turn, that research and knowing, or coming to know, a mind-to-world activity in a praxical form, is a matter of observation and measurement, that it has a universal rather than an embedded rationality and that it works with a unitary and invariant set of methods. Those subscribing to this doctrine are also committing themselves to a particular ethical way of seeing and acting in the world, which can at times be brutal and uncaring. Many of these people are not aware of the consequences of their beliefs, and, in addition, temper their enthusiasms for logical positivist and empiricist worldviews by deliberately adopting compassionate and caring attitudes in their relations in the world, such as Christian notions of care for the poor and the sick, charitable works, and, in extreme cases, living out their lives in the service of others. These are, however, addendums and adjuncts to their real selves.

However, the most significant thing about positivism for our purposes here is that it is not simply an epistemology but, more importantly, a way of theorising social reality. Positivism is a continuation of the grand narrative of the European Enlightenment that only a society based on science and its universal values can be rational and therefore truly free. This is a narrative of cultural progress where modernity is depicted as a process of science replacing not only religion and tradition but also practical wisdom and experience as the foundation of social organisation, and where the law-like generalisations of science form the basis of expertise that informs and justifies policy-making. It is positivism which shapes this position and technical-rationality, the enactment of positivist principles in the realm of practice, which plays a key role. Technical-rationality involves practices of expertise based on law-like generalisations or nomothetic statements. It is the deployment of instrumental rationality in choosing the most efficient means based on expertise in achieving pre-specified ends, and this is the base or foundation of colonial knowledge and practice, albeit that there are a number of different versions.

However, there are many who would argue that there are few who nowadays believe in positivism. There is much truth in this argument, since positivism has undoubtedly been subjected to a great deal of hard critique, probably to the extent where few would wish to support it purely as an epistemological position. Yet it would be a serious mistake to therefore think of positivism simply as a philosophical curiosity, fit only for the dustbin of history. It could be argued, on the contrary, that this is far from being the case, since it still remains a dominant philosophy in practice, and, of course, is particularly alive and well in the practices of technical-rationality, itself still influential in research, practice, ethics, and colonial policy-making.

To understand why this is the case it is also necessary to recognise that positivism and technical-rationality are themselves not the whole story. Another layer is provided by the conceptual framework of representational realism, a framework that is presupposed by positivism and the practices of technical-rationality. Whilst philosophically there are many variants of realism, indeed some would argue that we can do without the notion of reality altogether,[5] there are certain common features. The best-known variant could be characterised simply as common sense expressed in philosophical language, which is perhaps what makes it so powerful, yet at the same time masked in its effects. Our common-sense intuition tells us that the world exists independently of our lives and socio-cultural practices. We feel that the world is real, that it exists around us, out there, indifferent to our hopes, beliefs and desires at any particular moment. This independent, objective, world is the yardstick against which we must measure our hopes, beliefs, etc. in order to assess and establish their truth and reality. The nature of the world out there is something about which we can make discoveries, and our knowledge increases with every discovery. Consequently, knowledge acquired in the scientific and colonial mode brings us closer to true descriptions of the world in the form of theories that express these truths. Representational realism overlaid by positivism can therefore be summed up in three propositions: first, that reality is self-evidently available and can be accessed directly; second, that science is free of its own cultural framings; and third, that knowledge is produced by means of immutable methods.

The independent existence of the world is the essence of the view of objectivity shared by common sense, colonial science and technical-rationality. Truth is achieved through applying appropriate rationally grounded techniques; hence the notion of knowing as a technical process. Once a statement about the world is found to be true, it is true absolutely for everyone anywhere. For any field of understanding, there will be one true description of the world, and this description must command universal assent, since once a truth is established it is unassailable; it has a cognitive authority which makes it irrational not to assent to it. Moreover, the values, true or false, as applied to statements about the world exhaust all its epistemic and semantic possibilities. One cannot have 'true just for x' or 'neither true nor false'; representational realism inclines us to believe that such statements would literally be meaningless. All propositional statements must be either true or false, and must be non-contradictory, since otherwise no true description of the world would be possible, given the plurality of incommensurable truths.

In direct forms of realism, the relation between theories that explain the world and the world itself has to be understood on the model of the external perspective, which we might want to call the God's-eye point of view. One comes to know about the world but without being in it. The world

consists of independently existing objects of which there can only be one true description; a description that is guaranteed by the elimination of observer bias and ambiguity of language. Truth is a matter of correspondence between statements about the world contained in theories and the way the world is, its reality. It is the presence of reality, therefore, that determines truth, which is, in effect, the measure of truth; presence is the *voice* of nature, the origin, the authorising centre, which places the necessary restrictions or limits on how the world can be described, and how it can be known. It eliminates any distortion in representing or knowing the world so that the latter can be represented in the language of knowledge. The priority or pre-existence of the world – as it really is – over any descriptions we make of it implies that the role of language is to be a transparent medium that enables the world to be accurately represented. Language is tied to the world through relations of correspondence between names and sentences *and* objects and states of the world. For the empiricist, then, the only language that counts is a language which is representative and literal, with pure and unambiguous meanings, free from the distortions of interpretation and the figural, and this is in all essential respects a colonial form of knowledge.

Embodied in representational realism is a picture of a universally correct standard of rationality operating according to the laws of inferential logic. Individuals are considered to be endowed with the capacity, albeit to varying degrees, of exercising this rationality; a rationality that is seen as an essence of a natural kind rather than an outcome and function of the norms and practices of particular societies. Knowledge can be systematically developed by deploying this invariant and universal standard of rationality, encapsulated in notions such as Western knowledge or European Enlightenment knowledge or colonial knowledge or occidental cultural knowledge.[6] The history of science is that of a cumulative, linear progression from ignorance to knowledge, a steady and inexorable movement away from incompleteness and error.

What this points to is that although knowing is generally thought of as a process of finding out about the world, there is also a need to take account of the reflexive dimension in research and indeed in all forms of knowing. Reflexivity is about exploring how meanings, including the meanings given to and generated by this knowing, are discursively constructed within the apperceptive process.[7] One implication of foregrounding reflexivity and discursive construction is the recognition that academic and literary genres interpenetrate, and this itself has implications for epistemological questions of validity. Given the embeddedness of representational realism in Western science and colonial knowledge, there has always been a rigorous exclusion (in the name of rigour) of expressive modes. These expressive modes have been consigned to literature, and so literature becomes the feared and rejected other of science and coloniality which is always necessary to

establish its credibility. Literary texts were deemed to be metaphorical and allegorical, expressing inventions rather than observed facts and privileging multiple effects of meaning rather than singular meanings. Above all, they violated referential language and the principle of bivalence, narrating one thing in order to say something else, often of a contradictory nature.

Yet the literary dimension is not so easy to mark off-limits and out of bounds by this construction of otherness, since literary processes – metaphor, figuration, narrative, expressive tropes generally – select and impose meanings as they express them. But these literary processes, endemic in all forms of research and apperception,[8] yet concealed by empiricist/positivist metaphysics, not only highlight its rhetorical nature but also make possible systematic exclusions that enable the very possibility of truth. What we have here is yet another hierarchical binary opposition – science/literature – alongside the colonising and decolonising binary that we are so concerned about in this book, which, when deconstructed, shows the interdependence of the two terms rather than their opposition. The deconstruction of this binary opposition implies, therefore, that texts, such as this one, do not simply report the truth of the matter. They are not just a written record of what went on in the apperception process and what was found out about the world. Rather, they are implicated in economies of truth; for example, knowledge is now implicated in the ethnocentric economy of truth of Western philosophy or colonial metaphysics.

At this point, having mentioned *writing*, it might be appropriate to say something more about the notion of *text*; a notion that is extraordinarily controversial and yet is critical in thinking of ways in which the apperceptive process might be thought of differently. To talk in terms of text, and to conceive of text as a signifying practice, implies that in the practice of science, or indeed in the practice of generating bodies of validated knowledge, we should always question and deconstruct those discursive formations that we are interpolated in; or, to put it another way, recognise our own cultural positionings by being reflexive. Furthermore, the responsibility of any practice that questions itself is that it cannot just challenge positivism and simply locate itself as post-positivist but must take responsibility for itself. It must be political in the sense that it recognises its own powerful effects – a key concern of decoloniality – and accepts the moral dimension that is intrinsic in interpreting the utterances and actions of others, and, of course, of operating in a decolonial way. We hope that this is what we have done in this book.

This takes us back to the earlier argument, since the consequence of this is that as thinkers we need to problematise representation so that we can be reflexive about the practices of representation within which we are located; in other words, we need to engage in a signifying practice that questions the grounding and effectiveness of knowing as a signifying

process. The implication here is that there is a need to decentre validity from the realist notion of the correspondence of thought with its object. Validity can then alternatively be seen as multiple, partial, endlessly deferred; a transgressive and decolonial validity, which can interrupt or disrupt, even if it cannot entirely replace, a validity of correspondence. At this point, it is important to stress that it is not a matter of overthrowing and replacing conventional notions of validity, since there would then be a danger of decolonial transgression itself becoming a new grounding. What transgressive validity does is to remind us that knowing in its active and learnt manifestation is not simply representational. It brings to our attention the ways in which the discursive does its work through truth, where, because different epistemologies (or truth games) imply different relations between people, establishing truth always involves a power struggle, and this struggle is always embedded in a language. Furthermore, it foregrounds the limits and boundary-marking of disciplinary knowledge – a key colonial concern[9] – and questions the conventional integrity of the self as a social being, seeing this self not as free-standing and rational but rather as a specific subject of difference located in a colonial economy.

Colonial and Decolonial Frames

In trying to understand how a concept or a binary set of concepts functions in the world, it is important to contextualise the way it functions within three networks or constellations of meaning: antecedent frameworks, coextensive frameworks and pragmatic frameworks. In stating this we are invoking a truth; indeed, we cannot say anything at all, from the most profound to the relatively trivial, without doing this. In trying to discover what the relations between coloniality and decoloniality might, or could be, we are committing ourselves to a truthful account of these two concepts and the relations that connect the one to the other. If we make a comment about a meal that we have just eaten in a restaurant we are at the same time making a comment about the truthfulness of this comment. If we correct a student's English we are remarking on the truth or otherwise of that correction. Truth as a concept and as a practice is undeniably a part of the complex webs and practices that we surround ourselves with. We cannot do without the idea, and yet, concepts, such as coloniality and decoloniality, are multisemic, semantically contested, networked, interactive, powerful and dynamic.

What this means is that truth as a concept can be understood in a number of different ways; for example, true knowledge might refer to hypotheses that work. Here, the burden of proof for whether a statement satisfies a set of criteria is that when this hypothesis, referring to a proposed relationship in the world, is deployed in a practical sense, it works, or at least leads to effects that the hypothesis predicted. A second possibility might be that true

knowledge is inter-subjectively agreed knowledge. Here the burden of proof is that the truth criterion for this statement about knowledge resides in whether or not the claim being made is agreed with a community of knowers that have an interest in it – this, of course, means that the power dimension of this exchange is foregrounded. A third possibility might be that true knowledge can be justified empirically; and here the burden of proof for any statement that we might want to make rests with some form of true relationship between what is in the world and our knowledge of it. The most common form that this can take is correspondence or mirroring (see Richard Rorty's [1979] arguments against this position). A fourth possibility is that true knowledge is logically coherent and here an acknowledgement has to be made that it is possible to identify in a universal sense certain correct relations and consequently certain incorrect relations between words, word-sets, concepts and forms of knowledge. And there is also a credible position that can be taken, which asserts that true knowledge is such because we trust it. In effect, we have tried and trusted methods, deeply embedded in the social arrangements we have made, for judging whether evidence is reliable, including criteria for making these judgements. These different conceptions of truth, and the choice between them that is demanded, always operate in the realm of language and thought, and can only give us a limited understanding of the external world, what is outside the mind, ours and other people's minds.

However, all these different conceptions of truth are fundamentally about the limits or foundations of knowledge, and as we are arguing here are directly related to notions of coloniality and decoloniality, and provide possible answers to transcendental questions concerning the nature of reality and how we can know it and come to know it. Such knowledge might refer to the following propositions: i) any claim to knowledge made by a person is enframed; ii) there is a need to articulate and give expression to this enframing as it relates to ontological, epistemological and methodological concerns; and thus any knowledge claim is enframed by a theory of knowledge, what it is and how it can be justified; iii) a relationship exists between a claim to knowledge and its truth-value, and this allows us to talk about true-knowledge as a useful compound word; iv) any divisions or categories that we care to use are in history and could be other than they are, and this includes ontological and epistemological divisions; v) this requires a theory of mind and thus a theory of the relationship between mind or minds and the world; vi) knowledge and learning are homologous concepts; vii) concepts – including the concept of corrigibility – can be polysemic and used in a number of different ways and are enframed in a form of life; viii) it is possible to determine that any claim to knowledge we might want to make is credible, that there are four ways of establishing the truth or otherwise of any propositional claim we might want to make about knowledge: epistemic,

coherentist, rational and logical, and that some form of combination of these is possible and necessary; and ix) this ontology is a form of dispositional realism (see Scott, 2021).

Two arguments (reason-giving propositions) can be inferred from these examples of transcendental knowledge. The first is that it is possible to identify a type of meta-knowledge, the truth of which does not lie in specific instances of knowledge-construction, but in a set of preconditions for the operation of knowledge disciplines and practices. The second is that no sense can be given to a general notion of knowing and coming to know unless there is also an acknowledgement that all its generating instances are situated in some form or another. The argument then becomes that our utterances always and necessarily presuppose a set of conditions that are, in effect, universal. These include context-transcending notions of truth and morality and the rejection of domain-specific notions of correctness. Acts of referring therefore cannot take place without a background of an operating referential system; acts of lying cannot take place outside a system of truth-telling.

Ludwig Wittgenstein in his 1969 book, *On Certainty*,[10] suggested that there is a set of conceptual framings that operate – having an ontological presence – outside of what can be called forms of knowledge (propositional, embodied, procedural and dispositional). Wittgenstein also identified a set of justificatory principles in and for knowledge: *Bestimmtheit* (certainty), *Versicherung* (assurance), *Überzeugung* (conviction), (*das*) *Sichersein* (being sure), *unbedingt vertrauen* (trust with reservation), *Glaude* (belief), and *es steht für mich fest* (it stands fast for me). All of these expressions are used at various points of *On Certainty*, and they are repeated here in the original German that Wittgenstein wrote in and in translation,[11] although as with any translation they are not exact repetitions of the German word. The point is that these are forms of knowledge, or forms that knowledge and knowing can take, and for Wittgenstein they are not transcendental or the ultimate core of being. They are superceded by something more fundamental, which at various times in his writing he called: hinge certainty,[12] or grammatical ineffability, or bounds of sense and not objects of sense, or scaffolding of thought, or that some things cannot be put into words at all but can only show themselves through words (the literary dimension) or deeds (the praxical dimension).

Grammar, for Wittgenstein, came to mean not merely a set of syntactical rules but the conditions for intelligibility: it is the basis from which we can make sense of the world and acquire knowledge of it, but it is not a form of knowledge in itself. Resolving this issue requires us to answer the question of what the contents of a mind and a set of minds might be. By restricting in what seems to be an arbitrary way what is constituted by the terms, knowledge and knowing, and coming to know (the learning element), it doesn't

seem to us to move the debate very much forward. The issue in both cases – knowledge as being the contents of our minds and as the scaffolding of thought or hinge certainty – is still world-to-mind relations and conversely mind-to-world relations. And, in turn, these are central to understandings of coloniality and decoloniality and colonial and decolonial practices.

We also need to say something here about the concept and practice of learning, because learning is a key epistemic concept. (You will have noticed that learning in its pluralised form is a part of the title of this book.) In order to understand the meanings we can give to coloniality and decoloniality, we need in the first place to understand what learning is. A theory of learning pivots on the idea that there is an entity called for the sake of convenience a person and this entity has a relationship (both inward and outward) with an environment. It also positions learning as the key connecting link between mind and world. As a concept, learning is fundamentally related to knowledge, and therefore, if we are concerned with learning and the practices of learning, we also need to make reference to what is to be learnt, and typically what we are aiming at in such considerations is some form of knowledge. As social expressions and activities, these different forms of knowledge are given different statuses or have different attachments of importance, as we can see all too clearly with the two key concepts that we are concerned about in this book, coloniality and decoloniality, and, of course, the relations between them. These valorised ascriptions do not lie exclusively in the intrinsic nature of each knowledge form, but also in the way these knowledge forms are realised in societies, and certainly in colonial and decolonial ones.

Learning then is an epistemic category, besides having a number of other senses. There are three sites of knowledge (to use a spatial signifier): the world and its contents, the mediating arena between the contents of the world and objects in the mind (this is what we might want to call learning sites, which are also contentful), and the contents of the mind that allow us to make judgements, perceive the world and reflect on what we have perceived. To separate out these three sites is itself to make a judgement about the contents of the world and how we can access them. It is also to make a claim that there are always non-conceptual external constraints on what we perceive to be the contents of the world – we cannot make limitless claims about its contents because the world does not allow us to do this, as we can see all too clearly with the two key concepts that we are concerned about in this book, coloniality and decoloniality, and, of course, the relations between them. There are some philosophers[13] who seek to sever any relations between our minds and what we can tentatively call the world. In doing this they are suggesting that knowledge, the contents of our minds, is not about anything other than other contents of our minds, and this solipsistic approach is unable to explain learning, volition, action, ethicising, colonising, decolonising and much more.

A prior question that needs an answer, then, is: what is knowledge? and a second question, as a follow-up, might be, what is colonial/decolonial knowledge? For only then, having answered them in a satisfactory way, can we begin to understand what the relationship is between knowledge and learning, and what possibilities there are and might be in the concepts of colonisation and decolonisation. Further to this, if these two sets of foundational concepts can be construed in different ways (they are multisemic), then we would have to accept that there is a variety of possible relations between them. The key to understanding what these relations are lies with those relational concepts that are an essential element of any discursive configuration, given that we want to position the colonising–decolonising complex as central to our work in this book. Examples of such relations are: maturation, progression, narration, possibility, projection, praxis, edification, justification, teleology, pluralisation, strength, rank or order, development, enablement, constraint, convergence, divergence, framing, categorising, subsumption, contiguity and so on. Only some of these relations are relevant to the coloniality–decoloniality dyad in a fundamental sense.

Knowledge, or so we are arguing here, is integral to the four principal types of learning: cognitive (relating to propositions), skill-based (relating to processes), embodied (relating to bodily accomplishments) and dispositional (relating to the characteristics of a person). Knowledge and learning are homologous concepts, and what is meant by this is that both operate in the same way and that they share properties and meanings. Prior to cognitive, skill-based and embodied forms of learning is a set of dispositions, without which they would be unsustainable. Cognition comprises the manipulation of those symbolic resources (words, figures, idioms, terms, numbers, characters, signs, pictures, images, etc.), which points to (although not necessarily in a mirroring or isomorphic sense) something outside itself. Skill-based knowledge is different from cognition because it is procedural and not propositional. Embodied knowledge refers to knowledge which primarily relates to the body or has a corporeal impulsion. Distinguishing between knowledge of how to do something (process forms of knowledge), knowledge of something (judging that claim in terms of its relations within and to a network of concepts, and making the subsequent commitments that this entails), conceptual knowledge (interacting with the world in a specific way) and embodied forms of knowledge (assimilating an action and being able to perform in the spaces associated with that action) is important; however, they are in essence all knowledge-making activities, and consequently can be formulated generically as acts of learning.

Apperception

Wilfred Sellars, in his book *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind* (1997),[14] argued against, and with much force, the argument that what we receive

through our senses is received in an unmediated form in the mind of the person doing the sensing activity. What this implies, unequivocally, is that we can never know, where knowing is understood as a function of the mind and not a function of the object itself, what the world is like or what is in the world or how particular objects in the world, such as coloniality and decoloniality, are actually structured. And yet this set of knowledge claims would seem to rule out those things, that we are calling powerful objects, as having any influence, force or ability to contribute to the formation of minded objects or mental phenomena. We are, however, hearing, feeling, seeing, smelling and tasting beings, that is, we conceive ourselves as taking part in an endless process of interacting with our environment (making representings). We are also thinking beings and we think in languaged ways. So our knowledge claims, including those which we have made above, are claims made within the boundaries of language – we are never in a position to think thoughts without a language. What this means is that, although potentially there are many things that could be expressed as thoughts in language, we cannot have those thoughts in our minds because language has not yet evolved or developed so that we could express those thoughts using the resource of language. What we might be able to do, however, is have thoughts that can be expressed in language which point to the possibility that eventually we will be able to have those thoughts. We are always constrained and enabled in our thinking by language and what it can do; however, language and its capacities change over time. The Sapir–Whorf hypothesis (see Whorf, 1952) suggests that the structure of a language determines a speaker's perception and categorisation of experience. The word 'determines' in the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis is too strong. Perhaps 'shapes', rather than 'determines', is a better word to use. The currency of mind is ideas and sets of ideas expressed in a language. This does not mean that some objects, processes, object-relations and object-configurations understood in an ontological sense do not exist, only that we do not have a language, a system of symbols, to give an account of them.

However, the problem still remains: if the senses or pure sense datum does influence, force or impress upon our thoughts, how does it do this and in what way? If we can provide a set of reasons in favour of this proposition, then we can also say that not every account of the world, colonial or decolonial, for example, is true or valid, and that some are more correct than others. And we can also say that we are dealing with a process, with distinct stages – from particular object to sensation, to learning, to thought, to configuration of thought, and so on, with changes being made at each stage to the particular object going through the process. There is also another process which we can give some linguistic shape to and this is the reverse of what we have been thinking about here – from configuration of a thought to a thought, to a learning instance, to a particular object. And further to this, we can say that some minded objects or objects-in-the-mind do not have a

relationship with the outside world in the first instance, although in the second instance they may influence discursive objects, languaged objects, even material objects, although even here we are pointing to certain things in the world rather than saying what they are.

The essential concerns of this book and for anyone who is trying to understand the colonial–decolonial dyad are two relationships or connections in the world: mind–world and world–mind relations and connections. There are a number of ways in which these relations and connections can be articulated. The first model is a straightforward realist model in which the contents of the world are able to be processed by the mind (albeit the mind of an individual in a sophisticated and developed semblance) without some form of mediation (through intuition or temporal/spatial transformation) lodged in the mind. Language or other symbolic forms (words, pictures, mathematical symbols, musical notations, and so forth, or in combination) can transparently connect a symbolic character or set of symbolic characters to a referent, which it is assumed will have a non-symbolic form. The key to this exchange is that it is preflexive and what this means is that at the point of entry into the mind (this has spatial and temporal elements) the sensory input is pure – it has not yet been transformed in any way through meditative, integrationist, developmental, critical and other processes. The world, insofar as we can understand it, is these pre-sensory objects and their differentiating characteristics. This might solve the duality problem of inner and outer realms because the suggestion here is that there are no inner and outer realms. There is only one seamless process. What it cannot do, however, is solve the transformation problem, because we still have to make sense of the mediating relationship between what we think might be a set of material arrangements and a set of ideas, between a reference and a referent, and between a world and a mind. A mind, we can speculate, only works with ideas and concepts that are ideational.

And yet this hints at the idea that in relation to our attempts at describing the world, acting in the world and thinking about the world, there is something else which cannot be expressed in a language or a set of languages. The inability of being able to express it is a function of the thought itself, since this is what the thought is about. A language consequently cannot be a transparent medium for the expression and transmission of every possible thought or set of thoughts. It is a filter, a gauze, a transformer and a change-agent in itself. What this means is that if we use a language correctly (grammatically, semantically, syntactically, morphologically, linguistically) we are acknowledging that language use has rules that need to be followed. Despite its enormous capacity, there are therefore limits as to what it can do. A further point about language is that to use it correctly words have to be embedded in phrases, and phrases have to be embedded in sentences, and sentences have to be embedded in paragraphs, and paragraphs have to be embedded in

texts. Morphologically, then, these parts of speech are tied closely together in the correct use of a language and we are therefore entitled to say that this is how they should be used, but only if we commit ourselves to a sense of using language in a correct sense.

The learning element of the process can be construed in the following way: as at an entry point or access portal to the mind of a person; as a fundamental change element; as a meeting point between world and mind and then ultimately between mind and world (where world includes other minds); in a semantic sense as a valued or valorised attachment at which the values attached to the objects (for example, coloniality, decoloniality and the relationship between them) are changed or reworked in relation to the fields of valorisation currently in use; in an epistemic sense, as modality, as evaluative description, as minded capacity, as normative categorisation, as *Bildung*, as distinguishing marker, as ethical desideratum, as beyond human capacity and more.

Apperception, then, has a number of stages, which characterise most, but not all world-to-mind and mind-to-world processes. The sensory input in the apperception process goes through a number of phases: world-to-mind (perceptual relations), initial sensory formation as a thought (neuronal relations), thought-through-language (linguistic transformation), language-into-thought (conceptual integration), thought-on-thought (reflexive integration), and manifestation of the thought in action (praxis) or reflection (contemplation). All these phases involve conceptual activity, although different types of concepts are called upon at the different stages. For example, at the first two phases the dominant concept that is used refers or points to the concept of object-identification. At later stages in the apperception process conceptual activity is focused on integrative, transgressive, reflective concepts and dispositions. At each stage of the apperception process one of four actions are initiated: integration (the action or process of successfully becoming a part of a system of thought), transgression (the action or process of fundamentally changing the system of thought by reformulating it), by-passing (the action or process of sidestepping the current system of thought and yet at the same time not discarding it altogether), or replacement (the action or process of gaining traction in the system of thought by discarding elements that do not fit with existing schema). In the first case the sensory input is integrated into existing frames of thought in a satisfactory manner. In the second case the sensory input serves to act in opposition to existing structures of thought and may result in impasses and blockages. In the third case the sensory input by-passes the existing frameworks of understanding, with the result that dislocations and divisions feature in the mind of the individual, without at the same time discarding them altogether. And in the fourth case, these sensory inputs replace those that have been implanted before. These four actions take place at each of the six stages of the apperception process. These are learning processes

or actions, and they are, and have to be, universal linguistic signifiers in a foundational sense.

At each of the six stages of the apperception process, an object, the perceptual object, is transformed in some way or another.[15] We can then subsequently describe the transformational event (or series of events) as an object-relation working in the world, with these events being commonplace, temporally located, multivarious and frequent. If we are able to distinguish between different objects, such as coloniality and decoloniality (and the justification for doing this is complicated, but nevertheless essential to the argument being made in this book) and we want to build into our conception of the world ideas of change, inter- and intra-relationships and continuities (over time), then we need to understand what these are and how they occur. These object-relations act as change-mechanisms at the various stages of the apperception process: perceptual relations-in-action, neuronal relations-in-action, linguistic transformations, conceptual integrations, reflexive integrations, and praxes or contemplations. They also influence the type of change to the object that occurs at each stage.

Enframing

This enframing process comprises a reasoned argument to support a claim about some aspect of the world, whether universal, meta-conceptual, meso-conceptual or empirical, and consequently there is a need to give expression to it as it relates to ontological, ethical, epistemological and methodological issues, and especially with regards to the concepts and praxes of colonising and decolonising. This requires a theory of mind and therefore a theory of the relationship between mind or minds and the world. In addition, concepts such as colonising and decolonising can be polysemic and used in a number of different ways and are enframed in a form of life. All this and more needs to be made explicit before the central argument of this or any other book can be attended to.

There are five object-types in the world: discursive objects (for example, a concept of decolonisation), material objects (for example, a diaspora), relational objects (for example, an inferential relation between sexism and sexuate difference), structural-institutional-systemic objects (this object-type includes discursive configurations such as a racist discourse, and material configurations such as a concentration camp) and people. People have to be treated differently from other types of objects, not least because they operate through dispositional concepts and volitions, and all that this implies. Each of these object-types has different characteristics and, because objects have a morphogenetic structure,[16] in rare circumstances may change their status as objects; indeed, what constitutes an object-type is also morphogenetic.

In an object-ontology human beings have acquired dispositions. These are conceptual relations, which cannot be fully determined as to their meaning in definitional and essentialising ways, but only in terms of how they are used in a way of life. What we are suggesting is that when we make a truth-bearing statement, we are not providing a description of an experience but making a claim about it in what has been described as 'a space of reasons'.[17] Reasons are different from, and operate in different ways to, physical causes. There are also good and less good reasons for doing something. What follows from these two assertions is that we can and should understand and use concepts specifically in relation to current and future-oriented networks or constellations of meanings. Reasoning within this space involves the giving and asking for reasons, where this activity is understood as making a commitment in the world and to its consequences[18]. For the time being, we will put to one side the obvious problems with this idea or set of ideas and try to show that these notions of reason-giving and commitment are extraordinarily rich in content and form. This book is about these issues, but above all else it is about the concepts and practices of colonising and decolonising, and those objects, object-configurations and object-relations that characterise them.

The Book

Both of our key concepts (coloniality and decoloniality) and the actual and possible relations between them are valorised (or ethicised) in different ways. Ethics is not a unisemic concept: what counts as a good or bad description of our own or another person's actions in the world is disputed. Even in a descriptive sense, ethics can be understood as a family-resemblance notion, with weak and vaguely drawn boundaries between its different manifestations. As with other key concepts such as coloniality and decoloniality, ethics is multisemic, semantically contested, networked, interactive, powerful and dynamic. It can be thought of as a special type of action in the world with a special type of weight or authority given to it because of its concerns with the welfare of other people. It can also be construed as a special type of reasoning about our relations with other people. By giving it this weight or authority, there is also a suggestion that ethical norms have universal characteristics and that these characteristics apply to and bind all human beings who find themselves in similar circumstances.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4, which focuses on education,[19] is a decolonial set of aspirations. Colonisation often resulted in educational inequalities, with the colonisers receiving a superior education while the colonised were provided with limited access to a good education. This inequality has persisted in many post-colonial countries, contributing to disparities in knowledge, skills, and

economic opportunities. Goal 4 of the sustainable development goals addresses this issue by calling for inclusive and equitable education for all, with a focus on providing equal opportunities regardless of a person's background.

The legacy of colonisation can be seen in various aspects of education, including the continued dominance of colonial languages in education systems, curricula that do not reflect local cultures and histories, and unequal access to educational resources. It is further complicated by English being adopted during the second half of the 20th century as the primary language of globalisation and digitalisation, thereby compounding these linguistic difficulties. Goal 4 seeks to address these issues and ensure that education is culturally relevant and accessible to all, regardless of socio-economic background. One of the objectives of decolonisation is to revive and preserve indigenous cultures and knowledge systems that were often suppressed during the colonial period. Education played a critical role in this process. It promoted the preservation and revitalisation of local languages, traditions, and knowledge, thereby fostering a more inclusive and diverse educational landscape.

In Chapter 2, we examine the genealogy of the concept and practice of indigeneity. Particular ideas, concepts and descriptors are embedded in networks of ideas, concepts and descriptors, and have a history. So, for example, indigeneity as a concept is always positioned in a complicated network of other terms, such as innateness, colonisation, decolonisation, race, ethnicity, trait theory, genetics, phenotypicality, biology, historical origin, evolutionary theory and many more. Indigeneity as a concept and as a practice therefore has antecedents, is related to other concepts and praxes, and is used in the lifeworld in particular ways. Epistemic colonisation refers to notions of language, social organisation, religion and belief systems, powerful hierarchies, modes of production, laws, institutions, ways of life, healing processes and learning modes, which the coloniser declares to be illegitimate. Marie Battiste (2011)[20] identified a set of criteria for determining what indigenous knowledge is, with this indigenous knowledge designed to apply to all indigenous knowers in the world, even if they are separated in time and place: knowledge of unseen powers in the ecosystem, knowledge that all things in the ecosystem are inter-dependent, knowledge that reality is conceptualised by concepts that are well-known to participants in the indigenous practice, knowledge that personal inter-relationships are central to personal, community and eco-system practices, and knowledge that sacred traditions and persons should have as their primary function – the preservation of specialised forms of knowledge.

In Chapter 3 we examine the idea of a diaspora. This has three dimensions: temporal, spatial and epistemic. The first of these is time and the topology of the time line, since if we subscribe to the notion that time is a property of an object in the world or an object-relation in the world, then

the shape that the topological line assumes is dependent on the nature of these objects and object-relations, in our case here, a diaspora and a diaspora(ing). Space defines the frame of social relations and thus of forms of identity, and this includes their role, ethic, diaspora, intelligence and many more object-relations. The third dimension is epistemic. Communication modalities are central to the relationship between knowledge and the world. Representationalist theories of mind identify an inner realm of representations and an outer realm of objects in the world, which are placed in some form of identity relation. These modalities are constituted through numbers, words, sounds, images, gestures and symbols. In other words, we communicate through – by using – numeric, linguistic, musical, pictorial, gestural and symbolic forms of representation, or combinations of them, where the representation refers to the mind-world relation. This relation has a learning element. The point is that these modes or modalities are different in their make-up and in their effects; and, in addition, that new and dynamic events over time, such as the Indian diaspora, fundamentally change the nature and type of representation that can be made.

In Chapter 4 we examine the idea of acquiring and having colonial identities, and this is exemplified in the first instance by a genealogical account of Islam–Judaism relations. This is a history of difference, of the different ways that the relationship between Islamic and Jewish people can be understood over time, and of the different meanings that we can give to the notions of being a Muslim and a Jew.[21] These are traces of different orders and conceptualisations adopted by people during their lifetimes. We might want to call them Weltanschauungs, or universal-views, held by a community in place and time – discursive configurations that are in history. Having said that, it is important not to overvalue and thus exaggerate the efficacy of the properties of these historical configurations, and especially the property of absolute reach or ambit.

In Chapter 5, we elucidate the concept and practice of political and economic colonisation. It is possible to develop a typology of these types of colonisation, although we should be aware that there are other and more powerful forms of colonisation, such as epistemic colonisation: settler colonisation (large numbers of settlers claim sovereignty over land and then become the majority); planter colonisation (a form of economic colonisation where a group of colonisers control the mass production of a single crop, for example, sugar, coffee, cotton or rubber, using native labour); extractive colonisation (the coloniser's intention is to extract from a particular land a raw material – a slash-and-burn operation that does not entail permanent occupation); trade colonisation (the coloniser's intention is to control trading relationships with colonised countries – another form of economic colonisation); transport colonisation (this form of colonisation does not mandate the displacement of native peoples, but it does have

an impact on local economies and cultures by creating transport hubs); imperial power colonisation (the purpose of this form of colonialism appears to be simply land expansion); externalising colonisation (sometimes colonisers want a safe space away from the homeland to house convicts or conduct dangerous experiments); taxonomic colonisation (the coloniser gives a legal authority to a principle of unequal esteem for colonisers and those being colonised); rogue colonisation (the coloniser is not a state or a country but an individual who is supported by a state or country);[22] missionary colonisation (the principal aim of the coloniser is to convert the colonised to a religious faith); postcolonial colonisation (the coloniser seeks to influence the way of life of their previous colony); epistemic colonisation (the principal feature here is the control over the spread and extent of ideas in the colonised country), and cultural colonisation (this is where the primary focus of the coloniser is the transmission and enculturation of a particular way of life.). All these forms of colonialism are essentially political and social.[23]

In Chapter 6 we look at the issue of taxonomic categorisation. The concept of race, for example, has been used to signify a division of people into different groups. (This is only one way it can be used.) Under this conception, racial divisions are said to have some type of biological foundation, and this generates discrete racial groupings, so that members of each group share a set of biological characteristics that are not shared by members of other groups. These characteristics are inherited from other members of the same racial grouping; and it therefore becomes possible to identify the geographical origin of each race. These inherited characteristics are usually thought of as physical phenotypes, such as colour of hair, skin colour, eye shape and bone structure; however, and this is where it becomes much more complicated and divisive, sometimes these characteristics are used to refer to behavioural phenotypes such as intelligence or criminality. A belief in the concept of race as it is understood and defined here leads to certain social and political practices that discriminate against particular people, and in addition, to the formation and reformation of categories such as indigeneity, and subsequently to the development of social, cultural and pedagogical practices associated with them. They are not natural kinds.

In Chapter 7 we examine the epistemic colonial legacy in colonial institutions, curricula, pedagogies and learning processes. This picture of colonial institutions comprises an examination of a number of colonising devices: taxonomic (including the delimiting of interpretive possibilities); methodological (including the use of many common statistical devices); meta-theoretical (including the use of concepts such as prediction, averaging, probabilising, and more); cultural (excluding objects, artifacts, performances, activities that offer decategorising, transgressive, critical approaches to the status quo); and unmediated apperception. These colonising learning approaches might be called training models and they have deagentising elements.

In Chapter 8 we tackle the issue of epistemic decolonisation by trying to understand what this complicated conceptual framework might mean. In the first instance we need to ask ourselves the question as to why we should decolonise knowledge. One way of answering this question is to suggest that colonialism can be characterised as a single epistemic authority over and above other plausible contenders, and to then argue that this is a form of epistemic injustice. This positions the imperative to decolonise as an epistemic and ethical virtue. We also examine the relationship between primitive beliefs and practices *and* Western colonial science, and conclude that some of these primitive beliefs and practices cannot be thought of as ethical, sensible, superior to many colonising beliefs and practices, or as progressive. What this means is that in any decolonial process we should be prepared to discard those beliefs and practices because there are no good reasons for retaining them and because there are better and more ethical beliefs and practices available, even if the source of these is colonial.

In Chapters 9, 10 and 11 we examine three very different decolonial concepts and praxes. The first of these comprises the idea of a feminist epistemology and, more importantly, what its contents might be. A feminist praxis is not just an action in the world for this would render the concept of feminism and all the other concepts that have a direct relationship with it as meaningless, insofar as everything we do in the world would be a praxis. It comprises some form of conversion of thought into action, or at least the construction of a particular thought or set of thoughts in such a way that certain actions inevitably flow from it and other actions are set aside. As with all thoughts or thinking this praxis is embedded in histories, archaeologies, and genealogies of that thought or concept[24] and what that thought or set of thoughts allows or disallows. And, of course, praxes become, or may become, settled and persistent configurations, discursive or material.

In Chapter 10 the focus is very much on decolonising the notion and practice of sexuality. Taking a non-binary position is a re-classification of gender and not of biological sex, such as male, female and inter-sex. Nor is it about sexuality, for example, lesbian, asexual, queer/questioning, autosexual, intersexual, gay, bisexual and other types of sexual identity. The category of non-binary is also sometimes known as genderqueer, agender, bigender and genderfluid. Gender, then, is a social category that is learnt rather than given, and consequently has an ethical component. The problem with these three sets of categories, sex, sexuality and gender, is that they are frequently conflated with each other, both linguistically (for example, male is used both as a biological category and as a gendered category) and semantically (for example, lesbians are always female in both a biological and a gendered sense). Gender, then, has as its primary meaning and use those social, psychological, cultural and behavioural characteristics that we attach in a fluid sense to sex differences. Gendered differences are fluid, dynamic, powerful and contested.

In Chapter 11, we explicate the notion of a taxonomic decolonisation, by exploring its criticality and its significance in fostering more equitable relationships between human beings, particularly with regards to race. We also surface the historical underpinnings that have shaped race science and the practice of taxonomy, and reflect on how Western approaches have often perpetuated exclusionary practices and biases, which, in turn, have hindered a full understanding of a racialised world. Here we emphasise the interplay between knowledge and social justice and demonstrate how taxonomic decolonisations can be a pivotal tool in creating more just political and social systems and equal relations between human beings.

In Chapter 12 we foreground Martha Nussbaum's liberal principle (see 2000b), which is that everyone should be treated equally (men, women and inter-sex persons), unless those characteristics that constitute their difference are such that this becomes impossible or unfeasible. The default position is always one of equality of esteem and treatment. Moral equality is a rights-based notion of justice and consists of treating everyone, especially men and women, equally. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity because they are human. This is a conception of justice which is substantive, universal, and morally equivalent. In Immanuel Kant's (2007) moral philosophy, the categorical imperative is underpinned by an equality notion of universal human worth. However, recognising that all human beings are equal does not logically and categorically lead us to the view that we should treat all persons equally.[25] This is principally a normative ethic of equality, and it has universal elements and consequences.

In the final chapter of this book, we examine the issue of the decolonisation of the curriculum, by looking at notions of resistance to colonisation in its many different forms and guises. Here we seek to construct and legitimise alternative epistemologies and epistemological framings. The presumption is that knowledge systems, learning approaches, curricula, categories etc. are colonised and need to be decolonised. The universality that it is opposed to is replaced by a more apt and coherent sense of universality. A praxical hermeneutics and critique comprises, in general terms, an opening up, a looking at, the ways in which our concerns have been portrayed and represented in the past, how we can develop new ways of thinking and how those institutions and practices that are hostile to certain groups of people can be reorganised and reconstructed.

Notes

1 We have to be careful about how we use the word *indigenous*, so that it is not understood in any derogatory way.
2 Tuhiwai-Smith L. (1999: 32) *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research And Indigenous Peoples*, London: Zed Books.

3 In a certain type of reason and reasoning.
4 It is interesting that over time social enquiry has come to be known as social science enquiry. Another way of looking at this is to say that the reason for the change in naming is to add a truth component to the idea of enquiry.
5 Richard Rorty Rorty, R. (1979) *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton: Princeton University Press; Rorty, R. (1998) *Truth and Progress: Philosophical Papers, Volume 3*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.) thought like this.
6 See Said, Edward (2003) *Orientalism Penguin Modern Classics*, London, England: Penguin Classics.
7 The apperceptive process has a number of stages, which characterise most but not all world-to-mind and mind-to-world processes. The sensory input in the apperception process goes through a number of phases: world-to-mind (perceptual relations), initial sensory formation as a thought (neuronal relations), thought-through-language (linguistic transformation), language-into-thought (conceptual integration), thought-on-thought (reflexive integration), and manifestation of the thought in action (praxis) or reflection (contemplation).
8 Knowledge of whatever type always has a semantic element.
9 An example of this knowledge formation is what Michael Young (Young, M. (2005) *Bringing Knowledge Back In: From Social Constructivism To Social Realism In The Sociology Of Education*, London and New York: Routledge) has called social realism, in which he chooses to defend a disciplinary form of knowledge or a subject-didactics. It is, as a knowledge formation, regressive, philosophically naïve, conservative, colonial, exclusionary, desemantic, unpragmatic in a philosophical sense and brutal in its consequences. It is best consigned to the dustbin of history.
10 Wittgenstein, L. (1969) *On Certainty*, New York: Harper and Row.
11 Originally made by Elizabeth Anscombe and Denis Paul.
12 'That is to say, the *questions* that we raise and our *doubts* depend on the fact that some propositions are exempt from doubt, are as it were like hinges on which those turn' (Wittgenstein, L. (1969) *On Certainty*, New York: Harper and Row, §341).
13 Richard Rorty (Rorty, R. (1979) *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton: Princeton University Press; Rorty, R. (1998) *Truth and Progress: Philosophical Papers, Volume 3*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) is an example of a philosopher of this conviction.
14 This is the first real attempt at defining and explicating a critical realist approach to the world.
15 Robert Brandom's (Brandom, R. (2022) *The Spinoza Lectures: Pragmatism and Idealism: Rorty and Hegel on Reason and Representation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 106): Hegelian interpretation characterises this process as containing of recollective instances: 'For recollection reveals this objective represented reality as governing the expressively progressive appearances representing it in a dual sense that the representings are subjunctively sensitive to what they represent and that what they represent serves as a normative standard for assessments of the correctness of those representings.' In using this device he is, in effect, saying that it is possible to identify, in some form or another, both the process that knowledge, as knowing, goes through and the original shape, form, appearance, content of the noumenal object.
16 In using the word morphogenetic, there is no implication that most objects in the world have a genetic structure. However, using this word in the way that we do implies that a system, of thought, of material objects, of relational entities, can be subject to structural change.

17 Sellars, W. (1997) *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
18 Those of you who are familiar with the work of Robert Brandom (Brandom, R. (1994) *Making it Explicit: Reasoning, Representing, and Discursive Commitment*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press; Brandom, R. (2000) *Articulating Reasons: An Introduction to Inferentialism*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press; Brandom, R. (2004) 'The Pragmatist Enlightenment (and its Problematic Semantics)', *European Journal of Philosophy*, 12, 1: 2–24; Brandom, R. (2009) *Reason in Philosophy*: *Animating Ideas*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press; Brandom, R. (2022) *The Spinoza Lectures: Pragmatism and Idealism: Rorty and Hegel on Reason and Representation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press) will recognise the insistence that he places on making commitments in the world during knowledge development processes. This is highly controversial.
19 We should note, however, that Ethiopia was largely unaffected by colonisation except for a brief Italian occupation during World War II.
20 Battiste, M. (2011) *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*, Vancouver: UBC Press.
21 In using these words, Islam, Judaism, Islamic, Jewish, Muslim and Jew, the greatest care needs to be taken in their use. This is because words such as these change their meaning over time and are multisemic.
22 An example of this might be the East India Company. The journalist Carole Cadwalladr and others have framed the modern-day form as a 'Broligarchy' located within a post-truth era.
23 The origin of this typology of colonisation is Nancy Shoemaker 'A Typology of Colonialism', *Perspectives on History*, October 2015, Available at: https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/october-2015/a-typology-of-colonialism.
24 See Foucault, M. (1980a) *Power Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, Brighton: Harvester Press.
25 See John Rawls' work (Rawls, J. (1971) *A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press) on distributive justice.

Part I

Colonisations

In the first part of the book we examine the various forms that coloniality can take: epistemic, cultural, personal, political and economic, taxonomic and institutional. All of these identity-formations are exclusionary, although in different ways. With each of these forms we provide examples from the past and from the present-past. So, in Chapter 2 we focus on the notion of indigeneity, with the understanding that as a concept it is multisemic, semantically contested, networked, interactive, powerful and dynamic. It also has praxical implications and consequences. In Chapter 3 we look at a form of cultural colonisation, the Indian diaspora. In Chapter 4 we examine an important and current form of colonisation in relation to the Arab–Israeli conflict in Palestine and Israel. This demands a sense of narrative identity with two dimensions: character (idem), expressing permanence and stability, and faithfulness of the self (ipse), the ethical component, denoting the dynamic and evolving aspects of identity construction.[1] In Chapter 5 our concern is with political and economic colonisation, with empire and commerce. In Chapter 6 the emphasis is on racism and notions of race. The reason for focusing on race here is because colonial discourses generally create strong boundaries between types of people and other objects, and racial divisions is a good example of this. In the last chapter of this part of the book we have a look at colonial institutions such as curricula, pedagogies and learnings.

We are concerned, above all else, in this book with the concepts and practices of coloniality, decoloniality and ethics, and the positioning of these important activities in a theory, which we might want to call semantic, bearing in mind that theories are always provisional and that they include an ordering of things or actions. Theory or theorising is a concept. Consequently, theory should be understood as an acquired disposition, so that as a concept it takes the form of theorising. Theory is not just a type of propositional knowledge, but an active, engaged and committed activity in the world. Any and every approach which we adopt in this book points to the possibilities and, as importantly, limitations, of a word, word-set or linguistically-structured concept, such as theorising(s), with the purpose of determining meaning (see Scott, 2021).

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Note

1 See Paul Ricoeur (1984; 1985; 1988), *Time and Narrative* (*Temps et Récit*), 3 volumes, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

2 Epistemic Colonisation
Indigenous Peoples

Colonising and decolonising are concepts and they are also practices of various types. As concepts, they have multisemic, semantically contested, networked, interactive, powerful and dynamic qualities attached to them. Every concept, then, including those being used here, has a referential structure, in that every conceptual (and thus semantic) activity is framed and then reframed in relation to the possibilities that inhere in the concept and in a network of other concepts. This means that we are committing to the idea that the meaning of a concept, including concepts such as colonising and decolonising and their contents, rests with three primary networks or constellations of meaning: a framework which is past-oriented and thus refers to the antecedents of the concept; a framework of other and contemporary concepts where a key concern is the notion of relevance; and a framework of how the concept we are concerned with is used or can be used in the present. These three frameworks correspond to the three foundational elements of any social theory: the genealogical, the semantic and the pragmatic. In colonial epistemic framings – and there are many of them – these three elements are generally neglected or misused in their application. The genealogical is transposed into a conventional event-orientated framing. The semantic element is ignored or distorted to fit the demands of a scientistic or colonial economy. The pragmatic is illegitimately conceptualised as irrealist and ethically relativist. All three of these elements are necessary for a full or complete social theory.

Concepts are the building blocks of thought, whether in genealogical, semantic or pragmatic modes. Consequently, they are pivotal to notions of coloniality or decoloniality, and also to notions of learning and knowledge. A variety of concepts can be used in any discussion about coloniality and decoloniality, such as: intelligence, indigeneity, racism, christonormativity, diversity, ethnocentrism, inclusion, exclusion, slavery, genocide, prejudice, discrimination and many more, and these are embedded in our three networks or constellations of meaning: antecedent, coextensive and pragmatic. It is also possible to identify different types of concepts if we understand a

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concept-type in relation to how a concept can be and is used in a way of life. Some of these are: generalisations, abstractions, symbols in the mind, acquired dispositions, object categorisations, valued configurations, algorithmic formations and semantic conditionals. There are three principal uses of the term: concepts as representations in the mind, concepts as abstract objects and concepts as abilities.

The first of these maintains that concepts are psychological entities and this view is underpinned by a representationalist theory of mind, with this view of the mind–world relationship able to accommodate a notion of correspondence, reflection, sameness or manifestation. There is something in the world, outside the structures of a mind, which can lead to an equivalent operation in that mind, and these operations can be thought of as beliefs, desires, concepts and the like. These are psychological states and they are sometimes divided into primitive or basic concepts and concepts that are dependent on them. Under this viewpoint, concepts are taken to be foundational or basic, and thought – now understood as irremediably conceptual – is grounded in these images and entities in the mind. This representational view of concepts is the default position in cognitive science.

The second view of a concept is that they are abstract objects. Concepts, under this conceptualisation, are the meanings of words and word-complexes as opposed to objects and states of mind. Concepts as meanings mediate between thought, language and their referents. This entails a sense-reference distinction – thoughts are not psychological states but rather they are the meanings of states of mind. A difficulty with the idea of concepts as abstract objects is that they stand – or seem to stand – outside the causal process; that is, they cannot be accessed in the normal way that we access objects in the world. And furthermore, it is unclear here, if we were to treat concepts as purely abstract entities, how concepts could be learnt.

The third view is that concepts are abilities, and this is the predominant way that concepts have been, and will be, understood in this book. This does not mean that some concepts cannot be understood and conceptualised as abstract objects; however, what this suggests is that primitive or basic concepts, such as learning, coloniality or decoloniality, are neither representative images in the mind nor words and word-complexes in a language of thought. What they are is underlying abilities or capabilities which allow a person to act in the world and in their persistent form can be called dispositions.

There is a need to distinguish between different types of concepts because if their functionality is different then we can only use them in different ways. For example, foundational concepts can be distinguished from peripheral concepts, in relation to how important they are in the argument that is being made or as a part of a discursive configuration. Learning and ethics are foundational concepts in most knowledge-claiming activities, whereas

coloniality, decoloniality, and, indeed, indigeneity, can only be used in certain well-defined contexts and circumstances. All concepts are normatively and ethically framed, and what this means is that every time we use a concept, discursively or as a praxis, we are giving a value to something in the world. However, some concepts are strongly framed as value-carriers, others only weakly framed. Some concepts have a supersessional form and consequently are hierarchically arranged, others do not. In our judgements, or in the judgements we choose to make, if we want to understand the meaning of a concept, we have to show how it relates to other concept-meanings and how relevant they are. These relations are object-specific and determine how objects are constructed and how they interact with each other.

The issue, then, is how our three constellations function in the world and how concepts such as coloniality, decoloniality and indigeneity fit with these three networks or nexuses. These nexuses work in different ways. The first, the antecedent network, is contentful only insofar as conceptual objects have already passed on their meanings to other meanings and meaning structures, although this cannot rule out sets of inferential relations persisting into present and future actions. As we articulate a belief, about, for example, the types of indigenous peoples in the world, we are also articulating the origins of that belief, concerning geo-historical locations of people who we might want to call indigenous. This means that in deciding to do something, we are also searching for a reason as to why we should do it, and this, in turn, means that we are distinguishing between good and bad reasons for its use. Consequently, and ineluctably, we are exploring and resourcing from a network of interactive meanings and concepts that have already been used in the world.

The second nexus or framework has the virtue of being present to any deliberations we might make, although we may not be aware of all its manifestations. This is the store of conceptual meanings – the contents of our utterances – that exist in books, on the internet, in speech patterns, in communication devices, in the use of words, sentences, paragraphs and texts, in ordinary and everyday talk, in all forms of writing and thinking, in colonial and decolonial discourses and more. This store of meanings about, for example, indigenous concepts and praxes contains contradictions, disputes, divisions, plurisemantics, temporal plays and the like. The network or nexus is variegated, interconnected, and ever-present in our utterances in the world and, more importantly for our purposes here, allows us to decide between good and bad reasons for decisions we make that lead to actions, whether contemplative or praxical.

The third nexus or framework is the use function of concepts and conceptual framings in the world. This clearly has a connection to, although it is not the same as, the other two frameworks, with these inferential relations operating in different ways. The guiding point of our actions in the world is

both denotative and performative – a denotative utterance attempts to correctly identify an object or objects in the world and its functioning in real life; whereas a performative utterance is either a performative act, such as a promise, or an attempt at changing what is in the world through the utterance – so that in operating in the world (being, thinking, doing, saying, uttering) we are being conceptually active and acting on conceptual meanings. We cannot avoid this, and never more so than when we are making colonial or decolonial judgements in and about the world, and when we are trying to determine how a concept such as indigeneity can be used.

This chapter is about the concept and practice of indigeneity or indigenising. We are committed to positioning them within antecedent, contemporaneous and applied networks of meaning. This means that we are not using the concept in essentialist, de-theorised or positivistic ways. As educational theorists and as human beings our work is framed, and therefore requires us to operate with and through a general theory of objects and object-relations. This enframing comprises a semantic understanding of the possibilities of the concepts we use, and these possibilities have political, social, epistemological, functional, ethical and relational meanings. As we suggested in the opening chapter of this book, there are five object-types in the world: discursive objects, material objects, relational objects, structural-institutional-systemic objects (this type includes discursive and material configurations) and people, including the self, which is always experienced differently from the way other people are experienced. Each of them has different characteristics and, because objects have a dynamic structure, in rare circumstances may change their status as objects; indeed, what constitutes an object-type is also dynamic. In an object-ontology, objects, including human beings, have acquired dispositions. This leads us to a form of conceptual or dispositional realism, and, as we saw in Chapter 1, a deep antagonism towards empiricism in all its forms and guises. We are acknowledging that language and language systems are valorised, and multi-perspectival at the levels of word, word-complex, word-concept and praxis, and we are using this notion to suggest that there are several different interpretations of indigeneity, the concept we are examining in this chapter. Indigeneity or indigenising as a concept and as a practice has a relation or set of relations with, and can be understood in relation to, the concepts of coloniality, decoloniality and learning, genealogically, semantically and in their application.

Discursive Configurations

A discourse, or discursive configuration, such as indigeneity, is a set of propositions about the world joined together by a set of connectives and relations that offers an account of an object or objects in the world and may even act to create objects in the world. A discourse can never be a singular

determinant of identity, behaviour, or action. Discourses (for example, indigenous discourses) are structured in a variety of ways, and both this meta-structuring and the forms it takes are relative to time and place. These meta-forms refer to constructs such as object-designation, performativity, reference, value, binary opposition, representation, and legitimacy.[1]

The first of these meta-forms refers to the designation of objects as objects and how they are different or separate from other objects in the world; in part, this constitutes a naming process and it refers to the relations between singulars and generalities, such as indigenous/extraneous in a colonising discourse. A second meta-form refers to the balance between denotative and performative utterances, or between offering an account of something with no intention of changing objects in the world and offering an account which is intended to change an object or create a new one. Utterances about indigeneity, colonisation, decolonisation and the like may be characterised by the balance of performativity and denotation within them. A third meta-epistemic form concerns the relative value given to an object in comparison with another object, an example of which is an indigenous philosophy being understood as inferior to eurocentric notions of science.[2]

A fourth meta-structuring device is where an object, description or disposition is defined in terms of another object, description or disposition of which it is the opposite. If the indigenous/non-native[3] binary is used as an example, it is possible to see that the positioning of the two terms as oppositional in meaning, and the subsequent valuing of one (non-native) and the devaluing of the other (indigenous) because of their oppositionality, has significant implications for how we can use these concepts in the world.

A fifth meta-principle refers to the referential value of a statement. Making an educational or social utterance about indigeneity, for example, implies a particular type of truth-value. A correspondence theory represents the truth of whether the utterance mirrors the reality that it seeks to describe. A number of such theories are in existence, some fairly primitive such as naïve appeals to facts or fact(ing)s,[4] others are more sophisticated so that they avoid mirror imagery and at least take account of sceptical arguments. On the other hand, coherence theories suggest that the truth-value of a statement does not lie in its reference to an external world but in whether it fits coherently in a web of knowledge. A statement about, for example, indigeneity, therefore implicitly or explicitly, is underpinned by a theory of reference embedded within a theory of truth, and this marks it out as a knowledge form.

A sixth meta-principle refers to the way that particular ideas, concepts, phrases and descriptors are embedded in networks of ideas, concepts, phrases and descriptors, and have a history. So, for example, indigeneity as a concept is always positioned in a complicated network of other terms, such as innateness, colonisation, decolonisation, race, ethnicity, trait theory,

genetics, phenotypicality, biology, historical origin, evolutionary theory and many more.[5] Indigeneity as a concept and as a practice therefore has antecedents, is related to other concepts and praxes, and is used in the lifeworld in particular ways. We have been referring here to the relations in the discourse between different ideas and notions, and how these can vary depending on the discourse.

Indigeneity

Why indigeneity? A too simple answer to this question is that in the coloniality/decoloniality discourse the word is used by people who feel that it is an essential part or element of a decolonial discourse. A more complicated answer is that indigeneity, in its conceptual form, embraces those life-forms that constitute an indigenous people. It is, we think, more than this. It is also an identifier and, consequently, a means by which one group of people differentiate themselves from another group of people. We are focusing here on the concept of indigeneity and because it is a concept it has all the characteristics that we associate with a concept or conceptual frame. Dispositional concepts precede other forms of knowledge and what this means is that human beings cannot possess propositional, process or embodied forms of knowledge without some form of conceptual knowledge, and that this conceptual knowledge influences and conditions the shape, form, function and reach of these other forms of knowledge. This conceptual framing process is unique to people, and it therefore acts as a marker of difference between people *and* material objects, discursive objects, object-relations, and material and discursive object-configurations. Conceptual framings include objects that have an active quality, for example, being indigenous.

A variety of criteria have been suggested as to what is, or is not, an indigenous person or people and this difficulty is further compounded by how it is used now, rather than in the past. What this suggests is that a concept, a conceptual frame and a conceptual discursive configuration changes its meaning between different time points, and this requires us to adopt a genealogical approach to understand the meaning of a concept such as indigeneity and how it is currently used to identify a discursive or material object in the world, in this case, an indigenous people. (The identifying act takes place in the mind and is not, to use Wilfred Sellars' (1997) term, 'a given'.) Several discursive configurations focusing on the concept of indigeneity can be identified. (These also act as arguments for decolonising processes.) The first of these is that a distinct group of people maintained a lifestyle that was different from other peoples' lifestyles, with respect to the occupation and use of specific territories or land areas. In part, then, this is a geo-historical marker, in that a geographical area is set aside for the exclusive use of a group of people, even if in some cases that geographical area is no longer occupied by

the original set of people. For example, many aboriginal areas in Australia such as the Torres Strait are now occupied in part by people that would not self-identify as aboriginal peoples.[6] The distinction, then, rests on geographical and historical occupancy and on the symbolic importance that some groups of people attach to these areas of land. This is an argument that ownership of land, past or present, is an inalienable marker of a social arrangement.

A second discursive configuration focuses on, and prioritises, this last criterion as being of particular importance, although not necessarily based around the value and meaning attached to it. To distinguish an indigenous people from a non-indigenous people might involve the deliberate perpetuation of cultural distinctiveness by particular indigenous people and this refers to language, social organisation, religion and belief systems, various powerful hierarchies, modes of production, laws, institutions, ways of life, healing processes and learning modes. The point is that these are deemed by indigenous people to be different and as having more value than other processes, symbolic formations, non-indigenous objects, object-relations and discursive and material object-configurations. In addition, there is always a desire to preserve their ancestral environments and systems. Distinctiveness rests on different values being attached to different objects.

A third discursive configuration focuses on the idea of self-identification and the subsequent endorsement of that status by governments and authorities. The idea of difference – being different and attaching different values to material and symbolic formations and institutions – is built into, is a part of, that way of life and how that way of life is valued. In Canadian aboriginal terms,[7] this refers to those beliefs that endorse the idea of knowledge of unseen powers in the ecosystem, that all things in this ecosystem are interdependent, that reality is structured by conceptual frames that inhere in the life of the indigenous people, that personal inter-relationships are central to these ecosystem practices, that sacred traditions demand that certain people within the indigenous practice should preserve these specialised forms of knowledge, and that the network of family life is entrusted with the passing on of this specialised knowledge (see Battiste, 2013). This is difference writ large, as is the notion of espacement or spacing, so that what should concern us here is the process that differentiates social elements from other social elements, and, in most cases, engenders binary oppositions and endlessly renarrativised hierarchies of meaning (see Derrida, 1982). The key to understanding this reason for conceptualising indigeneity in this way is that this is how those indigenous people see themselves, and this allows us to distinguish an indigenous people from another people.

A fourth way of constructing the discursive configuration is by focusing on the idea of indigenous peoples, also referred to as First Peoples, aboriginal peoples, native peoples or autochthonous peoples, as a culturally distinct

ethnic group. There is an immediate problem with this in that the term is now being applied to a wide variety of people in different geo-historical locations.[8] Amnesty International (2010), for example, claim that there are 370 million indigenous people in the world, spread across 90 countries. There are 5000 different indigenous peoples and more than 4000 indigenous languages. Each of these indigenous peoples are likely to have constructed different narratives as to why they are different from non-indigenous groups, and also from other indigenous groups that self-identify as indigenous.

Finally, there is the most interesting of the indigeneity-framing arguments, which centres on the experience of subjugation or colonisation, and downplays the idea of different symbolic and material institutions. This experience then – the concept is immersed in history – of subjugation, marginalisation, dispossession, exclusion and discrimination, even if these conditions no longer exist, is central to how we might understand the concept and praxis of indigeneity, and, in addition, help to construct an opposition to these hegemonic forms of oppression.

The concept itself, then, is perplexing and complicated. It also has a history. Sir Thomas Browne in 1642 first used (indeed, invented) the term, indigeneity, to distinguish between different types of what he called negroes,[9] which, in turn, meant that he was not just describing a people but creating a way of differentiating between peoples. This is what Browne (1642: 132) had to say: 'and although in many parts thereof there be at present swarms of Negroes serving under the Spaniard, yet were they all transported from Africa, since the discovery of Columbus; and are not indigenous or proper natives of America'. Divisions between peoples are being created in slow and incremental ways that have real effects on object-arrangements and normative networks in society. Indigenous people usually, though not always, have been affected by colonising and decolonising narratives or discursive configurations. One of these decolonising onto-epistemologies is a rights-based argument. Indigenous rights have been declared as powerful forces and as having efficacy in international law by the United Nations, the International Labour Organisation, and the World Bank, and this includes issues to do with culture, identity, language, access to employment and health, education, and natural resources.

Indigenous is derived from the Latin word, *indigena*, meaning 'sprung from the land, native' (see Online Etymological Dictionary). The Latin word-object, *indigena* is based on the old Latin word-object, indu, meaning 'in, within' and gignere, which can mean to 'beget, produce'. *Indu* is an extended form of the Proto-Indo-European *en* or *in*. The origins of the term *indigenous* are not related in any way to the origins of the term, *Indian*, which, until recently, was commonly applied to indigenous peoples of the Americas. Autochthonous originates from the Greek αὐτός, autós, meaning self/own, and χθών chthon, meaning *Earth*. The term is based in the

Indo-European root, dhghem- (earth). In the 1970s, the term and the concept began to be used as a way of linking the common experiences of colonised people across international borders. They are culturally distinct groups that have some common characteristics. However, these forms of genealogising have only a limited capacity to explain the concept we are dealing with here.[10]

Concepts and concept-meanings, such as indigeneity, can also be given social, political, religious and even legal expressions. The *Doctrine of Discovery* is a legal and religious concept tied to the Roman Catholic Church which rationalised and legalised colonisation and the subjugation of indigenous peoples throughout the last millennium. Pope Innocent IV's writings from 1240 were particularly influential. He argued that Christians were justified in invading and acquiring the lands of infidels because it was the Church's duty to control the spiritual health of all human beings on Earth. The English developed the legal concept of *terra nullius* (land that is null or void) or *vacuum domicilium* (empty or vacant house) to validate their land-claims over indigenous peoples' homelands. This has been superseded by the use of *res communis* in relation to ownership of the Moon, where, currently, nobody can own it but anyone can plunder it. This praxial concept formalised the idea that lands which were not being used in a manner that European legal systems approved of were open for European colonisation.

In this chapter we have started our investigation of the concepts and praxes of coloniality and decoloniality by addressing one of those concepts that we consider to be an important component of the three networks (or nexuses) within which these concepts are embedded: antecedent, contemporary and pragmatic. This is the concept of indigeneity and this, we contend, has an important role in the way coloniality and decoloniality, as concepts and praxes, work. In the next chapter we examine the issue of a diaspora, and exemplify this by looking at the Indian diaspora round the world and, in particular, in relation to the geographical landmass of the United Kingdom.

Notes

1 See Scott, D. (2017a) *Education Systems and Learners: Knowledge and Knowing*, London: Palgrave Macmillan; Scott, D. (2019a) 'Virtues and Dispositions as Learning Theory in Universities', in P. Gibbs, J. Jameson and A. Elwick (eds.) *Values of the University in a Time of Uncertainty*, Geneva: Springer Nature Switzerland; Scott, D. (2019b) 'Nationalisms, Internationalisms and Identities', in D. Scott (ed.) *Manifestos, Policies and Practices: An Equalities Agenda*, London: University College London Institute of Education Press; Scott, D. (2021) *On Learning: A General Theory of Objects and Object-Relations*, London: UCL Press; Scott, D. (2025) *On Learning: volume 3, Curriculum, Knowledge and Ethics*, London: UCL Press; Scott, D. (ed.) (2024) *On Learning: volume 2, Philosophy, Concepts and Practices*, London: UCL Press; Scott, D. and Leaton

Gray, S. (2024) *Intelligence, Sapience and Learning: Concepts, Framings and Practices*, London: UCL Press; Scott, D. and Scott, B. (2018) *Equalities and Inequalities in the English Education System*, London: UCL IOE Press; Scott, D. and Usher, R. (2011, 2nd Edition) *Researching Education: Data, Methods and Theory in Educational Enquiry*, London: Bloomsbury Continuum; Scott, D. with Bhaskar, R. (2015) *Roy Bhaskar: A Theory of Education*, New York: Springer.

2 Eurocentric science can only be categorised as multi-dimensional. This does not just refer to enlightenment views of the scientific method.

3 Extraneous or non-native may also be thought of as having universal dimensions.

4 The recent controversy about Mark Zuckerberg's decision to do without fact-checkers in the US for Facebook, Instagram and Threads is an example of a fact(ing) issue, in which the opposition to it is framed as facts are true, rather than that these facts are decontextualised items of knowledge. The solution, therefore, is not to check out whether they are true or not but to place these items, words, pictures, images, sounds etc. in our three nexuses of meaning: genealogical, semantic or pragmatic. This, of course, doesn't mean that we are doing without a notion of truth.

5 This list of possible connections and relations only covers a small part of the range of networked meanings.

6 The term aboriginal has to be used with great care, but it can mean a member of a people who were the first people to live in a country, before any colonists arrived. Marie Battiste (Battiste, M. (2011) *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*, Vancouver: UBC Press) uses it in this sense.

7 Marie Battiste's origins are in the Potlotek First Nation in Nova Scotia, Canada.

8 For example, the word 'Celtic' is frequently used to describe the first people to populate the British Isles, and currently various forms of sporting affiliation, whereas in fact their original geographical spread was significantly larger and more complex.

9 We are using this term here because of its popularity and not because we agree with the meanings and values attached to it. It is, of course, not our term.

10 Online Etymological Dictionary (accessed January 2019): https://www.etymonline.com.

3 Cultural Colonisation
The Indian Diaspora

The history of the Indian diaspora, spanning over two hundred years, intertwines with processes of cultural colonisation and decolonisation. The relationship can be examined through three key historical phases: Pre-Independence, Partition, and Post-Independence. The colonial period saw the British reshaping Indian society through economic advantage, administrative control, and cultural hegemony. The imposition of English education and the marginalisation of indigenous knowledge systems played a central role in this transformation. Following the abolition of slavery in 1834, the British mobilised Indian labour to sustain the global empire, particularly in sugar, rice, rubber, and tea plantations. These migrations, driven by economic need, recurring famines, and the collapse of traditional industries, led to the dispersal of Indian communities across British-controlled territories, reinforcing the structures of colonial dominance (see Arasaratnam, 1979).

The colonial framework not only restructured India's socio-economic order but also dictated cultural and linguistic assimilation within diasporic spaces. Through mechanisms such as English-medium education and bureaucratic structures, the British sought to cultivate a class of Indians who would act as intermediaries between the colonial administration and the native population. This form of cultural colonisation persisted even after India's independence in 1947. As migration patterns evolved in the postcolonial period, so too did the challenges of identity and assimilation, particularly within new host societies in North America, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand.

Ruben Gowricharn (2020a) categorised the Indian diaspora into four broad groups, each reflecting distinct historical and socio-cultural experiences of assimilation. The old diaspora consisted of 19th- and early 20th-century labourers who settled in the Caribbean, Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands. While they maintained aspects of their Indian heritage, they were also subjected to cultural erasure and forced integration into colonial societies. The post-colonial migrants emerged after independence, comprising professionals, students, and entrepreneurs who moved to the UK,

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Canada, the US, and Australia. Post-colonial migrants often arrived in host countries with limited resources, as Partition had displaced many and stripped them of their assets. While they sought opportunities in predominantly Western institutions, they also faced socio-economic challenges and pressures of assimilation. The gulf diaspora, developing in the mid-20th century, represents temporary labour migration to Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, and Qatar, where restrictive policies prevented long-term settlement or cultural integration. The twice-migrants category refers to Indian-origin populations who initially settled in Africa and the Caribbean but later relocated to the UK, Canada, or the US due to political upheavals, such as the 1972 expulsion of Asians from Uganda.

Gowricharn (2020b) highlights the unique position of post-1947 migrants to Western Europe, particularly in relation to education as a means of upward mobility. First-generation migrants often retained strong cultural ties while engaging with dominant institutions in their host societies (see Jain, 2014). However, in the context of a globalised society, the notion of an *Indian migrant* is problematic, raising questions about identity construction and cultural continuity.

This chapter examines cultural colonisation and decolonisation through frameworks of assimilation, tracing how colonial and postcolonial forces have shaped diasporic identities. By situating historical processes within broader discussions of the Indian diaspora, the chapter aims to shed light on how the legacies of the past continue to shape contemporary experiences and, in turn, how diasporic formations influence postcolonial Indian identities. We first need to understand what a diaspora is and what it might be.

Three Dimensions

A concept such as a diaspora (and thus a diaspora(ing)) has three dimensions: temporal, spatial and epistemic. The first of these is time and the topology of the timeline, since if we subscribe to the notion that time is a property of an object in the world or an object-relation in the world, then the shape that the topological line assumes is dependent on the nature of these objects and object-relations, in our case here, diaspora and diaspora(ing). In addition, we can never know what the shape of the topological line is: linear and singular, or multi-streamed, or beginning-less or end-less, or branching, or a closed loop, or discontinuous? There are multiplicities of time: lived, experienced, generated, allocated, or used as an exchange. It also means that there are many linguistic and conceptual manifestations of time: order, organisation, synchronisation, change between fixed points, rates of change, repetition, regulation, duration, sequencing, irreversible direction, passage, the rate at which events occur, timing, parameter and measure, can be – and frequently are – enframed in different ways.

For example, the temporal dimension of order can be understood as a Foucauldian technology of power and truth (see Foucault, 1980a) or as a rational way of arranging human affairs. In both cases, power through time is understood as diffuse, embodied, enacted, discursive and constitutive of agency.

Space defines the timeframe of social relations and thus of forms of identity, and this includes role, ethic, diaspora, intelligence and many more objects. The key spatial feature of the networked society is the relationship between the local and the global, or perhaps between seven levels or scales. Identities and identity formations, a key dimension of the concept and practice of diaspora, operate at different social levels differently. These different levels can be categorised as: the sub-individual or psychological level; the individual or autobiographical level; the ordinary level of living our lives; the functional level, at which we are concerned with relational roles; the structural level, as in the functioning of whole societies or their parts (i.e. internal and external migration, the economy or the sociosphere); the mega level of whole traditions and civilisations; and, finally, the planetary or cosmological level, where the person's immediate concerns are with the planet (or cosmos) as a whole[1]. The flows or modal points of the diaspora are not determined by actual and logical spatial relations but by connections occasioned by powerful organisations or powerful ideas, and by imagined notions of what they are.

The third dimension is epistemic. Communication modalities are central to the relationship between knowledge and the world. Representationalist theories of mind identify an inner realm of representations and an outer realm of objects in the world, which are placed in some form of identity-relation. These modalities are constituted through numbers, words, sounds, images, gestures and symbols. In other words, we communicate through – by using – numeric, linguistic, musical, pictorial, gestural and symbolic forms of representation, or combinations of them, where the representation refers to the mind–world relation. This relation has a learning element. The point is that these modes or modalities are different in their make-up and in their effects; and, in addition, that new and dynamic events over time, such as the Indian diaspora, fundamentally change the nature and type of representation that can be made (by them and us). Particular notions of diaspora favour a particular communication modality over all the others, real or imagined.

Diaspora is a Greek word meaning 'to sow over, or to scatter', as applied to people – the term was probably first used by the Greek historian, Thucydides, to describe the Greeks' dispersal from Greece to other parts of the world. (Di- means 'through, in different directions, between'.)[2] It is important to understand the word as a dispersal, then, a breaking-up of a group of people over time and a uniting of that group in a different form in a different place at a different time and with a different set of representational modalities (although many of these modalities have their origins in

the original collection of people and are sustained by imagined views of what those who stayed are like). What this means is that there are many different types of diasporas that have taken place and will take place in the future.

The Indian Diasporic Experience

UK–India relations are 'unusual', given that 'the historical legacy of empire lingers, with paradoxical effect', whereby 'the two states are pulled closer and apart'. Scott (2017a: 32) provides an explanation for this paradox. On the one hand, he maintains, the pulling together is impelled by the common presence of parliamentary democracy, the common use of the English language, and the settlement in the UK of a significant Indian diasporic community, numbering almost 1.5 million in the 2011 Census. This Indian community in Britain has increasing economic and political significance, and on the social and cultural front generates important interpersonal links. The pushing apart comes from a troubled colonial history. This was recognised by the then British prime minister, David Cameron, in a joint press conference of November 2015 with his Indian counterpart, Narendra Modi, when Cameron acknowledged that 'for years, the relationship between Britain and India was in some way imprisoned by the past'.

In 2017, the 70th anniversary of the Partition of British India was widely discussed in the UK, not only within academic and cultural circles, but also in popular culture through, for example, the BBC Radio 4 series *Partition Voices*, featuring first-hand accounts from British Asians and Colonial British who witnessed the events. Five years later, on the 75th anniversary of Partition, the scholarly, cultural and community interest in the events of 1947 intersected with the commemorations of the 50th anniversary of the expulsion of the South Asian population from Uganda, and the 70th anniversary of the movement that led towards Bangladeshi independence in 1971 – the 50th anniversary of which was celebrated just the year before. Based on the work of the *Migrant Memory* and *the Postcolonial Imagination* research project (Loughborough University), for example, Clini et al. (2023) show the entanglement of the memories of these events within the South Asian diaspora in the UK, and how their transmission and communication shaped the construction of contemporary diasporic identities and concepts of community, belonging and home.

India's Diasporic Populations

Estimates of overseas Indian communities vary over time, and since India's independence, scholars have attempted to quantify the global Indian diaspora. For 1947, S. Nanjundan (1950) estimated 3,383,137 persons, while C.

Kondapi (1951) placed the figure at 3,468,610. However, throughout the 1950s and 1960s, systematic attempts to assess the overseas Indian population were lacking, reflecting limited academic and governmental interest. By the 1970s, Hugh Tinker (1977) estimated the overseas Indian population at approximately five million in 1970, whereas Yash Tandon (1973) proposed a higher figure of 6.5 million. In August 1972, Surendra Pal Singh, then Deputy Minister for External Affairs, stated in the Lok Sabha[3] that around 3.4 million people of Indian origin had settled abroad (see Tinker, 1977). By 1981, estimates increased significantly. Shubha Singh estimated 12.9 million overseas Indians, while Prakash Jain provided a comparable figure of 12.1 million. However, Jain's estimate did not account for Ceylon Tamils – their inclusion would have raised the 1981 total to approximately 14 million (see Jain and Prasad, 2023). Within the 1980 estimate, the Indian diaspora population in Great Britain was recorded at 750,000.

A more systematic approach to quantifying the diaspora emerged with the *High-Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora*, which submitted its report to the Indian Parliament in December 2001. This was the first major governmental effort to estimate the Indian diaspora at the beginning of the 21st century. Compiled after extensive consultations with experts, diaspora associations, and community members across approximately two dozen countries, the report estimated the total Indian diaspora population at 16.8 million, including 468,920 stateless persons (High-Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora, 2021). Of this total, 97% (16.4 million) were concentrated in just 32 countries. As in previous decades, Asia remained home to more than 50% of the overseas Indian population. Countries such as the US, Canada, UK, UAE, and Australia emerged as key destinations due to economic opportunities and better living standards (see Jain and Prasad, 2023).

The most recent figures on the Indian diaspora are from the 2022 Indian Parliamentary Committee Report of the Ministry of External Affairs, titled *Welfare of Indian Diaspora: Policies/Schemes*, 2022. According to this report, as of December 2021, the total Indian diaspora population exceeded 53 million, comprising approximately 36 million Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs)/Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs), around 10 million Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), and 1.3 million Indian students studying abroad. Appendix 1 of the report details the geographical distribution of the diaspora, with the UK's Indian-origin population recorded at 1,777,000 in 2021. UK-based sources provide a similar estimate, with the 2021 UK Census placing the Indian diaspora at approximately 1.8 million.

The Pre-British Period and India's Education

Dharampal's (1995) historical account of Indian education and its connection with British rule begins with a quotation from Gandhi's (1931) speech

at Chatham House, London, which inspired the title of his book, *The Beautiful Tree*. Gandhi suggested that:

> I say without fear of my figures being challenged successfully that today India is more illiterate than it was fifty or a hundred years ago, and so is Burma, because the British administrators, when they came to India, instead of taking hold of things as they were, began to root them out. They scratched the soil and began to look at the root, and left the root like that, and the beautiful tree perished.
>
> (Mahatma Gandhi, Chatham House, London, October 20, 1931, cited in Dharampal, 1995: 6)

Dharampal identified a significant gap in existing scholarship on the history of Indian education. He argued that early 19th-century discussions on indigenous Indian education relied primarily on a limited set of sources: William Adam's reports[4] on education in Bengal and Bihar, British surveys of indigenous education in the Bombay Presidency from the 1820s,[5] and extracts from broader surveys on Indian education. Among these, he highlighted Gottlieb Leitner's work,[6] based on both earlier government records and his own survey, as the most explicitly critical of British policies. Leitner contended that British authorities were directly responsible for the decline and destruction of indigenous education in Punjab. Dharampal also referenced additional reports corroborating similar critiques in other regions.

Gandhi's (1931) speech at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, reinforced the view that literacy had sharply declined in India over the past 50–100 years, attributing this deterioration to British policies. His assertion aligned with long-standing Indian concerns and the growing importance of historical sources on indigenous education from the early 19th century (see Dharampal, 1995). Criticism that literacy had declined under British rule was met with resistance. Sir Philip Hartog, vice-chancellor of Dacca University and chairman of the 'Auxiliary Committee of the Indian Statutory Commission', emerged as a key defender of British educational policies. In a series of three lectures at the University of London Institute of Education (now University College London), Hartog sought to counter Gandhi's claims. He later expanded these lectures with memoranda and references, publishing them as a book in 1939.[7]

Indian Knowledge and Pre-British Rule

Indian historical knowledge has largely been documented through accounts left by foreigners (Dharampal 1995: 7). Before 1770, by which time British governance had expanded across large territories, British interests in India were primarily mercantile and technological, rather than engaging with Indian religions, philosophies, or education. While occasional references to

specific communities such as the Parsis or Banias of Surat exist, early British scholarship showed minimal interest in India's intellectual and educational traditions. Dharampal (1995) added that, during the mid-18th century, European travellers and scholars began accumulating material on India, leading to broader academic debates on Indian politics, law, philosophy, and science, particularly astronomy.

Parallel to this growing academic interest, British administrative policies in India prompted practical actions for governance. To effectively rule, some British officials sought to learn Sanskrit and Persian, recognising the necessity of linguistic proficiency to access and manipulate indigenous knowledge. This linguistic engagement was less about preservation and more about selective adaptation – choosing and discarding elements to serve British colonial objectives (see Dharampal, 1995).

From about the 1770s with regards to Indian knowledge, scholarship and learning, three approaches, which complemented one another, were at work in British India (see Dharampal, 1995):

Approach 1: Resulted from growing British power and administrative requirements which needed to provide its legitimacy and background of previous indigenous precedents to the ideas, actions and laws being created by the British at that time.

Approach 2: Resulted from the scholarship promoted by the Edinburgh enlightenment (represented with scholars such as Maconochie). Their historical experiences, philosophical observations and reflection (of other civilisations) led to their concern that conquering and defeating a civilisation, generally leads not only to its disintegration, but that precious knowledge that it values also disappears. They therefore argued for preparing a written record of what exactly existed, and 'what could be got from the learned in places like Varanasi' (Dharampal, 1995: 16).

Approach 3: To project what was then being attempted in Great Britain itself: to bring people to an institutionalised, formal, law-abiding Christianity and, for that, some literacy and teaching became essential. To achieve such a purpose and knowledge in India, preparation of the grammars of various Indian languages became urgent. The task, according to William Wilberforce, called for 'the circulation of the holy scriptures in the native languages' with a view to the general diffusion of Christianity, so that the Indians 'would, in short become Christians' (Dharampal, 1995).

The Legend of 100,000 Schools

The collection of data on the extent and nature of indigenous Indian education was largely driven by the long debate in the House of Commons in 1813. The debate pivoted on a clause concerning the promotion of 'religious and moral improvement' in India. Before any new policies could be

implemented, British officials deemed it necessary to gather information on the existing education system. However, the quality and coverage of the surveys varied widely between different presidencies and even between districts.

Dharampal (1995) carefully examined these surveys, providing preliminary observations about the collected data and a detailed analysis, particularly of the Madras Presidency. He noted that the surveys focused primarily on institutions resembling modern schools, which could lead to misinterpretations. Indigenous education in India was traditionally carried out in pathshalas, madrassahs, and gurukulas, which were sustained by community revenue contributions, including support from the illiterate population. Education, known as shiksha, incorporated prajna (wisdom), shila (ethics), and samadhi (meditative absorption), forming the foundation of knowledge in and through gatherings of traditional Indian communities. Dharampal emphasised that equating these institutions with the British concept of 'schools' was misleading, arguing that an increase in the number of schools in England during the colonial period did not necessarily signify progress, as it often meant the rise of factory-style schooling (see Rogoff, 2016). Conversely, the decline of indigenous Indian educational institutions meant the erosion of a rich and self-sustaining educational system, replaced by an inferior colonial alternative.

One of the most debated observations from these surveys came from William Adam's first report (July 1836), which suggested that there were approximately 100,000 village schools in Bengal and Bihar. Adam's claim was based on impressions of high-ranking British officials and local administrators, who had long-standing familiarity with these areas. However, this estimate lacked formal documentation in official records. Similar statements were made earlier for other presidencies. Thomas Munro noted in the Madras Presidency that 'every village had a school'. In Punjab, Leitner's 1882 study revealed a similar picture. Leitner documented that education in Punjab around 1850 was widespread, yet his observations provoked polarised responses. On the one hand, supporters of Indian nationalism, including prominent late 19th- and early 20th-century Indian intellectuals and English scholars like Max Müller, endorsed this view.[8] On the other hand, British administrators and officials, particularly those aligned with colonial governance, sought to dismiss these claims.

Dharampal (1995) argued that after 1860, the British colonial administration actively worked to refute claims suggesting that British policies had led to the decline of Indian education. Officials who had spent years in British Indian administration were encouraged to defend colonial rule, portraying the pre-colonial educational system as inefficient or exaggerated. The difficulty in assessing the credibility of existing reports was understandable, according to Dharampal. He pointed out that England itself had very few

schools for the common people before 1800. Thus, when British officials observed widespread education in India, it stood in stark contrast to their experiences in England and may have influenced their assessments.

Unlike speculative claims, official British surveys provided concrete data revealing the depth of Indian education, for which Dharampal provides detailed analysis about: the nature of curricula and subjects taught; the duration of study in different institutions; the number of students actively enrolled; and the socio-economic backgrounds of students and teachers. In effect, he argued that while the dramatic claim of 100,000 schools attracted much attention, it often eclipsed the more detailed and crucial data that painted a nuanced picture of India's thriving educational ecosystem. According to Dharampal, much of this data was ignored in later British educational policies, which instead emphasised the need for Western-style schooling. The data from the Madras Presidency and Bengal-Bihar revealed a complex reality. It provided detailed records of the backgrounds of teachers and students, challenging the long-held assumption that education was exclusive to the twice-born Brahmins or elite Muslims. Instead, these reports suggested a far broader and more inclusive educational reach. Dharampal concluded that the legend of 100,000 schools, while partially based on estimates, highlighted a fundamental truth: that pre-colonial India had an extensive and well-functioning indigenous education system, which was progressively dismantled under British rule.

The Madras Presidency – An Illustrative Case

Dharampal's *The Beautiful Tree* (1995) drew upon historical records of indigenous education in India, particularly the detailed survey conducted in the Madras Presidency between 1822 and 1825. The educational system it described had been in place for centuries, thriving well into the 18th century before experiencing rapid decline under British rule. The decline was not merely an incidental byproduct of colonial administration but part of a larger process of assimilation – one that systematically reshaped and eventually displaced traditional Indian education in favour of colonial policies.

Dharampal saw his work not as a mere critique of British rule but as an effort to reconstruct a forgotten history – one that demonstrated how indigenous education was eroded through economic dispossession, administrative reconfiguration, and ideological displacement. The survey of the Madras Presidency offers an interesting case study of how local educational structures, once sustained by community initiatives and local revenue, were documented, dismissed, and ultimately assimilated into a British-controlled framework.

The responses from district collectors provide an illuminating, if often-contradictory view of this transformation. While some collectors compiled

detailed reports on the existing schools, others minimised their significance. The Collector of Canara,[9] for instance, refused to provide detailed data, stating that education in his district was largely 'private', conducted through informal arrangements where parents pooled resources to hire teachers for their children. 'The preparation of the necessary information would take up considerable time', he reported, adding that even if collected, it would not offer a just criterion of education in the district. His remarks revealed not only an official reluctance to recognise indigenous educational structures but also a colonial mindset that dismissed anything not conforming to the British model of formal schooling.

The Madras survey recorded thousands of schools and higher learning institutions, categorised along caste and religious lines. Scholars were recorded as Brahmins, Vysee, Soodra, those of other castes, and Mussalmans. This rigid classification, though partially reflecting pre-existing social divisions, also served the colonial administration's desire to codify and regulate Indian society for governance. However, the data contradicted the British assumption that education had been the exclusive domain of Brahmins. In Tamil-speaking areas, for instance, non-Brahmin scholars were well represented, yet this diversity did not carry over into the colonial education system, which prioritised English-medium instruction and Western curricula.

As British policies took root, the very definition of education began to shift. Traditionally, Indian education emphasised oral transmission, memorisation, apprenticeship and contextual learning, but British administrators dismissed these methods as outdated and inefficient. Macaulay, in his infamous *Minute on Education* (1935),[10] claimed that all Indian literature did not amount to 'a single shelf of a good European library'. This ideological stance translated into policy: schools that followed indigenous methods were starved of resources, while new institutions modelled after British schooling were given state support.

The Collector of Malabar reported 1,594 scholars engaged in advanced studies in subjects such as Theology, Law, Astronomy, Metaphysics, and Medicine, while the Collector of Madras noted that 26,963 students were receiving tuition at home. Despite this, the British administration dismissed the findings, claiming that 'little aid is to be expected from the instruments of education which already exist'. This rejection of indigenous education was a pivotal moment in the assimilation process, as it cleared the path for the imposition of a British-controlled system.

The transformation of education in the Madras Presidency was inextricably linked to economic and political restructuring. Traditionally, Indian education was sustained through land grants and revenue allocations, which were systematically withdrawn under British rule. In 1801, over 35% of cultivated land in the Ceded Districts (modern-day Rayalaseema and Bellary)[11] had been designated as revenue-free assignments funding educational and

religious institutions. Under Thomas Munro's[12] administration, this figure was reduced to just 5%, effectively stripping indigenous institutions of their financial base. In a letter, the Collector of Bellary observed that in many villages where schools had once thrived, there were now none: 'Of the 533 institutions for education now existing in this district, I am ashamed to say not one now derives any support from the State' (cited in Dharampal, 1995). Fiscal dispossession was part of a larger strategy to integrate India into the colonial economy. The local, self-sustaining, model of education, which had relied on community funding, was replaced by a system that depended on British-controlled revenue channels. The new structure prioritised English-language instruction, reinforcing social hierarchies by limiting access to education for those who did not conform to British educational norms

The Long-Term Consequences Of Assimilation

Dharampal argued that this restructuring of Indian education was not an accidental byproduct of colonial rule but a deliberate policy aimed at transforming Indian society. He traced its consequences across multiple generations. First, literacy rates suffered drastically. The indigenous pathshalas and madrassahs, which had once ensured broad-based education, were replaced by a system catering primarily to an elite minority. As a result, access to education became increasingly stratified.

Second, assimilation led to social fragmentation. Whereas the indigenous system allowed for mobility across castes and professions, the new system reinforced rigid social hierarchies. This was particularly evident in the medical field, where British authorities dismissed traditional Indian practitioners – including barbers who had long served as skilled surgeons – as unscientific and unqualified. The erasure of such knowledge systems not only reduced access to education but also contributed to the broader economic decline of artisan and service communities.

Finally, the assimilation of education into the colonial framework instilled a deep sense of cultural dislocation. As Dharampal noted, educated Indians became disconnected from their own history and traditions, leading to a loss of intellectual self-reliance. By the early 20th century, the colonial education system had created a class of Indians who were alienated from their cultural heritage, a reality that shaped educational policies well into the post-colonial period.

Dharampal's research, drawing from colonial-era surveys, offered evidence of the disappearance of indigenous educational institutions, the erosion of community-supported schooling, and the prioritisation of Western curricula over Indian knowledge systems, all of which pointed to a systematic assimilation process – one that sought not merely to educate but to reshape the very foundations of Indian society. By tracing this process,

Dharampal challenged the dominant narrative that Indian education had been primitive or underdeveloped. Instead, he revealed a history of deliberate restructuring – one in which a vibrant, community-driven system was absorbed into a colonial framework that prioritised control over continuity.

The Colonial Period and Education: Framing Assimilation through the Case of Language

> How stands the case? We have to educate a people who cannot at present be educated by means of their mother tongue. We must teach them some foreign language. The claims of our own language it is hardly necessary to recapitulate.
>
> (T.B. Macaulay, *Minute on Education*, 1935).

With these words, Thomas Macaulay formalised a momentous shift in British colonial education policy, advocating for English as the primary medium of instruction in India. Macaulay, a key functionary of the *Committee of Public Instruction*, dismissed indigenous languages as unsuitable for conveying modern knowledge. In his view, English was the only language capable of civilising the Indian populace. His education policy became a powerful mechanism for cultural assimilation, altering India's intellectual and social landscape.

The politics of language was deeply embedded in the colonial project. The promotion of English and the simultaneous neglect of Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic were matters not merely of education but of power. The ability to speak the language of the rulers conferred access to administrative positions and economic opportunities, thus reordering Indian society along linguistic lines. This transformation was not only educational but psychological, redefining how individuals positioned themselves within the colonial hierarchy. Language became a means of survival, a double-edged sword through which individuals could either gain a foothold in the dominant order or risk being cast aside. Such necessity led to a process of self-subjectification, wherein individuals internalised the need to conform to the linguistic and cultural norms imposed by the colonial state. To participate in the new socio-political order, they had to learn the language of power. The linguistic hegemony created a new hierarchy in which access to knowledge, social mobility, and political participation were tied to English proficiency. It was not simply a matter of replacing one language with another – it was an epistemological shift that redefined what counted as *knowledge* and who had the right to produce it.

The Orientalists Versus The Anglicists

The decision to impose English as the primary language of instruction was not without fierce debate. The Committee of Public Instruction,

which had been tasked with determining the future of education in India, was deeply divided into two factions: the Orientalists, who championed the preservation of indigenous languages and learning; and the Anglicists, who sought to replace such languages with English as the sole medium of instruction.

The Orientalists believed that Indian scholarship deserved state patronage, including funding for the publication of classical texts in Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic. Many were administrators and scholars who had spent years in India, learning local languages and immersing themselves in Indian traditions. Some Orientalists, such as Jonathan Duncan, founder of the Hindu College in Benares, saw their role as one of preservation – maintaining the knowledge systems that had sustained Indian civilisation for centuries. They argued that British administrators needed to learn indigenous languages to govern effectively and that institutions for higher learning should continue teaching Indian jurisprudence, philosophy, and literature in their native tongues.

British Orientalists often aligned themselves with early East India Company officials, who had initially approached India not as conquerors but as traders, who had to negotiate and integrate into existing power structures. This group included men influenced by the ideals of the Scottish Enlightenment, such as Sir William Jones, who founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal and translated numerous Sanskrit texts into English. Jones and his followers were fascinated by the antiquity and sophistication of Indian civilisation and viewed India's literary and legal traditions as worthy of serious study. Their belief was that governing India required an appreciation of its cultural depth, which could only be achieved by maintaining and supporting traditional educational institutions.

On the other hand, the Anglicists – many of whom were more recent arrivals from Britain –saw these efforts as a waste of time and resources. To them, India's classical languages and learning had no practical value. The leader of this faction was Thomas Macaulay, who upon arriving in India was appointed president of the Committee of Public Instruction. Macaulay's perspective was utilitarian: he regarded Indian knowledge systems as obsolete and unscientific, arguing that teaching English would serve the dual purpose of civilising Indians and creating a class of intermediaries who could serve the British administration.

His now-famous *Minute on Education*, delivered on February 2, 1835, sealed the fate of the Orientalists' cause. Aligning himself with the Anglicists, Macaulay dismissed the value of Sanskrit and Persian with near-total disdain:

> We must at present do our best to form a class who may be our interpreters between us and the millions we govern; a class of persons, Indians in

> blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect.
>
> (Speeches by Lord Macaulay (1935), with his *Minute on Indian Education*)

The Psychological Violence of the Classroom

With Macaulay's victory, English became the official language of administration and education, institutionalising a new form of social stratification. The shift did not just alter India's linguistic landscape; it also produced a cultural hierarchy that devalued Indian knowledge systems and forced assimilation through the classroom. Once English was enshrined as the language of governance and education, those who could not assimilate into the English-speaking elite found themselves increasingly marginalised. Macaulay's nephew and biographer, George Trevelyan, described his uncle's role in shaping colonial education as that of an *education czar*, overseeing a massive project of cultural transformation. His influence extended beyond policy-making to the minutiae of daily schooling:

> A volume of Macaulay's Minutes shows a man directly involved in every phase of this vast endeavour, from organising training colleges for teachers, hiring competent managers and inspecting schools, to making up the book lists for school prize-giving ceremonies; all in the cause of what his nephew calls 'providing our Eastern empire with an educational outfit that would work and wear'.
>
> (Trevelyan, 1876: 32)[13]

The newly emerging English-educated elite understood the rewards of assimilation – employment in the colonial bureaucracy, higher social status, and access to power. But the policy also widened the gulf between those who embraced English and those who did not. This was not merely a linguistic transformation but a profound restructuring of Indian society.

Macaulay's influence extended well beyond his time. As Jawaharlal Nehru later observed, British education in India functioned as 'education for clerks', designed to produce a class of administrators rather than independent thinkers (see Gopal, 1976[14]). This marked a reversal from earlier traditions in which British officials themselves had been expected to assimilate into Indian society by learning local languages and customs. By the late 19th century, British attitudes had become ruthless. The process of assimilation was no longer mutual – it was unilateral, requiring Indians to conform to English norms while British officials ceased making any serious efforts to learn Indian languages or customs.

This shift was reinforced by works such as James Mill's *History of British India* (1826), which dismissed Indian civilisation as stagnant and in need

of reform. The logic of modernisation became a means of justifying exclusion and control. In effect, Macaulay's language policy was not just about education; it was about defining who belonged in the new colonial order. Those who assimilated into the English-speaking elite gained access to power, while those who did not were condemned to the margins. The linguistic battlefield of 1835, it turned out, would shape India's future.

Liminality, Partition and Assimilation: A Multidimensional Process

Partition, as both a historical event and a lived experience, represents a profound moment of liminality – a transitional phase characterised by uncertainty, dislocation, and transformation. Victor Turner (1969) conceptualised liminality as an in-between state where individuals and groups exist outside of stable social structures, undergoing a process of identity reformation before re-entering society in a new form. The Partition of British India in 1947 produced such a liminal space, where millions were forcibly displaced, navigating multiple layers of belonging, loss, and re-assimilation. For many, the forced migration that followed Partition was not just a geographical movement but also a transformation in social, religious, and economic identities, shaping different assimilation pathways both within South Asia and beyond, particularly in Britain.

Turner's notion of liminality is helpful in understanding Partition's impact on identity and assimilation. The violence and upheaval that accompanied the division of India and Pakistan displaced approximately 15 million people, many of whom found themselves stateless, community-less, and in a transient state of uncertainty (see Butalia, 1998, 2015). In this liminal phase, previous social markers – such as caste, regional identity, and even national belonging – were destabilised, forcing individuals into new social categories based on religion and displacement. Hindus and Sikhs in newly formed Pakistan and Muslims in independent India had to navigate forced assimilation into dominant cultural and political frameworks, sometimes adopting new names, practices, and survival strategies. The process mirrors Turner's (1969) description of liminality as a space where existing structures dissolve, leading to an ambiguous and often unsettling transition period.

The assimilation trajectories of Partition survivors were shaped by their specific socio-economic and political circumstances. Many were compelled to integrate into new social systems based on necessity rather than choice. Those who remained within South Asia, particularly those who crossed borders, faced immediate pressures to assimilate into the dominant religious and linguistic cultures of their new nations (see Zamindar, 2007). For example, Urdu was promoted as a unifying language in Pakistan, compelling many refugees from India to abandon their mother tongues (see Ghosh, 2007). Similarly, Muslims in India, particularly those who had lost economic

and political influence due to Partition, had to renegotiate their identities within a new secular framework.

For those who migrated to Britain, a second layer of assimilation began. Economic opportunities in the UK, particularly in the post-war period, encouraged South Asian migrants – many of whom were Partition refugees – to integrate into British labour markets and urban environments. The *Partition Voices* series by BBC Radio 4 (2017) documented first-hand accounts of how migrants arriving in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s carried the trauma of Partition while simultaneously adapting to new cultural and economic realities. The necessity to secure employment, housing, and education led to pragmatic forms of assimilation, which did not necessarily mean cultural erasure but rather a strategic negotiation of identities (see Sahoo and Sheffer, 2014).

Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) provides a literary exploration of the fragmented and layered nature of assimilation for Partition survivors. The protagonist, Saleem Sinai, is born at the exact moment of India's independence, inextricably tying identity to the shifting sociopolitical landscape of South Asia. His personal journey, which involves migration, shifting allegiances, and multiple cultural influences, mirrors the experiences of many Partition migrants who had to navigate multiple assimilation processes. Rushdie's narrative highlights how Partition was not a singular historical event but an ongoing process that continued to shape identities long after 1947. Saleem's experience embodies Turner's liminality, as he exists between multiple worlds, never fully belonging to one.

Partition's legacy challenges essentialist understandings of assimilation as a unidirectional process where migrants move from one fixed cultural identity to another. Instead, it reveals how assimilation can be multi-layered, fluid, and non-linear. The concept of reflexivity, as articulated by Archer (1995), helps frame this dynamic process: individuals and communities actively negotiate their place within new structures rather than passively conforming to them. This is evident in the ways South Asian migrants in the UK maintain transnational connections, cultural practices, and political engagement with their countries of origin while also integrating into British society (see Vertovic, 2009).

Turner's theory of liminality acts as a frame for assimilation during Partition, not only as a moment of historical rupture but as a continuing process of identity negotiation. The liminal space created by Partition forced South Asians to undergo multiple forms of assimilation, whether into new national frameworks in South Asia or into diasporic communities in Britain. These assimilation processes were not uniform; they were shaped by religion, class, economic status, and migration pathways. The voices of Partition survivors, as documented in *Partition Voices* (BBC, 2017), as well as literary depictions such as *Midnight's Children*, reveal that assimilation is neither

complete nor singular – it remains a dynamic, evolving process shaped by historical memory, social structures, and individual agency. The history of Partition thus offers a powerful lens through which to understand assimilation as an ongoing, multifaceted process that extends across time and space.

Shifting the Assimilation Gaze – UK, India and Diaspora Relations

The legacy of British colonialism in India established a structural framework for assimilation processes, influencing both internal socio-cultural adaptations and the experiences of Indian migrants abroad. During colonial rule, British policies encouraged the adoption of English, Western education, and bureaucratic systems, embedding a form of cultural assimilation that persisted beyond independence. This historical context facilitated the adaptation of Indian migrants to British societal norms, shaping their assimilation trajectories in the UK and other parts of the Global North.

However, recent research from the Global South (see, for example, Favell, 2022) challenges the conventional view of assimilation as a unidirectional process dictated by the receiving country. Rather than merely conforming to host nation norms, Indian diasporic communities engaged in a dynamic process of structural assimilation, influenced by India's evolving global agenda. India's proactive engagement with its diaspora – through policies of cultural promotion, economic integration, and strategic collaboration – demonstrates an alternative model of assimilation rooted in transnational identity formation. This perspective shifts the focus from a migrant-centric, Global North-driven paradigm to one that acknowledges multiple positionalities and relational experiences.

From this perspective, assimilation is not merely about integration into the host society but also involves a reflexive negotiation between the migrant's origin and destination contexts. Margaret Archer's concept of reflexivity provides a useful framework for understanding this process. Archer posits that structures shape, but do not determine, human agency; individuals navigate and reinterpret structural constraints through reflexive deliberation. In the context of the Indian diaspora, reflexivity manifests as a continuous negotiation between inherited cultural frameworks, contemporary global mobility, and India's active role in fostering diasporic ties.

Reflexivity, as a 'necessary mediatory process' of morphogenesis (Archer, 1995), further explains how assimilation is dynamically evolving. Unlike previous historical periods, where culture was constrained by structure, contemporary society sees a synergy between structure and culture, leading to far-reaching morphogenetic consequences. In previous eras, structural rigidity maintained cultural continuity (morphostasis), whereas today cultural transformations actively restructure social frameworks through a dialectic of positive feedback. This means that the Indian diaspora's assimilation is

not simply an absorption into host societies but also a transformation of cultural and structural contexts at both ends.

For example, India's Ministry of External Affairs (2022) recently emphasised the role of the diaspora in strengthening India's soft power, economic influence, and cultural diplomacy. The '4Cs' approach – Care, Connect, Celebrate, and Contribute – demonstrates a strategic effort to integrate the diaspora into India's national development agenda. Policies such as the Know India Programme (KIP) and VAJRA Faculty Scheme not only reinforce cultural linkages but also position assimilation as a bidirectional exchange, wherein Indian migrants maintain their identity while simultaneously contributing to their host nations. This interplay of structure and culture aligns with Archer's assertion that cultural shifts amplify structural change and vice versa, fostering a dynamic and reflexive assimilation process.

Additionally, transnational practices, enabled through digital technologies and global mobility, challenge rigid conceptions of assimilation. Steven Vertovic (2009) highlights how migration no longer implies a permanent rupture with the homeland; rather, Indian diasporic communities maintain fluid connections that reshape their cultural and social identities. The use of communication modalities, symbolic representations, and economic linkages enables assimilation to occur as a continuous, reflexive, process rather than a linear progression toward cultural absorption.

In light of this, we can suggest that assimilation for the contemporary Indian diaspora is explained as structural assimilation intertwined with reflexivity and morphogenesis. Rather than passively conforming to external pressures, Indian migrants engage in an ongoing dialectic between past and present, tradition and modernity, home and host nation. This challenges essentialist notions of Indianness and calls for a re-evaluation of post-colonial migrant categories, for example. India's strategic engagement with its diaspora illustrates how assimilation is not simply about becoming part of the host society but also about maintaining and reshaping Indian identity in a globalised world, driven by a continuous interplay of structural and cultural transformations. In the next chapter we examine the notion of cultural identity.

Notes

1 See Bhaskar, R. (1998) [1979] *The Possibility of Naturalism* (3rd edition), London: Routledge.
2 See *Online Etymology Dictionary*, 2001–23, entry on diaspora.
3 The Lok Sabha is the lower house of India's Parliament, the supreme legislative body of the country. It is also known as the House of the People and represents the directly elected representatives of Indian citizens. The Lok Sabha is responsible for making and passing laws, overseeing the government, and debating national issues. Members of the Lok Sabha (MPs) are elected through general

elections held every five years, unless dissolved earlier. The Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers are accountable to the Lok Sabha.

4 See First Report on the State of Education in Bengal 1835 in Anathnath Basu ed., *Reports on the State of Education in Bengal (1835 & 1838) by William Adam* (Calcutta: Calcutta University Press, 1941); Second Report On The State of Education in Bengal: District of Rajshahi, in William Adam, *Second Report On The State of Education in Bengal* (Calcutta: Bengal Military Orphan Press, 1836); William Adam, *Third Report On The State of Education in Bengal* (Calcutta: Bengal Military Press, 1838).

5 During British rule in India, a *Presidency* referred to an administrative division that functioned as a province under the British East India Company and later the British Crown. The three main Presidencies – *Bengal, Bombay, and Madras* – were the primary territorial units of British India, each governed by a *Governor* appointed by the British administration. These Presidencies had their own governance structures, judicial systems, and military forces. Over time, as British control expanded, other provinces were added, but the Presidencies remained the core administrative and political centres of British rule in India.

6 See Muhammad Ikram Chaghatai: *Writings of Dr. Leitner: Islam, education, Dardistan, politics and culture of Northern areas*. Comp. by Muhammad Ikram Chaghatai. Lahore: Government College Research and Publ. Society.

7 See Hartog, P. (1939) *Some Aspects of Indian Education Past and Present*, London University.

8 Max Müller (1823–1900) was a German philologist, Orientalist, and scholar of comparative religion and mythology. He is best known for his pioneering work in the study of Indian languages, particularly Sanskrit, and for his contributions to the field of Indology. Müller played a crucial role in translating and interpreting ancient Hindu texts, including the Rig Veda, which he edited and published in multiple volumes.

9 Canara is now part of Karnataka, During British rule, Canara was a coastal region divided between the Madras Presidency (South Canara) and the Bombay Presidency (North Canara). The first Collector was Sir Thomas Munroe.

10 See 'Speeches by Lord Macaulay' (1935), with his 'Minute on Indian education', Thomas Babington Macaulay, edited by G.M. Young, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

11 Modern-day Rayalaseema is a region in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Bellary is now part of Karnataka, though historically it was part of the Madras Presidency under British rule.

12 Sir Thomas Munro (1761–1827) was a Scottish soldier and colonial administrator who played a crucial role in British India, particularly in the Madras Presidency. He served as the Governor of Madras from 1820 to 1827 and was instrumental in implementing revenue and administrative reforms. His policies influenced the colonial administration of South India, and his tenure marked a transition in British governance towards direct control over land revenue collection.

13 See George Macaulay Trevelyan, *History of England*, 1876–1962, London and New York: Longmans.

14 Sarvepalli Gopal (1976) *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography, Volume 1 1889–1947*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

4 Colonial Identities

Arab–Israeli Conflicts

In this chapter we examine the idea of acquiring and having colonial identities, and this will require, in the first instance, a genealogical account of Islam–Judaism relations. This is a history of difference, of the different ways that the relationship between Islamic and Jewish people can be understood over time, and of the different meanings that we can give to the notions of being a Muslim and a Jew.[1] These are traces of different orders and conceptualisations adopted by people during their lifetimes. We might want to call them *Weltanschauungs*, or universal-views, held by a community in place and time – discursive configurations that are in history. Having said that, it is important not to overvalue, and thus exaggerate, the efficacy of the properties of these historical configurations, and especially the property of absolute reach or ambit.

Muslim–Jewish relations comprise those sets of human and conceptual relations between Jewish people and Muslims in the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa, the Middle East and their surrounding region. This genealogical and conceptual story begins in the 7th century with the spread of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula. These two religions shared values, guidelines for living, and human exemplars. (Moses, the most important prophet in Judaism, is also considered, to this day, to be an important prophet and messenger in the Islamic religion.) Maimonides, an influential Jewish theologian, was influenced by Islamic legal thought (see Halbertal, 2014). Because of the shared heritage of the two religions, there has been considerable and continued physical, cultural and political overlap between the two faiths in the subsequent 1400 years.

The word 'semitic', which can be applied to both Muslims and Jews, originated from the history of these people recounted in the Old Testament of the Bible. Hebraic and Arabian peoples are generally classified as semitic, although this term has now taken on a racialist sense, where race is understood as being imagined and constructed, but all too real in those terms. This affinity between Hebrews and Arabs is based on characteristics such as genetic heritage, learnt habits, a shared language and a shared culture.

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To understand the resulting differences between the two sets of people, difference needs to be located within the common origin of Hebrews and Arabs, their culture, ways of living and epistemological convictions.

Around the 12th century BC, Judaism developed as a monotheistic religion. According to Jewish religious tradition, their history begins with the Covenant between God and Abraham, who is thought of as a Hebrew. The Hebrew Bible (or Tanakh), also known as the Miqra, comprising the canonical collection of Hebrew scriptures, such as the Torah, the Nevi'im and the Ketuvim, makes reference to the Arvi peoples from the Arava plain. Judaism, Islam and Christianity are in a sense Abrahamic religions, since they all have a common heritage. Divisions and separations between them are both ideological and praxical, and can thus be understood as the different histories of these three religious bodies and the way their identities and self-conceptions (as races) diverged. Although their different histories were developed over time, there are many agreements in their originating narratives about what happened to these people. For example, the Qur'anic and biblical accounts agree on the events of Moses' infancy, his exile to Midian, plagues and miracles, the parting of the Red Sea, the revelation of the tablets, the incident of the golden calf and forty years of wandering. Muhammad, a religious, social and political leader, in the 7th century, in order to settle some long-standing grievances among the tribes of Medina, drafted, with the help of others, a document known as the Constitution of Medina. This document came to shape the legal status of the old Arab tribes, and also, in time, became an unquestionable authority. Muhammad also adopted from the Hebraic tradition some features of Jewish worship and customs, such as fasting on the Yom Kippur day. However, the cultural differences between the Arabic and Hebraic peoples continued to multiply and these cultural differences began to be seen in the form of geographical and land separation, and in the practical and ethical way of life they adopted. For example, Maimonides referred to Muhammad as a false prophet, a conceptual dispute which had praxical consequences, including fighting each other (see Moshe Halbertal's *Life and Thought of Maimonides*[2]).

There are many common aspects of Islam and Judaism, both of them being monotheistic religions originating from a semitic Middle Eastern culture. Whereas Christianity originated from the interaction between ancient Greek and Hebrew culture, Islam is similar to Judaism in its fundamental outlook, structure, jurisprudence and practices. The most obvious common practice is the statement of the absolute unity of God, which Muslims observe in their five times daily prayers, and Jews praying three times daily. The two faiths also share the central practices of fasting and almsgiving, as well as dietary laws and other aspects of ritual purity. Sacred texts of both religions ban homosexuality, forbid human sexual relations outside of marriage and necessitate abstinence during the wife's menstruation. Both Islam and Judaism practise circumcision of males.

Land and sovereignty eventually became the dominant factors in the relationships between Muslims and Jews. The State of Israel was proclaimed on 14 May 1948, one day before the expiry of the British Mandate of Palestine. Not long after, five Arab countries (Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq) attacked Israel, launching the 1948 Arab–Israeli war. Twelve more wars have been fought between the Arab States and Israel since then. At the time of writing, the Arab and Jewish conflict has reignited, taking two forms: Israel against Hamas, who are the dominant force in the Gazan part of Palestine; and Israel against Hezbollah, a Lebanon-based Shia Palestinian group. Cultural and epistemic differences between peoples can turn into fighting over land and resources and persist over a long period of time.

Categories and concepts are time-oriented or temporally-related. Colonising as a concept and as a practice has a temporal dimension. If we understand it as a process – a first event produces or leads to a second event which, in turn, leads to a third event – then we are identifying three time points, each of these time-points being arranged sequentially. And further to this, these three time-points roughly correspond to what we understand as the past, the present and the future. This holds with the exception of our understanding of the present. Any presencing activity[3] is an intrusive act in the ceaseless flow of time. In addition, self-reflection or taking part in an internal conversation or in an examination of the self (especially in a religious sense) all refer to past occurrences – they are never acts of reflection about present occurrences. From this, we can then determine three temporal configurations: a full understanding of a text (event, occurrence, written account, spoken account, learning action, epistemic process) in terms of its immersion in the past and the present-past; a text that is wholly concerned with predicting and influencing the future; and a text that takes account of all the possible temporal configurations that are relevant to it. In the last case there is an added complication: that we now also have to determine what the relations might be between these different temporal configurations.

A temporal event-based configuration might include descriptions of historical events that occurred in the near past as well as the distant past. Here is a series of statements about the Israeli/Palestinian conflict:

1. On 7 October 2023, the Palestinian group Hamas launched an assault on the local communities near the Gazan border (imposed by Israel after the 1967 war and after their occupation of Gaza) with Israel. More than 1,400 Israelis were killed and some 220 hostages, including children, were taken hostage and imprisoned in Gaza.
2. The Israeli government cut off electricity and most water supplies to Gaza, and stopped the provision of food and medicine from outside its borders, although it did allow a limited amount of these provisions through Egypt's Rafah crossing.

3. Britain took control of the area called Palestine (including what is now known as Gaza, Greater Israel and the West Bank) after defeating the Ottoman Dynasty, which had ruled that part of the middle east during world war one. The land was inhabited by a Jewish minority and a Palestinian/Arab majority.
4. In the Balfour Declaration of 1917, Britain promised to create a national homeland in the Palestine area for Jewish people. This created an immediate problem since both the Jewish (and many Jewish communities round the world) and Palestinian peoples understood the land as their ancestral home.
5. In 1947 the United Nations voted for the Palestine area to be divided up between separate Palestinian and Jewish states, with Jerusalem becoming an international city. The plan was never implemented,.
6. In 1948 the British withdrew from the Palestine area and Israel declared the creation of the State of Israel. Five Arab countries attacked Israel and after the fighting ceased hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs had been displaced, Jordan occupied the land which is now known as the West Bank and Egypt occupied Gaza – Jerusalem was divided between Israeli forces in the West and Jordanian forces in the East.
7. In the 1967 war between Israel and the bordering Arab States, Israel occupied by force the eastern part of Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Syrian Golan Heights, Gaza and the Egyptian Sinai peninsula. Most Palestinians or those with Palestinian heritages now live in Gaza, the West Bank and neighbouring Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. Gaza and the West Bank are now de facto Israeli colonies (through control of its borders, movement of its people and its economic activity, but not through direct governance).
8. In the past 50 years, Israel has allowed Jewish settlers to build homes in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and there are now 700,000 Jews in these settlements, although these are in direct contravention of international law.
9. The peoples of this region continue to self-identify as Jews or Palestinians, with their historical and religious overtones.[4]

These statements, and their associated periodisations, are not value-free facts about an event, or series of events, or series of occurrences in the world. Either through omission or selection or partiality, a particular picture is being painted of the conflict. Furthermore, one of the ways in which these pictures are being painted is to set the different interpretations within a temporal framework, that is, a predominantly antecedent network, a contemporaneous network or a futures-nexus. Which one of these we choose to adopt will influence, but not determine the epistemic and ethical approach that we can take towards the Kibbutz Be'eri, the Nova Festival, Kfar Assa, Sderot and Nir Oz massacres, and the subsequent response of the Israeli government.

For example, we can adopt a deontological attitude towards the issue if we ignore the history of the region and talk just about the brutality of these two occurrences, or we can seek to explain what happened recently as a consequence of the ethnic histories of these peoples, or we can take a purely partisan attitude towards these events and subsequently construct an ethical approach in these terms. The temporal dimension to any ethical judgement is frequently downplayed and marginalised.[5]

Practices of Representation

In Edward Said's book, *Orientalism*,[6] he identified a variety of concepts, assumptions and discursive practices that were used to produce a viewpoint about non-European peoples, and, in particular, about those peoples that were thought of as Arabic. He described this area as the Orient, with this perspective an Occidental one. This perspective was not just a set of ideas that languished on the dusty shelves of libraries, but also a proactive, with some success, attempt to frame the culture, way of life, belief-system and identity of those people who were being colonised. Said's way of working makes it possible for us to deconstruct the literary and praxical texts that reinforced this imperial project, especially with regards to the Arab/Israeli conflict that has dominated Western media over the last year. (There is, at the time of writing, no sign of a resolution to this conflict.) The focus, therefore, is not so much on the economic or political logic of colonialism but on its cultural dimensions. In this sense, his book *Orientalism* can be understood as a poststructuralist critique of Western epistemology, as we defined this important concept in the first chapter of this book.

Said used the term *Orientalism* in a number of different ways. He used it to denote a specialist field of study about a geographical area in the world, which he defined as the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa, the Middle East and their surrounding region. And he conceived of this study as interdisciplinary (and even transdisciplinary), so as not to locate it within narrow boundaries or transient disciplinary spaces. He also identified it as a way of characterising Europe as not being the Orient. Orientalism, then, is a way of describing Western knowledge or European Enlightenment knowledge or colonial knowledge or occidental cultural knowledge, as a series of binary oppositions (rational/irrational, cerebral/somatic, order/chaos and many more). Said, drawing on his Foucauldian roots, also suggested that Orientalism was a mode of exercising power, and it worked by organising and classifying knowledge about the Orient. Above all else, it is and was an attempt by the colonising powers to divide the world into the Occident and the Orient, and to give different characteristics, valuations and dispositions to each. They are binary terms in that the meaning of each depends on the meaning of the other, although it constitutes an opposition rather than an extension.

The colonial world is thus shown to be superior and progressive, rational and civilised, whereas the colonised world is depicted as inferior and backward, irrational and uncivilised. This cultural knowledge about the coloniser and the colonised allowed Europeans to rename, redefine, and exert control over Oriental peoples, places and objects.

In *Orientalism*, Said refers to a piece written about the Arab World by Harold W. Glidden (in the 1972 edition of *The American Journal of Psychiatry*), in which Glidden remarks about the Arab World in the following way. Purporting to uncover 'the inner workings of Arab behaviour', Glidden describes these as aberrant from the West's point of view and from the Arab's point of view normal. We are told that Arabs stress conformity; that Arabs can function only in conflict situations; that prestige is based solely on the ability to dominate others; that a shame culture, Islamic in origin, makes a virtue in revenge; and that from a Western point of view 'the only rational thing for the Arabs to do is to make peace…For the Arabs the situation is not governed by this type of logic, for objectivity is not a value in the Arab system.' Glidden goes on to remark that: 'it is a notable fact that while the Arab value system demands absolute solidarity within the group, it at the same time encourages among its members a kind of rivalry that is destructive of that very solidarity'. Arabs 'live naturally in a world characterised by anxiety expressed in generalised suspicion and distrust, which has been labelled free-floating hostility'; 'the art of subterfuge is highly developed in Arab life, as well as in Islam itself' – and so on and so on and so on.

Glidden's piece was written in 1972; more recent depictions of Arab behaviour can be found in a written report by the Centre for Media Monitoring about how Israeli/Gazan relations at the beginning of the conflict[7] were represented in the written and spoken media in the UK. Researchers at the Centre analysed more than 200,000 news items in the months following 7 October 2003, and found coverage to be 'disproportionately biased towards a pro-Israel framing and narrative'. The Centre for Media Monitoring (CfMM), a branch of the Muslim Council of Britain, examined nearly 177,000 broadcast clips and 25,515 online news articles. The broadcasts were from 13 channels operated by media organisations, including Al Jazeera English, the BBC, Channel 4, ITV, Sky News and right-wing outlets such as GB News and TalkTV. The CfMM Report, *Media Bias: Gaza 2023-2024*, also examined news websites published by 28 media organisations, including the *New Statesman*, *Economist*, *Daily Mail*, *Sun*, *Mirror*, *Independent, Guardian*, *Times*, BBC and iNews. The evidence they presented to allow them to draw the conclusions they did was complicated and extensive,[8] with only a brief account of this evidence given here:

1. They found that broadcasters referenced Israeli perspectives almost three times as much as Palestinians (4,311 times against 1,598), while online

news outlets presented Israeli perspectives almost twice as much (2,983 times against 1,737).
2. On broadcast channels, 'Israel's right to defend itself' was promoted on 1,482 occasions, while the rights of Palestinians were mentioned 278 times, a ratio of five to one.
3. Emotive terms such as atrocities, slaughter, and massacre, were eleven times more likely to be used to describe Israeli victims, compared to Palestinians. Israeli victims of Palestinian violence are 'killed' while Palestinians mysteriously 'die'.
4. The news outlets also failed to contextualise the 7 October attacks, which saw Hamas kill more than 1,400 Israelis and take more than 200 hostages. The News Media largely ignored Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories.
5. In 98,500 mentions of the term Gaza, 'occupied Gaza' was only used on 28 occasions. The Al-Jazeera English news channel used the term 'occupied territories' 202 times, more than all other channels combined (179 mentions).
6. Palestinians who tried to explain the 75-year occupation of Palestine were found to have been accused of 'justifying the 7 October attacks'.
7. On 10 October, the Tel-Aviv News channel i24 alleged that Israeli soldiers had found babies 'with their heads cut off'. These claims were repeated by various media outlets, but were not confirmed by Israeli officials.
8. CfMM's report also highlighted numerous examples of broadcast interviews that perpetuated Islamophobic tropes, such as being oppressive towards women and not allowing women to speak in public.

A trope, in this case an Islamophobic trope, potentially has semantic implications.

Colonising and Colonised Identities

Paul Ricoeur's (1984; 1985; 1988) concept of narrative offers an ethical and epistemic perspective on personal identity and the construction of the self.[9] He suggested that there is an interplay between our ethical actions – our ways of behaving in the world – and those acquired dispositions that constitute the self. Ricoeur emphasised the first-person or personal nature of selfhood and autonomy, which cannot be fully captured by third-party descriptions, that is, other people describing what you do. In addition, this sense of personhood involved the active construction of the self through narratives or personal stories, through an interplay between stable dispositions and ethical commitments. Ricoeur's sense of narrative identity has two dimensions: character (idem), expressing permanence and stability; and faithfulness of the self (ipse), the ethical component, denoting the dynamic

and evolving aspects of identity construction. Identity is a story we tell ourselves and also an ethical project that ends with death.[10] The faithfulness of the self refers to the wellspring of our ethical decision-making. Coloniality and decoloniality, and the relations between them, are stories and narratives that have effects in the real world.

The issue of personal identity (and thus, collective identity as colonial or decolonial tropes) refers to the way a person identifies with a particular social object, such as a nation, a collection of nations, an ethnic trait, a racial classification, a geographical entity, a personal history, a sense of heritage, a sporting club, an abstraction such as goodness or love,[11] a social unit such as the family, a religion or a sexual orientation. All of these identity formations are exclusionary in some form or another. Whatever the social object, this identification comprises a preference for that object over other objects of the same type, for example, identifying with a nation over and above a collection of nations, or identifying with a particular racial grouping and not with human beings in general. These social objects can be nested in some type of identity grouping, so, we can identify with an area within a country ('I am a Gazian'), a country ('I am Palestinian'), a religious body ('I am a Muslim') or even the world ('I am a world citizen'). Belonging to all four of these identity groupings is not in itself incoherent or irrational.

What is pivotal here is how a person constructs their personal identity – how they give more importance to one particular social object or even to a number of objects and, consequently, less importance to others. A person's identity refers to certain properties of the social world to which a person feels a special sense of attachment or ownership, that is, in all their deliberations about the world and with regards to their activities in this world, they prioritise some reasons for action over and against others. As a result, they see the world in a particular way, although they may share that world with other people who subscribe to the same or similar markers of identity. All of these identity markers are imagined conceptualisations of the social object, so racial, spatial, historical, ethnic, religious, sexualised, embodied or familiar attachments comprise imagined and constructed narratives about race, geographies, histories, ethnicities, religions, sexualities, bodies or social groupings. Frequently, human beings reify and sanctify the properties of the social object to which they are attached, treating them as natural, or as common sense, or as sacred, and thus beyond reproach.

A person's sense of identity, then, consists of those features of the imagined object that define them as a person, or even that make them the person that they are. They give that person a sense of belonging, and they direct that person in a particular way. Fundamentally, personal identity is a matter of what human beings care about in the world. They are also a reminder about what texts, written and spoken, a person should consider as sacred, as to the nature of how to read these sacred objects and about what should be

valued in the world. Jewish communities are diverse politically, religiously and culturally, and yet all of them believe in the centrality of Israel, a small geographical entity, to their belief systems. The land of Israel, and Jerusalem in particular, has remained over many centuries at the heart of their everyday worship. For thousands of years, Jews have faced towards Jerusalem, known as Zion, which appears 152 times in the Hebrew Bible, and is integral to Jewish faith and identity. It is also a signifier of difference, that is, a difference which at the time of writing has led to warfare of the most savage kind between the Israelis and their Arab neighbours.

These markers of difference refer to the type and extent of dissimilarity between different manifestations of the social object, i.e. Israeli and Palestinian, Jewish and Islamic, and more. Crude versions of these relations are ever-present in modern societies. However, difference can be understood as not being or as being opposite to something else, and, in addition, that ideas and concepts are part of a network of words and signs, that only have meaning within other arrangements of words and concepts, from which they differ. However, difference can become pathological if different sets of values, usually in opposition to each other, are attached to different manifestations of the social object.

Being a women, preferring a Jewish cuisine, and living in Jerusalem may be characteristics of a particular person, but they do not constitute identity markers for that person unless and until that person has invested enough feeling and commitment in them to trigger actions. In addition, it may be possible for a characteristic to belong to a person, in that it is a central defining belief that they have (ethnic purity for example), with at the same time that belief being false. A person's sense of identity may be changeable, fragile, focused on different social objects at different times, and contingent. However, for most people social attachments that are acquired at an early age persist over time and are extremely difficult to reverse, although they may take a different form at different moments in that person's life and indeed involve denials and repudiations, such as in ethnic or racial identities.

What sort of things, entities, objects, then, are people or persons? What are their fundamental properties? What, for instance, are they made of? Are they substances wholly or partly formed and reformed by material, embodied and discursive features of society or is each person able to shape their own life-course? And, fundamentally, how do human beings construct their sense of self? These are difficult questions to answer, but the answers that are given and the subsequent identities that are assumed have consequences, some trivial, some serious.

Identity is being used here to indicate a sense of wholeness and thus persistence across time. All discussions of a person over time require some understanding of change; that is, a notion of change is built into the conception of the human being. However, if there was no cohering element

between time moments, so that every moment entailed a change of person, we would not have a sense of personhood, which therefore has to include a notion of persistence over time, and, in addition, has a notion of emergence. And this is emergence understood in its two modes: as a temporal phenomenon and ontologically as a response to the stratified nature of reality. This sense of personhood also has an ethical dimension.

Ethical Configurations

What we are suggesting here is that a particular expressive mode has certain characteristics that compel us to understand the world in a particular way and thus enable and constrain the determination of meaning and how we behave in life, and can be thought of as ethical formations. Examples of these colonial and decolonial ethical formations are: the honour ethic, disengaged reasoning, theistic control, self-reflection, and the transformation of the will. There are many more. These are ideal representations that are sanctioned in language. In their use in particular contexts and settings, such as the Middle East, we are likely to find variants, incomplete renditions, fragmentary performances and partial iterations.

The honour ethic,[12] the first ethical configuration, is perhaps misleadingly entitled in that it reflects its stoic ancestry rather than the sense it has of mastery over the passions. This ancestry prioritised virtues such as strength, fortitude, resolution, and control over contemplative qualities. It is rarely now deployed in great deeds of military valour but perhaps we can say that it is deployed in modern sporting encounters such as the Olympic Games, and privately in the domination of the passions by thought and thinking processes. This internalised ethical stance reconstitutes the public/private nature of a virtue, an example of which is dignity. In the older form of the honour ethic, a person's dignity and its preservation assumed a position of immense importance over and above the life of the individual or the person's family. In its more modern form it points to inner struggles between action and contemplation, between expression and suppression, and between doing and knowing. The dignity of the individual is of prime concern in the construction of the self. In Judaism honour refers to the respect, esteem, reverence, admiration, or approbation shown, felt toward, or received by, a deity or person. Honour is accorded to those in a position of authority (see Genesis, 45: 13), achieved by heroism (see Judges, 8: 22), wisdom (see Genesis, 41: 39), or divine favour (see 1 Samuel, 24: 7). In the Qur'an, Verse 21 suggests that

> Whoever desires honour, then to Allah belongs the honour wholly. To Him do ascend the good words; and the good deeds, lift them up, and (as for) those who plan evil deeds, they shall have a severe chastisement; and (as for) their plan, it shall perish.

A disengaged reasoning ethic, a second ethical configuration, is a form of moral reasoning. The most significant aspect of disengaged reasoning for our purposes here is that it is not simply an epistemology but, more importantly, a way of theorising social reality and a way of developing a positional objectivity in which the desires, wants and preferences of the ethicist and the colonialist and decolonialist do not play a part either in their epistemic narratives or in their moral infrastructure. Disengaged rationality is a continuation of the grand narrative of the Enlightenment that only a society based on science and its universal values can be rational and therefore truly free (see back to Chapter 1). This is a narrative of cultural progress where modernity is depicted as a process of science replacing not only religion and tradition but also practical wisdom and experience as the foundation of social organisation, and where the law-like generalisations of science form the basis of expertise that informs and justifies systems of ethics and, more importantly, individual ethical practices. Whereas classical epistemology has been fixated on bridging the gap between belief and knowledge, Jewish epistemology is more often interested in bridging the gap between faith and knowledge (or, more precisely, between Emunah – faith or belief, or even trust – and Da'at or Da'ath [Hebrew] meaning knowledge). In the Qur'an, there is an extensive discussion of the nature of knowledge in Islam, its source, aims and objectives, its types and branches, and how it can be acquired.

A theistic form of ethical knowledge is constituted by its fidelity to certain types of norms, practices and protocols. These include the accepted means for determining what is true knowledge in a community; the arbitration of good practice within the community, over, for example, what constitutes *excellence*; the semantic formulation currently in use; the type of values that are attached to concepts within the community; and the types of power mechanisms that are in place to regulate these practices and protocols. Ethical practices, their constitution and their justification are theistic and usually monotheistic in the way they work. A theistic version of the self, then, also requires practices of the self which can be characterised as deferential, obeisant, instrumental and confessional, and these are similar in both the Muslim and Jewish faiths. In Judaism, God is never portrayed in any image. The Torah specifically forbids ascribing partners to share his [sic.] singular sovereignty. In classical Islamic theism, God is the creator and sustainer of everything – being the creator (al-Khāliq) is an essential attribute of God. In both cases, this theistic doctrine supports the idea of sacred texts, sacred ways of reading texts, and particular and specific moral formulations.

A fourth ethical configuration refers to the idea of reflection, self-reflection and reflexivity. This internal conversation has three conditioning structures. The first is that it is a genuinely interior phenomenon, and this implies that we have private lives. The second conditioning structure is that this sense of a person's subjectivity has a first-person ontology – it relates directly

to a particular person. The third conditioning structure is that it possesses causal powers, in that material and discursive consequences could follow directly from particular internal conversations. This is a notion of reflection, or even reflexivity, which is a way of saying that a person can be disposed to reflect back on herself. Here the life of the mind is characterised by an internal conversation that is a part of the whole process of learning. The second type of reflexive action can be called autonomous reflexivity and here the processes of the internal conversation are foreshortened and may be automatic and involuntary, in so far as they lead to actions. Then there are meta-reflexive processes, in which the principal focus is the internal conversation; interiorisation and exteriorisation processes are marginalised. There may also be fractured reflexive processes, in which the interrogation by one part of the mind of another part does not proceed smoothly and coherently, leading to the learner being distressed and disorientated.[13]

The Torah tells the story of Avraham and Sarah, and his grief when she died: '…and Avraham came to eulogize Sarah and to bewail her (v'livkosa)'. Avraham came from Mount Moriah (Har HaMoriah) after performing the Akeidah to find that his wife had passed away. An interpretation of his grief was to understand it as an act of self-reflection – Akeidah had to reflect on what had happened in order to grieve properly for his wife. The Qur'an emphasises the importance of introspection and self-awareness, urging believers to ponder over the signs of creation and their own existence. It encourages individuals to contemplate their actions, seek forgiveness for their shortcomings, and work towards self-improvement.

A fifth ethical configuration comprises a transformation of the will (the issue of volition or free will is central to this notion, as is its exercise). In its application, this knowledge claim cannot be sustained unless it is supported by a notion and a practice of the self. In other words, a purely idealistic view of life is simply not adequate for describing the notion and the practice: they have real, understood in a materialistic way, qualities. They also have the essential qualities of control and impact. The control element has two manifestations: the first of these is control over actions and the second is control over other people's actions. This raises issues concerning the nature and existence of both types of control (for example, the power of self-determination) and what its true significance is. Free will, as a concept and as a practice, then, can be enframed metaphysically and ethically, and is concerned with notions of causation, time, substance, personhood and reason-giving epistemologies. In trying to understand the notion of free will, we are also forced to consider issues of rightness and wrongness, good and evil, virtue and vice, blame and praise, reward and punishment and attribution. In asserting the existence of free will we are engaging in an ethical practice and an ethical practice of a particular kind. An example of this might be acting in a decolonial way.

The story of Adam and Eve is an important part of the Qur'an. God created Adam, fashioning him from clay. He breathed a soul into Adam, taught him the names of all things, and created from the same soul, his wife, Eve. God allowed them to live in Paradise. In Islamic belief, human beings are considered to be originally good by nature, born in a state of purity. Adam and Eve enjoyed perfect freedom and happiness in Paradise. God told them to eat fruits from the Garden with pleasure and delight as they pleased. He forbade them from approaching one tree, and warned them that if they did, they would be in the wrong. Satan came and deceived them, saying that God only forbade them from eating fruit from that tree because it would make them immortal or they would become like the angels. They were thus deceived by Satan and ate from the tree. Adam and Eve felt shame. They turned to God in sincere repentance, and God, the all-forgiving, the most gracious, the most merciful, forgave them. Islam clearly rejects the concept of original sin, or the notion that all human beings are born sinners because of the actions of Adam. No human should ever have to bear the burdens of another. Every human being is responsible for his or her actions and is born as a Muslim, pure and free from sin. It is important to note that Islam does not place the blame on Eve. Both Adam and Eve had free will. Both of them ate fruit from the tree. Their sin and disobedience was a joint venture.

In the Jewish Bible Adam was the first human being and the progenitor of the human race. God created a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. He placed him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. God told the man that he could eat from every tree in the garden, except from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, under penalty of death. God then put the man to sleep, extracted one of his ribs, and fashioned with it the first woman, whom Adam called Eve because she would be the mother of everyone who lived. The man and the woman were naked and felt no shame until the serpent convinced the woman to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree. After Eve shared the fruit with Adam, the couple became aware of their nakedness. They covered themselves with fig leaves and hid from God in embarrassment. Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the serpent. As punishment for their transgression, God condemned the serpent to crawl on its belly and eat dust. He told the woman that she would suffer pain in childbirth, and would crave for her husband, and be subject to him. God then made garments of skin and clothed Adam and Eve. To prevent them from eating the fruit of the tree of life, thus becoming immortal, God expelled them from the Garden of Eden.

In relation to these five ethical formations there is a remarkable similarity between the stories Jewish and Islamic peoples tell themselves, and this is not unexpected, since both religions have a common heritage. Colonised and coloniser are not in this sense defined by their stories, myths, belief-systems,

epistemologies, ethical predilections and the like. They are more likely to be, and have been, defined by economic and political processes that have occurred over time.

Notes

1 In using these words, Islam, Judaism, Islamic, Jewish, Muslim and Jew, the greatest care needs to be taken in their use. This is because words such as these change their meaning over time and are multisemic.
2 Halbertal, Moshe, trans. Joel A. Linsider, *Maimonides: Life and Thought*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2014.
3 For a fuller account of the notion of presencing, see Henri Bergson (1999) *Duration and Simultaneity*, ed. R. Durie, Manchester: Clinamen Press.
4 These nine statements about the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict can never be more than brief flirtations with the truth of what has actually happened and what is happening now. What we do know, however, is that there has been a large loss of life over a long period of time. They are taken directly from Scott, D. (2025) *On Learning: volume 3, Curriculum, Knowledge and Ethics*, London: UCL Press.
5 Recently, the Israeli ambassador to the United Kingdom rejected outright the notion of a two-state solution to the crisis, and at the same time rejected the idea of a single Palestinian state in the area that now includes Israel, Gaza and the Palestine Authority, on the grounds that this would put at risk the idea of a Jewish state, a religio-authoritarian governance structure, that, by virtue of its religiosity, would consist of two types of citizens unequally positioned and resourced. The third solution, if we can call it a solution, is a dividing up of the land into areas for a coloniser and areas for the colonised, with this rigid form of apartheid being policed by the dominant body of people.
6 Said himself claimed some form of Palestinian identity and this is important in trying to understand his view of the concept and practice of coloniality.
7 The focus here is on the Kibbutz Be'eri, the Nova Festival, Kfar Assa, Sderot and Nir Oz massacres, and the subsequent response of the Israeli government.
8 We should acknowledge, however, that their research processes may have been flawed, given that the broadcasters are likely to have varied considerably in terms of their investment in, and engagement with, impartiality monitoring processes.
9 We need to remind ourselves of Richard Rorty's (Rorty, R. (1998) *Truth and Progress: Philosophical Papers, Volume 3*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 105) injunction against the idea of a fixed centre of being or identity: 'Like heroines whose stories are told by novelists, and selves whose self-consciousness about their own past character results in the acquisition of a quite different future, objects change as our descriptions of them change. That is to say their centre of descriptive gravity shifts as inquiry proceeds.'.
10 See Antony Giddens' (Giddens, A. (1986) *The Constitution of Society*, Cambridge: Polity Press) concept of life as a project of the self.
11 For example, Philip Larkin's *An Arundel Tomb*: 'what will survive of us is love'.
12 Perhaps this is reflected in Donald Trump's choice of Defence Secretary of State in his second US presidential administration, Pete Hegseth.
13 See Archer, M. (2002) 'Models of Man: Transcendence and Being-in-the-World', *Discerning Values and Beliefs*, pp. 123–51, editor: E. Cassidy, Dublin: Veritas; and Archer, M. (2007) *Making our Way through the World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, for an account of reflexivity and the internal conversation.

5 Political and Economic Colonisation

Empire and Commerce

A semantic theory, a contra-representationalist theory of world–mind and mind–world relations, seeks to develop an argument or series of arguments against words naming objects, the reduction of language to representation and the adoption of an atomistic unitary philosophy. What this means is that for certain words and concepts, such as colonising and decolonising, we cannot give a definitive account of meaning. This does not mean that we cannot use these words and many others on the grounds that they are imprecise in definitional terms, but only that the case for establishing the meaning of a word, set of words or word-concept does not lie in the way it is defined. However, what this does is point to the conventional (not necessarily rule-bound) nature of meaning derivation, and this, in turn, suggests that the meaning of a word, sentence or proposition resides in and can only be fully understood within the contexts of its utterance (and these, in turn, need to be explained). This assertion is a refutation of the notion that meaning is given by the fixed and essential grammar of the word, sentence or proposition, typically addressed by reference to a dictionary or a work of reference.

We are focusing here on the way concepts, such as coloniality and decoloniality, have changed in form and appearance over time, and in particular how this has affected their historical, archaeological and genealogical connections and relations. In the first instance, we need to consider how these three types of event-methodologies, that refer to events in the past and in the present-past, can be distinguished from each other. Historical, archaeological and genealogical methodologies are framed by time, although this core category is construed differently in each of them. Discursive object-configurations are understood in different ways, historically, archaeologically and genealogically. The key, then, to understanding what they are lies with the types of relations that exist between objects in their formation and reformation.

Archaeology is the term used by Michel Foucault (1966, for example) in his earlier writings to describe his approach to history and writing history.[1]

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This approach focuses on the discursive trace-objects and object-arrangements (the order of things) left from the past, which enable us to write a history in the present-past. He contrasted this with a genealogical approach.[2] Although there are some confusions in his later work about the differences between the two modes of historical theorising, the genealogical approach is designed to critically interrogate belief-formations by attempting to explain the scope, extent, breadth and totality of discourses that are in existence. Both of these approaches are historical in a conventional sense, in that an event, a discursive or material happening, or a configuration relating to either of these, has occurred prior to other object-events, objects and configurations of objects. There is a temporal order between these objects.

Foucault revived the notion of genealogy as it had been used in the past, and in particular developed the idea from the one used by Friedrich Nietzsche in his *Genealogy of Morality* (1998).[3] Foucault's principal concern in his *Les Mots et Les Choses* (1966) (in English this is sometimes translated as *The Order of Things* with a subtitle of *An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*) is to offer an account of how knowledge over the ages has changed and the implications this has for practices such as psychiatry and clinical medicine and disciplines such as economics, sociology, philosophy, biology and philology. These are *Weltanschauungs*,[4] or universal-views, held by a community in place and time – discursive configurations that are in history. Having said that, it is important not to overvalue – and thus exaggerate – the efficacy of the properties of these historical configurations, and especially the property of absolute reach or ambit.

History, then, can be written in a number of different ways. There is the conventional way, where the focus is on the events and occurrences that happened over a specific time frame. This is an attempt to write history as it occurred and as it was sequentially arranged. The second way of writing history is to focus on the changing form over time of a number of key concepts, such as coloniality and decoloniality, treating these concepts and their manifestations as operating outside of any timeline, with its sequencing characteristic. (This corresponds to Foucault's notion of the archeological method, and is aligned with Nietzsche's use of the genealogical method in his discussion of morality.) A third way is to place these conceptual characterisations in material and discursive configurations and events in history – this approach is designed to critically interrogate belief-formations by attempting to explain the scope, extent, breadth and totality of discourses that are in existence. (This roughly corresponds to Foucault's notion of the genealogical method.) A fourth way of writing history is a development and extension of this into what Foucault called epistemes, definite moments in history where particular knowledge-configurations are in the ascendency – these are orders of discourse. Colonial history can be given temporal, spatial and epistemic positionings and boundaries, and it can be written

historically, archeologically and genealogically, and in relation to particular and specific epistemes.

Colonial History

This is a colonial history of European colonial rule in Africa. These are traces of different orders and conceptualisations adopted by different colonialists in Africa with those orderings and arrangements being almost exclusively economic and political, rather than discursive in the way they are constituted. Although the theory that is produced comes from a range of empirical evidence gathered by historians, this does not mean that the account is not partisan (it is certainly written from an Eurocentric perspective), factional and discriminatory. In other words, this brief history is written from a particular point of view. The argument that we make here, in its essence, is that the great colonial powers, France, Britain, Portugal, Belgium, Germany, and Italy,[5] ruled the various parts of Africa that they had jurisdictional control over in different ways, and this means that it is possible to develop a typology of colonial economic and political forms: indirect rule (decentralisation and continuity), assimilation (the colonised becoming like the coloniser), wealth extraction (commercial exploitation), brutal paternalism (by the coloniser on the colonised), civilising enlightenment (with coloniser values to the fore) and genocidal elimination (which had clear racialist intentions). The era of African colonisation by the great European powers was relatively brief. Most of the subjugated colonies after 1885 were granted independence less than eighty years later. However, this brief period of colonisation produced a massive disruption to African societies and has had profound consequences that have persisted to this day.

Before the great era of colonisation, political authority in Africa regarding the boundaries of each state was defined by geographic space with borders determined by natural features of the landscape, such as rivers, mountains and deserts, and, more importantly. by communities of people and where they lived, rather than by territory as such. The bindings of the state were social networks of kinship and lineage rather than borders drawn in an arbitrary fashion on the ground. European colonialism redrew these boundaries between the various states, with this redrawing defined by treaty in the corridors of power in Europe, where these social networks were either ignored or deliberately transgressed for reasons of politics and power. Another common feature of European rule was the ability of the colonial powers to exert their commercial authority over the colonised through a sophisticated toolbox of industrial technology, in the form of telegraphs, railways, steamboats and munitions of various kinds.

The first of these political and economic arrangements, enthusiastically endorsed by the British, was what we can call, with some authority,

indirect rule. This was a concept of ruling through native authorities and the two guiding principles were decentralisation and continuity. British officials in their territories were instructed to maintain a balance between indigenous traditions and imperial rule. This form of indirect rule allowed the traditional leaders of the area under colonial rule to administer justice, collect taxes and implement the policies of the colonial government. Some tensions occurred between customary law and the new colonial law, even if this was being imposed indirectly. British district officers reserved the right to outlaw what they considered to be barbarous practices, such as slavery, witchcraft, trial by ordeal, human sacrifice and blood feuds, understood by the colonial government as part of their civilising mission. Indirect rule also changed African jurisprudence by codifying and standardising customary law, in a written form.

The French, as a colonial power, at first experimented with a policy of assimilation. The French Revolution[6] had translated the philosophical beliefs of the 18th-century European enlightenment into practical ideas of action, which proclaimed that all men and women, not just French-born citizens, live freely and have equal rights. Assimilation, then, was a product of French history, its revolutionary and imperial institutions and their evolution. These egalitarian principles were then applied to France's colonial subjects, with the intention of making them French, by assimilating them into French culture and traditions. When the French colonised Algeria in the 1830s and then much of West Africa in the 1880s and 1890s, French politicians, administrators, and, indeed, its people, expected the inhabitants of these new territories to become Black French men and women. Indirect rule and assimilation appear, at least on the surface, to be opposites. Indirect rule assumes that the coloniser and the colonised have different dispositions and, perhaps more importantly, different destinies. Assimilation assumes that all people on the earth have similar capabilities, dispositions and qualities, even if at the moment of colonisation there were many important cultural differences. What it also assumed was that French culture was the epitome of this universal sense of personhood and, therefore, of nationhood. The political movement for pan-African unity emerged from the British colonies with their enactment of indirect rule, even if in an attenuated form, whereas in the French colonies, the debate was focused on an issue of African identity, called by some *Négritude*, which was designed to oppose the threat of French assimilation.

The third set of colonial arrangements was based on the idea of wealth extraction and commercial exploitation. All the colonising powers took the opportunity of colonialisation to enhance the wealth of the colonising country. For example, the Portuguese colonial empire in Africa at the end of the 19th century was established in territories with which Portugal had pre-existing commercial relations. By the end of their conquest of Africa,

Portuguese coloniality was recognised in the Atlantic islands of Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, and the larger mainland colonies of Portuguese Guinea, Angola, and Mozambique. This meant that Portuguese rule was governed by a long tradition of commercial exploitation rather than by recognition of African traditional culture and governance. In Angola, for example, Portuguese policy with regards to its overseas territories was driven by the need to restore Portugal's finances and wealth after the First World War. Angola was transformed into a corporate satellite of Portugal, with savage policies towards the African peoples of this nation being enacted, as Africans were coerced into building roads, producing coffee and cotton and working in the De Beers diamond mines.

The fourth set of colonial arrangements that we find of interest is a sense of brutal paternalism (by the coloniser on the colonised), exemplified by colonial rule in the Belgian Congo. Belgian colonial policy was formulated in the *Carte Coloniale*, which served as a constitutional justification for the Belgian Congo until independence in 1960. During the fifty years of colonial rule by Belgium, the Congolese, the native peoples of the Congo region, were never offered suffrage or citizenship of the colonising country. Instead of emulating the French system of assimilation or the British system of indirect rule, the Belgian Congo was administered, in the most brutal fashion, by the colonial state apparatus, working with the Catholic Church and large businesses with their roots in Belgium. The original African chieftains had little or no authority and the actual administration was organised into arbitrary and non-traditional administrative units, each of which had an appointed warrant chief who carried out the orders of the Belgian officials. This created a form of paternalism or direct rule that characterised the state administration and its welfare system. The philosophy of Belgian paternalism was based on the assumption that if the Africans of the territory could be assured of a reasonable standard of living, they would not seek to overturn or replace the colonial authority, who could then be left to pursue their commercial interests, which led to the impoverishment of the colonised state.

German and Italian colonialism in Africa were both too short-lived to have had many long-lasting effects. During the thirty years (1884–1914) of Germany's colonial history in Africa in Kamerun, Togo, South West and East Africa, fewer than 25,000 settlers migrated to these areas, which proved to have little commercial value. For example, South West Africa was administered by a military bureaucracy on behalf of the repressive settler community that operated a deliberate policy of genocide to eliminate the Herero people. The violent history of German colonialism in Africa was used as the excuse for stripping Germany of its colonies at the end of the First World War. Italy was the last European nation to acquire African colonies (between 1890 and 1941), but its colonial policy was not driven by any coherent sense

of coloniality and it was accompanied by military defeats. The final defeat by the allied powers at the end of the Second World War resulted in the restoration of the Ethiopian Emperor, Haile Selassie 1, and this ended the dream by some of a new Roman empire.

Throughout these colonial events in the subjugation of Africa one common theme was the idea of colonialism acting as a civilising enlightenment (with coloniser values to the fore). This idea had three elements: firstly, that the values of the coloniser, usually Christian virtues, should supersede and replace the values held by the native populations, for their own good. The second manifestation was underpinned by an idea of *terra nullius*, meaning nobody's land or land belonging to nobody, even if there were indigenous people already living there. This acted as a legitimation for colonialists in Africa and constituted a moral justification for the appropriation of colonial land: if indigeneity had no moral basis in territorial terms, then coloniality in its civilising mode had legitimacy. The moral legitimating reasoning of *terra nullius* assumed a different guise in the later years of African colonialism in the form of trusteeship. Edmund Burke's conceptualisation of trusteeship[7] suggested that traditionally conceived natural rights were instead better thought of as social rights, with trusteeship being central to the notion of European civilising moral commitments to African societies: the colonising powers were holding on to their colonies as trustees for the benefit of the indigenous peoples of these nations.

The last of the types of colonial engagement was what we are calling genocidal elimination. We have already pointed to one manifestation: the elimination of the Herero peoples in South West Africa by Germany. Both genocidal and settler colonialism typically employed the organising grammar of race. European discursive configurations which are xenophobic in orientation, such as Islamophobia or Negrophobia, are considerably older than those which use the concept of race. However, settlers used the concept of race (or at least skin colour) to indicate a reason for that person's (and, of course, those people's) elimination, and yet, some have argued, the real reason is not race or pigmentation, or even religion, ethnicity or the level of civilisation achieved, but access to territory or other resources desired by the coloniser. If it is territorial then genocidal elimination takes on a different perspective, as a pragmatic response to acquiring territory and resources for the settlers' home country. This is the best way to achieve this end.

This account comprises a typology of colonial economic and political arrangements: indirect rule (decentralisation and continuity), assimilation (the colonised becoming like the coloniser), wealth extraction (commercial exploitation), brutal paternalism (by the coloniser on the colonised), civilising enlightenment (with coloniser values to the fore) and genocidal elimination (which had clear racialist intentions). It is also possible to develop a genealogy of colonialities and African resistances.

A Genealogy of African Coloniality

How Africa was conceived of as an idea and integrated into the evolving Euro-North American-centric picture is a story of genealogies of colonialities and African resistance(s). There are perhaps eight of these genealogical reference points, and these are descriptions or theorisations of coloniality that are broad and overlapping, although they do have some spatial (they refer to what we know is Africa) and temporal (each one of them precedes the other, although in some cases these referencing points are only loosely related) referents. The eight epochs, in a very distilled form, are: the paradigm of discovery and mercantilist order running from the 15th century to the 18th century dominated by the slave trade and mercantilism; the post-1648 Westphalian order that inaugurated the exclusion of Africa from sovereignty; the 1884–5 Berlin consensus – the scramble for and conquest of Africa that led to the dismemberment and fragmentation of Africa; colonial government that was characterised by the production of African colonial subjectivity; the post-1945 United Nations decolonisation normative order that led to the positioning of Africa at the lowest echelons of the modern world system; the Cold War coloniality that polarised Africa ideologically and reduced it to a theatre of proxy hot wars; the post-Cold War triumphalism of the neoliberal order; and the post-9/11 anti-terrorist order that produced a new security regime; and the current coloniality of markets in Africa.[8] In conceptual and conceptualising terms, these amounted to discovery and mercantilism, suzerainty and dejurisdiction, dismemberment and fragmentation, colonial governmentality, a decolonised economic and political order, ideological polarisation, neo-liberalism, and market coloniality.

In adopting a racial discourse as a way of defining and classifying peoples and nations, this allows the coloniser to frame the colonised, and even the process of colonising, as inferior and infantilising. Those who became victims of the politics and epistemology of difference and alterity became legitimate subjects for subjugation. Coloniality, therefore, emerges in the 15th century as a model of power and expropriation, operating at every level, in every dimension of human existence (both discursive and material). However, its reach and ambit is always open to speculation. Europe was the source and location of ideas, Africa was the place of captive and enslaved Africans, the Americas were the sites of production and Europe again was the place of consumption of goods produced by those who were enslaved (see Nimako and Willemsen, 2011: 13–4). Despite the generality of these conclusions, they can still act as colonial tropes and they point to the boundary between civilisation and barbarism and thus, by extension, between reason and unreason.

The first genealogy of coloniality, historically speaking, then, is the discovery paradigm and mercantilist order. Broadly speaking, the discovery

paradigm and the mercantilist order that covers the period from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries inaugurated a commercial shift from a Mediterranean-centred economy to an Atlantic-centred economy, linking western Africa, the eastern coasts of North Africa and South America as well as the Atlantic coastline of Europe and North Africa. At the same time that the Spanish Atlantic sphere was being extended to the Pacific, the Philippines and China, the Portuguese were creating the Indian Ocean sphere that was extending to the East Indies. Eventually, four continents of Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas were linked together through interdependent economic activities, migrations of people and slaves, as well as cultural migrations from all four continents. The discovery paradigm and the mercantilist order were constituted by five core elements: exploration, discovery, cultural/colonial encounters, trade, and human trafficking. The leading external imperial powers were initially Portugal, Spain and Holland, and they were joined at a later stage by Britain, France and Germany.

The paradigm of discovery and the practices of the mercantilist order is best exemplified by the slave trade. The eventual abolition of the slave trade and the rise of what became known as legitimate trade did not release Africa from the deepening nexus of the evolving and exploitative capitalist modern international economy. The onset of the Industrial Revolution in Europe increased their appetite for raw materials and markets. The abolition of the slave trade coincided with a shift in Europe and North America from mercantilism to industrialism. Industrialists were interested in other commodities such as gold, diamonds, palm oil and others, different from commoditised human beings (slaves) that were the mainstay of mercantilism. The increasing demand for raw materials and markets coupled with some strategic considerations were the well-spring of imperialism and colonialism.

The next contour of coloniality worth exploring relates to the Westphalian order that unfolded at the end of the Thirty Years War in 1648. Institutionally speaking, EuroAmerican-centric modernity is credited with the production of the modern nation-state as a superior and enduring form of organisation of power and people. The birth of the modern nation-state is traceable to the end of the Thirty Years War, particularly to the Peace of Westphalia of 1648. The signatories of the Peace of Westphalia agreed on three principles. The first was the principle of state sovereignty. The second was the principle of equality of states. The third was the principle of non-intervention of one state in the internal affairs of another. At Westphalia, the institutionalisation and normalisation of a particular modern world order as a juridical political formation came into being (see Hardt and Negri, 2000, for a fuller account of this modern world order). The dominant European states, by then, namely, Germany, Spain, France, Sweden and the Netherlands, agreed to recognise and respect each other's sovereignty.

What must be noted here is that by the 16th century the concept of a nation-state was emerging in Europe as a new kind of human association. For Africa, the period from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries was dominated by a plethora of organisational forms of human associations, ranging from hunter-gathering societies, chiefdoms, kingdoms, dynasties, kinships, to clans and many others (see Sachs and Warner, 2001). The Berlin consensus was an agreement among European powers to divide Africa among themselves. While the institutionalisation of the slave trade became the first manifestation of a Western modernity, the Berlin Conference of 1884–5 enabled the colonialisation of Africa to begin. The scramble for, and partition of, Africa among European powers amounted to an open disregard and disdain for the African peoples.

The 19th century became the age of military conquest of Africa, occupation and settlement. The possession of guns gave Europeans an advantage over the African people to the extent that they celebrated the Maxim gun in colonial poetry and song. By 1914, the whole of Africa had been brought under colonial rule violently, with the exception of Liberia and Ethiopia. African people of different ethnic backgrounds were forcibly enclosed into one of the demarcated colonial boundaries of the colonial state, and, in addition, some African people with common ethnic backgrounds were randomly allocated to different colonial states.

As we have seen, at the centre of colonial governance there were different models in use: British indirect rule (decentralisation and continuity), French assimilation (the colonised becoming like the coloniser), Portuguese wealth extraction (commercial exploitation), Belgium's brutal paternalism (by the coloniser on the colonised), civilising enlightenment (with coloniser values to the fore practised if not whole-heartedly by many of the colonising powers) and Germany's genocidal elimination (which had clear racialist intentions). These different namings of colonial governmentality speak to variations rather than differences in logic and purpose. Broadly speaking, colonial governmentality was constituted by six core elements. These were violence, creating identities, inventing traditions, appropriating and exploiting resources (including people as slaves), dominating and repressing people, and ruling in accordance with the interests of the colonial settlers and the original colonising country.

The post-1945 United Nations sovereignty order emerged from two world wars (1914–1918 and 1939–1945). When decolonisation was eventually realised in the 1960s and onwards, the reality was that the postcolonial states were admitted to the lowest echelons of the hierarchised and asymmetrically-organised global international system. Consequently, the decolonisation process ushered into the post-1945 modern world order a group of the world's weakest and most artificial states.

The Washington Consensus was constituted by a set of ideas and institutional practices that began to dominate the world economy from the 1970s

onwards. At the centre of the ideas and institutional practices unleashed by the Washington Consensus was a neo-liberal development mercantile system. In neo-liberal thought, the role of the state is reduced to that of creating and preserving an institutional framework appropriate for the free operation of the market. The Washington Consensus and the neo-liberal order it supported inaugurated what can be termed the coloniality of markets.

It is important to emphasise that in the post-9/11 period, Africa, which had been previously thought of as a development and humanitarian case, immediately became a security concern. It became a global risk area. This was used as a justification for the USA and its North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) partners to establish military bases (for example, the US Africa Command [AFRICOM] on African soil as part of their global anti-terrorism strategy). Development based on the intensification of resource extraction by many countries and people rather than industrialisation is nothing more than a manifestation of the coloniality of markets.

These histories and genealogies of coloniality and African identity, then, are examples of how Africa as a colonised continent has been constructed. They also show how important concepts such as coloniality and its opposite term, decoloniality, have changed their meanings and the way they can be used, assuming at the same time new meanings and new ways of understanding the world. In the next chapter, we explore the idea of a taxonomic decolonisation through the category of race.

Notes

1 Michel Foucault (Foucault, M. (2010) *The Government of Self and Others: Lectures at the Collège de France 1982–1983*, trans. Graham Burchell, New York: Palgrave MacMillan; Foucault, M. (1961) *Madness and Civilization: A History Of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (*Folie et Déraison: Histoire de la Folie à l'âge Classiqu*e), Paris: Gallimard; Foucault, M. (1963) *Naissance de la Clinique: Une Archéologie du regard Medical*, Paris: Gallimard; Foucault, M. (1966) *Les mots et les choses, Une archéologie des sciences humaines*, Paris: Gallimard; Foucault, M. (1969) *L'archéologie du savoir*, Paris: Gallimard; Foucault, M. (1975) *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison*, Paris: Gallimard; Foucault, M. (1978) 'La société disciplinaire en crise', interview-lecture delivered in Japan, in *Dits et écrits*, Volume 3, 1976–9: 532; Foucault, M. (1979) [1976] *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*, London: Allen Lane; Foucault, M. (1980a) *Power Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, Brighton: Harvester Press; Foucault, M. (1980b) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, edited by Colin Gordon and translated by C. Gordon, L. Marshall, J. Mepham and K. Soper, New York: Pantheon Books; Foucault, M. (1983) 'Discourse and Truth: the Problematization of Parrhesia', 6 lectures at University of California at Berkeley, CA, Oct–Nov. 1983; Foucault, M. (1986) 'Of Other Spaces', *Diacritics*, 16, 1: 22; Foucault, M. (1990) [1984] *The History of Sexuality Volume 3: The Care of the Self*, London: Penguin

Books; Foucault, M. (1992) [1984] *The History of Sexuality Volume 2: The Use of Pleasure*, London: Penguin Books; Foucault, M. (1997) 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias', *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, edited by Neil Leach, NYC: Routledge: 330–6; Foucault, M. (2010) *The Government of Self and Others: Lectures at the Collège de France 1982–1983*, trans. Graham Burchell, New York: Palgrave MacMillan; Foucault, M. (2021) *The History of Sexuality Volume 4: Confessions of the Flesh*, London: Penguin Books) focused above all else on writing a history of the present. In his later writings, this became a critical history of the present, or, as we are calling it, the present-past. He described his archaeological method as a history of thought, and not a history of ideas, and he did this because he wanted to uncover the discursive traces of distinct historical periods, each with their own types of truthful statements and orders of discourse.

2 Michel Foucault understood the genealogical method as being qualitatively different from the archaeological method, although there are traces of each in the other. The archaeological method focused on structural order, difference and discontinuities between the past and the present-past. The genealogical method tried to show descent and emergence, and the continuities between the past and the present-past.

3 Michel Foucault acknowledged his debt to Nietzsche and especially to Nietzsche's (1998 [1887]) *On the Genealogy of Morality*, translated by M. Clark and A. Swensen, Indianapolis: Hackett.

4 The need to use a German word, *Weltanschauung*, here is because there is nothing in English that fully covers all the various meanings that attach themselves to it.

5 We discuss this in greater detail in Chapter 12.

6 The French Revolution was not a single event but a series of developments that unfolded between 1789 and 1799.

7 See Paul Langford (ed.) (1981) *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

8 The origin of these discursive formations is Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni's article 'Genealogies of Coloniality and Implications for Africa's Development', published in *African Development*, volume XL, No. 3, 2015, pp. 13–40, Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa.

6 Taxonomic Colonisation

Rethinking Racism and Notions of Race in Global Educational Contexts

In this chapter we examine the concept of taxonomic colonisation within educational research and policy, arguing that racial categorisations, often shaped by the sociopolitical dynamics of colonial legacies, continue to frame global education systems. We also explore the extent to which US-derived Critical Race Theory frameworks have influenced educational discourse and policy beyond their original context. While Critical Race Theory provides an essential lens for understanding systemic racism, its uncritical application across disparate regions risks simplifying the deeply embedded and regionally unique constructions of race, identity, and inequality.

By adopting a comparative analysis, using some indicative examples, this chapter challenges the dominance of US-centric racial theories in global educational discourses, instead advocating for approaches that reflect local socio-historical specificities. Across continents, colonial and post-colonial structures have produced different forms of racial stratification, and yet educational policies often homogenise these experiences under broad categories of race, failing to account for the combined impact of historical, cultural, and economic factors (in other words, factors relating to ethnicity). Towards the end, this chapter develops a typological framing of taxonomic colonisation within education, arguing for a contextualised approach that transcends racial taxonomies and recognises the multiplicity of identities that shape educational experiences globally.

Taxonomic Colonisation and Global Educational Inequalities

The term 'taxonomic colonisation' echoes Carl Linnaeus' classification system and is used here to describe the systemic classification and categorisation of populations based on racial criteria, a practice dating from the 16th century onwards, and deeply entrenched in colonial administrative systems (see Kennedy, 2013: xiii; and Kenyon-Flatt, 2021). The colonial enterprise functioned not only through the subjugation of territories but also through the ideological imposition of hierarchical racial orders that permeated legal,

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social, and educational structures.[1] These hierarchies did not vanish with the formal end of colonialism; as we will see in the chapter, they were merely adapted to the post-colonial context and continue to shape the operation of educational systems worldwide.

Educational institutions, particularly in the Global North, have historically played a central role in reproducing these racial hierarchies. The policies and practices within education systems remain reflective of colonial ideologies, where racial and ethnic minorities are often marginalised and disadvantaged. In the context of post-colonial states, the colonial classification of populations into rigid racial and ethnic categories has frequently been repurposed for different purposes. These can include monitoring and analysing socio-economic divides, or creating an overarching narrative of national unity or social cohesion.

Critical Race Theory and Its Global Limitations

Critical Race Theory emerged in the United States in the late 20th century within the field of critical legal studies, primarily as a response to the slow progress of civil rights reforms and the persistence of systemic racism in American society. Pioneered by Derrick Bell (a US civil rights attorney and latterly academic), Kimberlé Crenshaw (a US civil rights advocate and scholar), and Richard Delgado (a US legal scholar), Critical Race Theory understood racism as being embedded within legal systems, educational institutions, and broader sociopolitical structures. In this context, race is viewed as a social construct. Central to Critical Race Theory are the concepts of structural racism and intersectionality, which argue that racial inequalities are not just individual prejudices but are perpetuated through laws, policies, and institutional practices, including those employed in schools (Delgado and Stefancic, 2023). However, while Critical Race Theory has proved to be a powerful tool for analysing racial dynamics in the US, its application to other geopolitical contexts, particularly in education, raises significant concerns. The transposition of Critical Race Theory to educational systems beyond the US often fails to account for the unique sociohistorical and cultural conditions that shape race relations in other regions. This chapter critiques the global adoption of Critical Race Theory, arguing that it risks imposing a reductive framework that may obscure the specific racial, ethnic, and cultural nuances present in diverse educational contexts.

One of the central tenets of Critical Race Theory is the idea of a Black/White racial binary. This originated in the specific racial dynamics of the United States, particularly its history of slavery, segregation, and civil rights struggles. This binary, while crucial for understanding US race relations, does not map neatly onto other societies where racial and ethnic identities are often more fluid, multilayered, and interwoven with histories

of colonialism, religion, and migration (see back to Chapter 5). For example, the application of Critical Race Theory in the UK, while useful for examining some aspects of systemic racism, can neglect the particular legacies of British colonialism and the racialised experiences of South Asian, Caribbean, and African-descendant populations, who face different kinds of marginalisation than those of Black Americans.

In addition, Critical Race Theory's focus on legal structures and institutional racism may fail to capture fully the intersections of race with other forms of social stratification that are relevant to other parts of the world. In many African and Asian contexts, for example, ethnic, linguistic, and religious divisions intersect with race in ways that require more context-specific analytical tools. In South Asia, caste-based discrimination often operates alongside racial and ethnic exclusion, complicating any straightforward application of Critical Race Theory's binary framework. Similarly, in countries like Malaysia, affirmative action policies designed to uplift the original ethnic group[2] created a racialised educational system that cannot be adequately analysed through Critical Race Theory alone, given its focus on marginalised racial groups in Western contexts.

In addition, the increasing dominance of Critical Race Theory in global educational discourses risks sidelining other critical frameworks, such as postcolonial theory and decoloniality, that may be more attuned to the complexities of race, power, and identity in postcolonial societies. As Critical Race Theory continues to expand its influence beyond the United States, it is important to assess its limitations and adapt it to better reflect localised experiences of race and racism. This requires a recognition that racial inequalities are not universal; they are shaped by specific histories, cultures, and political economies. Otherwise the wholesale importation of Critical Race Theory without adaptation risks reinforcing a form of intellectual imperialism that mirrors the very dynamics of domination that the theory seeks to critique.

Regional Contexts of Colonisation and Racial Taxonomies – Some Examples

The racial taxonomies embedded in British education are deeply intertwined with the country's colonial history. From the 16th century onwards, at first England, and latterly Great Britain, expanded its empire across vast regions of Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and the Americas, establishing racial hierarchies that positioned non-Europeans as inherently inferior (see Hall, 2002). These racial ideologies were not only central to the colonial project but were institutionalised within British society and, by extension, its education system.

Although the formal decolonisation process began in the mid-20th century, the legacies of these racial classifications persist in contemporary

British education. Migrants from former colonies, particularly from South Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa, faced systemic racism upon arrival, with their children often being tracked into lower academic pathways (see Gillborn, 2008). Even as Britain introduced policies aimed at promoting racial equality, such as the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000), these initiatives often relied on simplistic and reductive categories that failed to capture the complex realities of racialised students' identities (see Gillborn, 2010).

One of the most significant challenges facing the British education system is the continued use of broad racial categories in educational policy and data collection, which obscures the nuanced experiences of different ethnic groups. For example, the categorisation of *Black* often conflates African, Caribbean, and other Black citizens, masking the specific challenges faced by members of each group[3]. In addition, the introduction of the Prevent Strategy, which aims to prevent radicalisation, has disproportionately targeted Muslim students, conflating race and religion within a security discourse that reinforces existing stereotypes and marginalisations.[4]

Europe (non-UK)

We discussed in the previous chapter how the development of racial taxonomies is closely tied to the legacies of empire, as major colonial powers such as France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, and Portugal imposed racial classifications that continue to influence contemporary education systems. These colonial administrations implemented systematic racial hierarchies that served to justify both the exploitation of colonised populations and their exclusion from full citizenship rights. The persistence of these racial ideologies is evident in the postcolonial period, where ethnic and racial minorities, often descendants of former colonial subjects, continue to face systemic discrimination in European educational systems.

France provides a particularly striking example of how colonial legacies continue to shape racial and ethnic relations within education. France's model of *laïcité* – its rigid interpretation of secularism – was originally developed to limit the influence of the Catholic Church on public institutions but has been weaponised in the contemporary context to marginalise ethnic and religious minorities, particularly those of North African descent. France's colonial history in North Africa, especially in Algeria, produced a large migrant population in the postcolonial period, and many descendants of these migrants now face racialised exclusion in education and beyond. The ban on religious symbols, including the wearing of headscarves in schools, disproportionately affects Muslim students, particularly girls, and serves to reinforce the exclusion of Muslim communities from French national identity. Research has shown that children from North African and Sub-Saharan African backgrounds in France are more likely to be tracked

into vocational schools, which provide limited academic opportunities, compared to their White French counterparts, who are more likely to attend general or technological streams that lead to higher education. This tracking is reinforced by implicit racial biases held by teachers and administrators, which contribute to the perception that racial and ethnic minority students are less capable of academic success. Additionally, the intersection of race, class, and location plays a significant role, as many minority students reside in impoverished suburbs (*banlieues*) where schools are often underfunded and ill-equipped to support high academic achievement (see Viguier, 2006).

In Belgium, the colonial past, particularly in relation to Congo, continues to have a profound impact on racial and ethnic relations within the education system. Belgium's brutal colonial regime in Congo, characterised by extreme violence and racial segregation, left a legacy of deeply entrenched racial hierarchies that persist today. African-descendant communities in Belgium face systemic barriers in accessing quality education, with many students being disproportionately represented in lower academic tracks and vocational education, a pattern that reflects broader socio-economic inequalities. The educational experiences of students of Congolese descent, in particular, highlight the persistence of racial discrimination within the Belgian education system, where these students face both implicit and explicit forms of racism, including lower teacher expectations and racial stereotyping. Belgium's French-speaking and Dutch-speaking communities exhibit different approaches to the integration of ethnic minorities, with the French-speaking region of Wallonia tending to embrace a more assimilationist approach, while the Flemish-speaking region promotes a multicultural model that theoretically celebrates diversity but, in practice, often leaves minority students marginalised and segregated in underperforming schools. This reflects the broader challenge of how colonial legacies continue to manifest in subtle but significant ways in educational policies that fail to adequately address the structural inequalities faced by racial and ethnic minorities.

The Netherlands offers another instructive case of how colonial histories intersect with modern educational inequalities. The Netherlands' colonial empire, particularly in Indonesia and the Dutch Caribbean, has left a lasting impact on the social and educational experiences of postcolonial migrant communities (as Van Niekerk (2000) reminds us). Surinamese and Antillean students, many of whom are descendants of former colonial subjects, experience significant racial discrimination within the Dutch educational system. Research has shown that these students are disproportionately placed in lower educational tracks and vocational training schools, which limit their opportunities for upward mobility.

The Dutch education system operates on a highly stratified model, where students are tracked into different types of secondary education –

pre-university, *senior general*, or *pre-vocational* – from an early age based on academic performance. However, studies have indicated that Black and minority ethnic students, particularly those of Surinamese and Antillean descent, are often placed in lower tracks regardless of their actual academic abilities, a reflection of entrenched racial biases within the system. This tracking disproportionately affects students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, many of whom come from minority ethnic communities, thereby reinforcing both racial and class-based inequalities. The Netherlands also struggles with the legacy of its colonial past in the East Indies (modern-day Indonesia). Although Indonesian migrants were granted Dutch citizenship following independence, their descendants continue to experience subtle forms of racial exclusion in Dutch schools, where their heritage is often erased or marginalised in the curriculum. This reflects a broader failure within European educational systems to fully confront the colonial past and its ongoing impact on minority communities.

Germany, though not typically seen as a major colonial power compared to France or the Netherlands, has its own complex history of racial categorisation, influenced by both its colonial ventures in Africa and the racial policies of the Nazi regime. Germany's colonial project in South West Africa (modern-day Namibia) is often overshadowed by its later atrocities during the Holocaust, but the racial hierarchies established during the colonial period have had lasting consequences, particularly in the treatment of African and African-descendant communities in Germany (see Schilling, 2014, and Chapter 8, later on in this book). The Herero and Nama genocides, perpetrated by German forces between 1904 and 1908, were based on racial ideologies that framed Africans as inferior and expendable (see Khan, 2012). These ideologies were later repurposed during the Nazi era, where racial purity became the central organising principle of the state, resulting in the extermination of millions of Jews, Roma, and other groups deemed racially inferior.

In post-war Germany, the state's focus on denazification and reparations for the Holocaust has left little political energy for addressing the legacies of colonialism, which have largely been overlooked in public discourse. However, the racial hierarchies established during both the colonial and Nazi periods continue to shape the experiences of racial and ethnic minorities in the German education system. Students of Turkish descent, the largest minority group in Germany, face significant barriers in education, with many being tracked into lower-tier schools that limit their access to higher education and professional opportunities. Studies have shown that Turkish students are overrepresented in *Hauptschulen* (the lowest tier of secondary education) and underrepresented in *Gymnasien*, the academic track that leads to university, a pattern that reflects broader societal biases against Turks and other ethnic minorities in Germany.[5]

South Africa

South Africa's education system is deeply shaped by its history of settler colonialism and the racial segregation of apartheid, which institutionalised a rigid hierarchy, privileging White South Africans while systematically disenfranchising Black, Coloured, and Indian populations. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 formalised these divisions, creating separate and unequal schooling systems designed to reinforce economic and social stratification. Even with the formal end of apartheid in 1994, the material and symbolic legacies of these policies continue to shape educational outcomes.

Post-apartheid education reform has focused on equity and redress, yet significant disparities remain. Former White-only schools, now open to all, often outperform historically disadvantaged schools, reflecting ongoing socio-economic divides. Language remains a critical issue, with English and Afrikaans continuing to dominate as mediums of instruction, despite efforts to integrate South Africa's eleven official languages. This reinforces the hierarchies established during the colonial and apartheid periods, as linguistic barriers disproportionately affect Black African students.

United States

The United States' racial taxonomy is arguably the most rigidly defined in the Western world, due in large part to its history of chattel slavery, segregation, and the enduring legacy of the one-drop rule, which determined that any African ancestry whatsoever defined an individual as *Black*. This binary racial division between Black and White Americans has had a lasting impact on US society, particularly within the educational system. During the era of US slavery, enslaved Black individuals were systematically denied the right to education, a form of control intended to reinforce their subjugation. This systemic exclusion continued into the *Jim Crow* (legal segregation) era, where 'separate but equal' policies entrenched racial segregation in public schools, effectively maintaining a dual education system that privileged White students while severely underfunding and neglecting Black schools.

The *Brown* v. *Board of Education* decision in 1954 was a landmark ruling that aimed to dismantle legally sanctioned segregation, but its implementation was slow and met with resistance, particularly in the Southern states. Although de jure segregation ended, de facto segregation persists in American schools today, largely due to residential segregation and the unequal distribution of resources. Scholars have argued that despite the formal end of segregation, the racial geography of the US has maintained educational inequalities, with predominantly Black and Latinx schools receiving fewer resources, lower-quality teaching, and fewer opportunities for advanced coursework compared to predominantly White schools.

The racial achievement gap in the United States continues to reflect these deep-seated inequalities. Black and Latinx students consistently score lower on standardised tests, have lower graduation rates, and are less likely to attend college than their White and Asian counterparts. Critical Race Theory has been used here to highlight and analyse these disparities, arguing that systemic racism is embedded within the structures of US education, perpetuating unequal outcomes. Critical Race Theory argues that educational policies that appear race-neutral on the surface, such as school funding based on local property taxes, are in fact deeply racialised, as they amplify the socio-economic advantages of predominantly White neighbourhoods while disadvantaging communities of Colour.

Another mechanism through which racial inequalities are perpetuated in US schools is the practice of tracking, or ability grouping. Numerous studies have shown that Black and Latinx students are disproportionately placed in lower academic tracks, which limit their access to college preparatory courses and advanced learning opportunities (see Oakes, 2005). This tracking often begins as early as elementary (primary) school, where teachers' perceptions of students' abilities are shaped by racial biases, leading to the systematic underestimation of the potential of students of Colour. Furthermore, disciplinary policies in US schools have a disproportionately negative impact on Black and Latinx students. Research has consistently shown that these students are more likely to be suspended or expelled than their White peers for similar infractions, contributing to what has been termed the 'school-to-prison pipeline' (see, for example, Wald and Losen, 2003).

The exclusionary nature of disciplinary policies reflects broader patterns of racialisation in American schools, where Black and Latinx students are often framed as inherently disruptive or dangerous, a stereotype rooted in centuries of racialised fear and control. The disproportionate criminalisation of students of Colour within the education system contributes to lower graduation rates, higher dropout rates, and increased involvement with the criminal justice system, further exacerbating racial inequalities.

While Black and Latinx students face distinct challenges within the US education system, other racial and ethnic groups also experience marginalisation, albeit in different ways. Lee, Wong and Alverez (2009) suggest that Asian American students, for example, are often subjected to the *model minority* stereotype, which assumes that they are universally high-achieving and do not face the same barriers to success as other racial groups. While some Asian American students do excel academically, this stereotype obscures the challenges faced by those from lower-income backgrounds, as well as the experiences of Southeast Asian communities, such as Cambodian and Hmong students, who often struggle with poverty and limited access to educational resources. The *model minority* myth also reinforces racial hierarchies by positioning Asian Americans as a buffer group between Whites and

other racialised minorities, thereby undermining solidarity between racial groups and masking the systemic racism that affects all communities of colour in different ways.

Indigenous students in the US face particularly stark educational disadvantages, which are rooted in the history of settler colonialism and the systematic destruction of indigenous cultures and languages through the boarding school system. Beginning in the late 19th century, indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families and sent to boarding schools, where they were prohibited from speaking their languages or practicing their traditions, in an attempt to assimilate them into White American society. This legacy of cultural genocide has had long-lasting effects on indigenous communities, where dropout rates are high, and educational attainment is significantly lower than for other racial and ethnic groups, as Reyhner and Eder (2017) remind us. Indigenous students today continue to attend some of the most underfunded and underperforming schools in the US, particularly on reservations, where poverty and limited access to resources exacerbate educational inequalities.

In recent years, the politicisation of Critical Race Theory has led to a significant backlash in US education, with several states passing laws to ban the teaching of Critical Race Theory or any curriculum that addresses systemic racism. These measures reflect a broader resistance to reckoning with the structural inequalities that continue to shape the American educational landscape. This resistance has profound implications for students of Colour, as it seeks to erase the very frameworks that can be used to understand and challenge ongoing racial inequities in education.[6]

Canada

Canada's racial taxonomy has been shaped by both its colonial relationship with indigenous peoples and its legacy of slavery and Black migration, although these histories are often overshadowed by Canada's national narrative of multiculturalism and inclusivity. Like the US, Canada was founded on the dispossession of indigenous lands and the forced assimilation of indigenous peoples through residential schools, which operated from the late 19th century until the 1990s (see Miller, 1996). These schools, similar to the US boarding schools, sought to eradicate indigenous languages and cultures. The intergenerational trauma caused by the residential school system continues to impact indigenous communities today, where educational outcomes are significantly lower than for non-indigenous Canadians.

Indigenous students in Canada face systemic barriers within the education system, including underfunding of schools in indigenous communities, lack of culturally relevant curricula, and widespread discrimination. Schools on reserves, which are funded by the federal government rather than

provincial governments, receive significantly less funding than off-reserve schools, resulting in a two-tiered education system that perpetuates inequalities. In addition, indigenous students often encounter curricula that erase or marginalise indigenous histories and knowledge systems, further alienating them from the educational process.

The educational experiences of Black Canadians are also shaped by the country's colonial past. While Canada did not practice slavery on the same scale as the United States, Walker (1997) suggests that it was nonetheless a participant in the transatlantic slave trade, and Black Canadians have long faced systemic racism and exclusion. Today, Black students in Canada face disproportionately high suspension rates, are more likely to be streamed into non-academic tracks, and experience racial profiling within schools. In Toronto, for example, Black students are significantly more likely to be placed in applied-level courses, which limit their access to higher education, compared to their White peers (see James and Turner, 2017). These patterns reflect broader societal biases that view Black students as less capable or more disruptive, mirroring the racial stereotypes that prevail in US schools.

Canada's policy of multiculturalism, officially adopted in 1971, has been praised for promoting diversity and inclusion, but critics, such as Bannerji (2000), argue that it often functions as a form of benign neglect, whereby racial and ethnic inequalities are obscured by the celebratory rhetoric of cultural pluralism. While multiculturalism encourages the recognition of cultural differences, it does not sufficiently address the structural barriers that limit the educational opportunities of racialised groups. For instance, students from immigrant backgrounds, particularly those from Africa and the Caribbean, face significant challenges in the Canadian education system, including language barriers, socio-economic disadvantage, and racial discrimination (see Dei, 1996). Like the US, Canada's reliance on local property taxes to fund public schools disproportionately affects racialised communities, where poverty and underfunded schools limit students' educational opportunities.

In recent years, there have been growing calls for educational reforms in Canada to address these systemic inequalities, particularly in relation to indigenous education. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada, established in 2008, has made significant recommendations for how the education system can be reformed to better serve indigenous students, including the integration of indigenous knowledge and languages into curricula, increased funding for schools on reserves, and mandatory education about residential schools for all students (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). While some progress has been made, many of the Commission's recommendations remain unfulfilled, and indigenous students continue to face significant barriers to educational success (see Battiste, 2013).[7]

Brazil

In Brazil, the history of slavery has left an indelible mark on the nation's racial dynamics, with long-lasting consequences for education. Brazil was the largest importer of enslaved Africans in the Americas, and by the time slavery was abolished in 1888, the country had a Black and mixed-race population that far outnumbered its White elite. Despite the abolition of slavery, racial hierarchies persisted, with Black and Afro-Brazilian communities remaining economically and socially marginalised. The ideology of *racial democracy*, popularised in the 20th century, argued that Brazil had avoided the racial conflicts of countries like the United States by embracing racial mixing (*mestizaje*) and creating a harmonious, racially integrated society. However, scholars have widely critiqued this notion, arguing that it masks deep-seated racial inequalities that continue to affect Afro-Brazilian populations, particularly in education.

Educational inequalities in Brazil are starkly racialised. Afro-Brazilian students, who make up a significant portion of the population, consistently underperform compared to their White peers, a disparity that reflects broader socio-economic inequalities and systemic racism within the educational system. Public schools in Brazil, which serve the majority of Black and low-income students, are notoriously underfunded, with poorly paid teachers, inadequate facilities, and limited resources. These schools are often located in marginalised urban peripheries or rural areas, where students face additional challenges such as poverty, violence, and a lack of access to basic services. In contrast, wealthier White students tend to attend private schools or better-funded public schools, which offer superior educational opportunities and are more likely to prepare students for university entrance exams.

The Brazilian government's introduction of affirmative action policies in higher education in the early 2000s, particularly racial quotas in public universities, has been a significant step towards addressing these inequalities. These policies reserve a percentage of places for Afro-Brazilian and indigenous students, as well as those from lower socio-economic backgrounds (see Francis and Tannuri-Pianto, 2012). While these measures have improved access to higher education for marginalised groups, they remain controversial and have faced backlash from those who argue that they reinforce racial divisions rather than address the root causes of inequality. Moreover, the quality of primary and secondary education remains a major barrier for many Afro-Brazilian students, who often lack the academic preparation necessary to succeed in higher education even when they are granted access through quotas.

In addition to racial disparities, Brazil's education system is also shaped by class divisions, which intersect with race in complex ways. The privatisation of education has reinforced these divisions, as wealthier families

increasingly opt for private schooling, leaving public schools under-resourced and predominantly attended by Black and working-class students. This bifurcation of the education system perpetuates inequality, as students from private schools are more likely to gain access to prestigious universities and well-paying jobs, while public school students remain trapped in cycles of poverty and exclusion.[8]

India

India's educational system is shaped by both its colonial past and the enduring influence of the caste system. Under British colonial rule, education in India was primarily designed to serve the needs of the colonial administration, with limited access for the majority of the population, particularly for lower-caste and indigenous groups. The British favoured the education of upper-caste elites, especially in English-medium schools, creating a system that perpetuated socio-economic and caste-based inequalities (see Sen, 2003). Post-independence, India has made significant strides in expanding access to education, but these colonial legacies, combined with caste-based exclusions, continue to affect the educational outcomes of marginalised communities.

The caste system, which predates colonial rule, stratifies Indian society into rigid hierarchical groups based on birth, with Dalits (formerly known as untouchables) and Adivasis (indigenous peoples) at the bottom of the social order. Despite legal protections and affirmative action policies, such as reservations in education for Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs),[9] these groups remain disproportionately underrepresented in higher education and overrepresented among those with limited access to quality schooling (see Deshpande, 2013). According to India's 2019 National Sample Survey, only 38% of Dalit children complete secondary education, compared to 75% of upper-caste students, highlighting the enduring educational disparities rooted in caste-based exclusion.

The medium of instruction further exacerbates these inequalities. English-medium schools, which were historically reserved for the colonial elite, are now seen as pathways to upward mobility, but access to them remains limited for lower-caste and rural students (Mohanty, 2006). As a result, children from marginalised communities are more likely to attend poorly resourced government schools where instruction is in regional languages, placing them at a disadvantage in a job market that increasingly values English proficiency. Furthermore, despite India's policy of providing free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of 6 and 14 under the Right to Education Act (2009), implementation has been uneven, particularly in rural areas where lower-caste and tribal populations are concentrated (see Batra, 2011).

Gender also intersects with caste to produce further inequalities in education. Dalit girls face a triple disadvantage – caste, gender, and poverty – that significantly limits their educational opportunities. They are more likely to be withdrawn from school early due to social norms that prioritise domestic labour and early marriage, and they face higher rates of violence and discrimination within schools. These barriers highlight the need for more intersectional approaches to educational reform that address the overlapping oppressions experienced by marginalised groups in India.[10]

Pakistan

In Pakistan, the legacy of British colonialism is compounded by the impact of the Partition of British India in 1947, which created deep ethnic, religious, and linguistic divisions that continue to shape the country's educational landscape. The Partition resulted in the mass displacement of millions of people along religious lines, with Muslims migrating to Pakistan and Hindus and Sikhs moving to India. This division entrenched religious and ethnic identities as central organising principles of the new Pakistani state, which has significantly affected the education system.

Hence Pakistan's education system is deeply stratified, with parallel systems of public, private, and religious (*madrassa*) schools that serve different segments of society. Public schools, which are underfunded and often provide poor-quality education, are attended primarily by lower-income students, including ethnic and religious minorities such as the Hazara, Baloch, and Christian communities. These minorities face significant barriers to educational success, including systemic discrimination, violence, and limited access to resources. In contrast, private schools, which cater to the urban elite, offer better facilities and instruction, but access to these schools is restricted to wealthier families, reinforcing socio-economic and ethnic divisions.

Ethnic and linguistic diversity further complicates Pakistan's educational system. The country is home to a variety of ethnic groups, including Punjabis, Pashtuns, Sindhis, and Baloch, each with its own language and cultural traditions. However, Urdu, the national language, is the medium of instruction in most public schools, while English is used in private and elite schools, creating a linguistic hierarchy that marginalises regional languages and their speakers. This language divide exacerbates educational inequalities, as students who are not proficient in Urdu or English struggle to succeed academically. For example, Pashtun and Baloch students, whose first languages are Pashto and Balochi, face significant barriers in schools where Urdu or English is the primary medium of instruction, contributing to high dropout rates and low academic achievement in these regions (see Rahman, 2011).

Gender disparities are pronounced in Pakistan, particularly in rural areas and among ethnic minorities. Girls from Baloch and Pashtun communities face significant cultural barriers to education, including early marriage, domestic responsibilities, and the perception that educating girls is unnecessary. Despite government efforts to increase female enrolment, particularly through initiatives such as the Benazir Income Support Programme, which provides financial incentives for families to send girls to school, progress has been slow, and rural girls remain significantly under-represented in secondary and higher education.[11]

China

In China, the educational experiences of ethnic minorities are shaped by the state's policies of ethnic assimilation, which prioritise Han Chinese identity while marginalising non-Han ethnic groups such as Tibetans, Uyghurs, Mongols, and Zhuang. The Chinese government officially recognises 56 ethnic groups, but the Han Chinese, who make up over 90% of the population, dominate the country's political, economic, and educational institutions (see Sautman, 1999). State policies promote a narrative of ethnic unity and national integration, often at the expense of minority cultures and languages.

Education plays a central role in the Chinese government's efforts to assimilate ethnic minorities, particularly in regions like Tibet and Xinjiang, where separatist movements and ethnic tensions have challenged State authority. In these regions, schools are required to teach in Mandarin Chinese, while instruction in minority languages is limited or discouraged (see Postiglione, 2013). For example, in Xinjiang, where the majority of the population is Uyghur, a Turkic-speaking Muslim ethnic group, the government has implemented policies that restrict the use of the Uyghur language in schools and promote Mandarin as the primary language of instruction. These policies are part of a broader strategy of cultural assimilation that seeks to integrate Uyghurs into the dominant Han Chinese culture, sometimes forcibly and aggressively, while erasing their distinct ethnic identity.

Tibetan students face similar challenges, as the Chinese government has sought to diminish the role of the Tibetan language in education, while promoting Mandarin as the language of instruction in schools across the Tibetan plateau. This linguistic marginalisation has contributed to a sense of cultural alienation among Tibetan students, many of whom struggle to succeed in an education system that does not recognise or value their language and culture. The government's efforts to assimilate ethnic minorities through education have been met with resistance from minority communities, who have called for greater autonomy in managing their own schools and curricula.

In addition to linguistic discrimination, ethnic minority students in China face socio-economic barriers to educational success. Many minority regions, such as Xinjiang and Tibet, are among the poorest in the country, and schools in these regions are often underfunded and lack basic resources. As a result, minority students are less likely to complete secondary education and more likely to drop out early, particularly in rural areas where access to education is limited (see Postiglione, 2011). This educational marginalisation reflects broader patterns of economic inequality between Han Chinese and ethnic minorities, who remain disproportionately represented among the country's poorest and most marginalised populations.[12]

Australia

The history of colonisation and the dispossession of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have profoundly impacted educational outcomes for indigenous communities. British colonisation, beginning in 1788, was predicated on the legal fiction of *terra nullius* – the notion, we explained previously, that Australia was an empty land available for settlement – which denied the sovereignty and rights of its indigenous inhabitants. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were systematically displaced from their lands, subjected to policies of forced assimilation, and denied access to formal education (see Reynolds, 1987). The legacy of these policies is starkly visible in contemporary educational disparities.

Despite legal reforms aimed at promoting equality, indigenous Australians continue to experience significantly worse educational outcomes compared to non-indigenous Australians. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), indigenous students are less likely to complete secondary education and more likely to attend under-resourced schools in remote areas. The *Closing the Gap* report, a government initiative aimed at reducing indigenous disadvantage, has highlighted persistent disparities in literacy and numeracy achievement, school attendance, and university enrolment rates (Australian Government, 2020). For example, in 2020 only 66.2% of indigenous students completed Year 12 (the final year of secondary education), compared to 89.8% of non-indigenous students (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2020).

One of the key challenges facing indigenous students is the marginalisation of their languages and cultures within the mainstream education system. Historically, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were forcibly removed from their families and placed in residential institutions, known as missions and reserves, where they were forbidden from speaking their languages or practicing their cultures. This legacy of cultural suppression continues to affect indigenous students, many of whom feel alienated by an education system that privileges Western knowledge and

English-language instruction. The underrepresentation of indigenous perspectives in the curriculum further exacerbates this alienation, contributing to higher dropout rates and disengagement from formal education.

Efforts to incorporate indigenous knowledge systems and languages into Australian schools have been made through teaching and learning programmes such as bilingual education and the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in the national curriculum. However, these initiatives have been unevenly implemented and often lack the necessary resources to be effective. Bilingual education programmes, which aim to provide instruction in both indigenous languages and English, have been particularly controversial. In the Northern Territory, for example, the government's decision in 2008 to reduce funding for bilingual education in remote indigenous communities sparked widespread protests, as many indigenous leaders argued that this policy would further marginalise their languages and cultures (see, for example, Devlin, 2009).

The intersection of race and socio-economic disadvantage further complicates educational outcomes for Indigenous Australians. Indigenous communities are disproportionately represented among Australia's most disadvantaged populations, with many living in remote areas where access to quality schooling is limited. These geographic and socio-economic factors contribute to the underfunding of schools in indigenous areas, where teacher shortages, inadequate facilities, and a lack of culturally relevant curricula undermine students' academic success. The remote location of many indigenous communities also means that students often have to travel long distances to attend school, which further impacts attendance and engagement.

Recent reforms aimed at addressing these inequalities have focused on increasing indigenous representation in the teaching workforce and improving teacher training in Indigenous cultural competencies (see Price, 2012). Programmes such as the *Stronger Smarter Institute* have emphasised the importance of high expectations for indigenous students and culturally responsive teaching practices. While these initiatives have shown promise in improving educational outcomes, systemic barriers continue to hinder progress, and the gap between indigenous and non-indigenous students remains wide.[13]

Racial Taxonomic Categories

Analysing the examples in this chapter allows us to describe four predominant racial taxonomic categories: systems experiencing the legacies of settler-colonialism; systems experiencing challenges rooted in caste and ethnicity; systems experiencing challenges relating to the alignment of national identity and cultural diversity; and systems experiencing a tension between

racial harmony and persistent inequality. Of course, particular countries may indicate multiple aspects of some or even all of these, but the categories here provide a starting point for further analysis. This typology is still useful, however, in that it reflects not only the tangible legacies of colonialism and its ongoing effects, but also highlights broader issues concerning power, identity, and the perpetuation of social orders.

1 **Systems experiencing the legacies of settler-colonialism**
In settler-colonial nations such as Australia, South Africa, Canada, and the United States, the residual effects of colonial racial hierarchies remain entrenched, despite legislative and policy efforts to foster greater equity. These nations grapple with the paradox of reforming systems fundamentally shaped by historical injustices. The attempt to transcend coloniality often reproduces its epistemic and material structures, revealing the limitations of reformist ideals when confronted with deeply embedded power relations.
2 **Systems experiencing challenges rooted in caste and ethnicity**
In countries like India and Pakistan, the intersection of caste and ethnic divisions continues to structure educational outcomes, with reform initiatives struggling against these complex, inherited social hierarchies. Despite efforts to uplift the marginalised, a deeper question remains regarding whether these reforms can ever meaningfully empower those subjected to structural subjugation. The complex relationship between caste, ethnicity, and class challenges the assumption that liberal reform can truly disrupt these age-old systems of stratification.
3 **Systems experiencing challenges relating to the alignment of national identity and cultural diversity**
In both France and China, educational policy functions as a tool for constructing a cohesive national identity, often at the expense of minority languages and cultural expressions. These policies raise important questions regarding the nature of community. What is the relationship between national unity and the marginalisation of difference? How can a nation that views its identity as monolithic accommodate the multiplicity of voices within its borders without undermining the very concept of unity? This tension highlights the fragility of national identity in a globalised world, where the proliferation of multicultural ideals confronts the state's desire for homogeneity, at least in terms of being able to render citizens governable.
4 **Systems experiencing a tension between racial harmony and persistent inequality**
In Brazil, for example, the ideal of racial harmony persists as a powerful societal narrative, yet structural inequalities remain entrenched, undermining this ideal. The notion of *racial democracy*, deeply ingrained in

> Brazilian political thought, invites a re-evaluation of how racial harmony is conceptualised: is it an ideological construction that obscures real social divisions, or does it represent an ongoing struggle for justice in a fractured society?

Critical Race Theory has proved useful here in interrogating systemic racism within education, particularly in settler-colonial and postcolonial contexts where racial hierarchies are embedded in institutional and legal structures. Critical Race Theory's strength lies in its ability to illuminate how seemingly race-neutral policies can perpetuate inequality, a concept closely aligned with Michel Foucault's (1980a; 2007; 2009) theories of biopower and governmentality. Foucault's notion of power as diffuse and productive, rather than merely repressive, suggests that institutional practices, while not overtly racial, function to reproduce racial inequalities. Yet, Critical Race Theory's limitations become evident when confronting contexts where race intersects with other axes of oppression, such as caste, ethnicity, or religion, as in India and Pakistan, or where the state enforces rigid cultural assimilation, as in France and China. In these instances, postcolonial theory, intersectionality, and decolonial thought provide richer, more context-sensitive, frameworks. Postcolonial theory, for example, attends to the dynamics of cultural and linguistic stratification, while decolonial approaches engage with the epistemic violence of Western thought, critiquing its imposition as the standard of universal reason (see back to Chapter 1).

At a global level, all these issues are compounded by the pervasive influence of linguistic colonisation in the digital era. The ascension of English as a global *lingua franca* introduces a new dimension of cultural hegemony that reinforces global power structures. Here, the imposition of a dominant cultural form, through language, education, and media, becomes so pervasive that it is internalised by subordinate groups, making resistance seem both impractical and impossible. Hence English, as the dominant language of academia and commerce, shapes educational access, identity, and opportunity, perpetuating the marginalisation of non-English-speaking populations. This linguistic dominance cannot be viewed as a neutral tool of communication – it is a form of epistemic colonisation that strengthens existing inequalities in global academic and economic systems. In this way the rise of English is not merely a linguistic trend, but also an ideological project that perpetuates historical power imbalances. In this light, the critique of linguistic colonisation is inseparable from broader struggles for decolonisation and justice, as it cuts across racial, cultural, and educational boundaries.

Ultimately, the intersection of race, power, and language in global education must be understood within the context of ongoing processes of colonisation and decolonisation. As much as these processes appear to be historical, they are in fact living phenomena, constantly evolving and taking new forms

in the age of digital globalisation. This persistent unfinished project of decolonisation calls for a reconceptualisation of education not only as a site of knowledge transmission, but also as a battleground for the transformation of societal structures that continue to be shaped by colonial legacies. In the next chapter we examine how colonial institutions work.

Notes

1 For an example, see Dillingham (Dillingham, W.P. (1911) *Dictionary of Races or Peoples* (Prepared for the Commission by Daniel Folkmar, assisted by Elnora C. Folkmar), United States, Immigration Commission): '3, the number of the chief division or basic races of mankind is more in dispute than when Linnaeus proposed to classify them into 4, or Blumenbach into 5, great races. Some writers have reduced the number of such basic races to 3, while others have proposed 15, 29, or even 62. In preparing this dictionary, however, the author deemed it reasonable to follow the classification employed by Blumenbach, which school geographies have made most familiar to Americans, viz, the Caucasian, Ethiopian, Mongolian, Malay and American, or, as familiarly called, the white, black, yellow, brown and red races'.

2 Sometimes described using the controversial term 'Bumiputera' but described in the constitution as "aboriginal people", "natives of Sarawak" and "natives of Sabah" (see Article 160 (2) and 161A (6) b), Federal Constitution of Malaysia, 2010, *Laws of Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: International Law Book Services.).

3 See Gillborn, D. (2010) 'The White Working Class, Racism and Respectability: Victims, Degenerates and Interest-Convergence', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 58(1), 3–25.

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7 Colonial Institutions

Curricula, Pedagogies and Learnings

A colonial model of organisation and governance has a number of features: complexity, division of labour, permanence, professional management, hierarchical coordination and control, empiricist forms of knowledge and legal authority. A colonial model is underpinned by a set of rules rather than by ties of kinship, friendship or patrimonial or charismatic authority. Some accounts of learning, but not the account being argued for in this book, have colonial elements – these are training processes. However, designating them in this way requires us to distinguish between training and educative curricula, pedagogies and, what we are calling here, learnings – these activities set out in a pluralised form are the core or foundation of our interactions in and with the world. There are three sites of knowledge (to use a spatial signifier): the world and its contents; the mediating arena between the contents of the world and objects in the mind (this is what we might want to call learning sites, which are also contentful); and the contents of the mind that allow us to make judgements, perceive the world and reflect on what we have perceived.

In contrast, a colonial and bureaucratic theory of learning comprises the idea that knowledge can be broken down into its smallest parts, with only those elements of it that can be incorporated into a bureaucratic view retained.[1] The rest are discarded. This process therefore values, through elimination, those dispositional, propositional, skill-based and embodied forms of knowledge, curriculum and learning that fit into a bureaucratic ethic and ethos. This mode of learning is rule-based insofar as the detheorised objects of learning, the pedagogic methods employed, and, fundamentally, the assessment and evaluation practices that accompany bureaucratic learning, are given prior to, and priority in, any acts of learning that might take place, and reflect a particular arrangement of knowledge and learning practices that is hierarchical, deagentising and reductionist.

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World–mind and Mind–world Relations

Before we examine the training/educative dyad, we need to understand, or at least begin to understand, the two key relationships in social theory: between mind and world and conversely between world and mind. This can be expressed as a relationship between structure and agency, where structure represents the world and agency represents the mind. In one version of this relationship, structure is reduced to agency and, consequently, society to individuals. This is best illustrated through the position that was advocated by Max Weber (1964), which presupposes that social institutions are the outcome of individual practices, experiences, decisions and behaviours. This is the voluntaristic mistake (descriptive term used by Archer, 2007) and from this stems the epistemic mistake of methodological individualism (descriptive term used by Archer, 2007), which is that all social phenomena can be explained in terms of individuals and agency. An opposing view of this relationship, inherent in Émile Durkheim's (1939; 2001) position, is the idea that social objects, such as curricula, pedagogies and learnings, have a life of their own and they exist and act independently of human action. According to this position, then, agency is reduced to structure and the individual to society. This is the error of reification and from that stems another epistemic mistake, that of social determinism, which suggests that phenomena can be explained only through institutional structures (see Archer, 1995).

For Archer (1995), structural/cultural and agential impulses are different and, because they are different, this allows a measure of actorial reflexivity. The properties and powers of an agent can and must be constitutionally separated from the properties and powers of those objects and object configurations that are mind-independent and make up the environment, again expressed as structural or cultural. If they are not separated out in the world and in individual minds, then it becomes impossible to identify the conditions under which agents have greater or lesser degrees of freedom to act. Social reality is understood as a series of constant interactions between human beings and the structured world, and this relationship is mediated conceptually and apperceptively,[2] although Archer would have disagreed with this last qualification.

Analytical dualism is a model that places world–mind and mind–world interactions in a temporal framework. Analytically speaking, Archer (1995) suggests that social structures (and also cultural objects and object configurations), all those objects and object configurations and human–environmental interactions that are mind-independent or at least independent of the particular mind that is doing the knowing, must be external to actions in time because they exist and happen before them. This time perspective allows us to understand (at the level of language and not necessarily at the level of reality, although we might want to assume that they are the

same) how pre-existing social structures limit or enable agential operations, and subsequently in time how agential actions can transform or reproduce pre-existing social structures and cultural objects. Archer's (1995) morphogenetic/morphostatic cycle has a number of sequenced stages. The first of these consists of emergent properties. These can be either structural or cultural. People (broadly thought of as agents) interact with these properties in both constraining and enabling ways. These structural and cultural objects create different life chances, costs and opportunities, relating to pre-existing distributions, roles, institutions, systems, cultural products and more. These are the conditions for future actions, which allows a measure of freedom or agency for the person concerned. These interactions between structures and acculturations *and* individual people are varied, multisemic and object-specific.

For Archer, then, there are two types of actors in the world: primary actors, who reproduce the pre-existing structures and acculturations (they rarely exercise their agency in any significant way); and corporate actors, who, working collectively, transform those structures and acculturations that make up society, and form the conditions for the millions of decisions made by human beings in their lifetimes. This view in the end cannot account for volition and agency in any real sense, because it does not properly address world–mind and mind–world relations (learning experiences) in all their variegated forms. An example of a colonial structure or form is a training model of learning.

Training Models

A first conceptualisation of the relationship between training and education (or between colonial and decolonial forms of learning) is that the object of learning and the arrangement of its characteristics at a particular moment in time are the prime determining factors in whether a training or an educative model should be used. This argument only makes sense if we accept that training in a colonial mode and education in a decolonial mode constitute two different forms of learning – they have distinctive approaches to learning and how learners experience activities associated with learning.

A second conceptualisation of the relationship between training and education suggests that the determining factor in distinguishing between a training pedagogy and an educative pedagogy is its function or purpose. This requires the identification of a set of differences between the two concepts and then the initiation of a process whereby different functions or purposes are matched to these different models of training in a colonial form and education in a decolonial form. So, for example, a teacher is trained to become a teacher because they are required to learn a particular set of behaviours and mechanistic actions. In this scenario there are no reflective,

self-reflective, meta-cognitive, meditative and imaginative elements that we might want to describe as educative.

A third conceptualisation of this relationship refers to the philosophy of learning that enframes it, such as behaviourism, phenomenology, cognitivism, constructivism or materialism. Each of these learning philosophies has different characteristics. For example, behaviourists focus on how human beings behave and not what is in their minds, and thus they argue that if these terms are used as descriptors then they should be replaced by behavioural terms or, at least, those mind-dependent constructs should be translated into behavioural descriptors. This has implications for whether we should adopt a training or educative model, although a decision such as this also depends on which characteristics are given to a notion of training and which characteristics are given to a notion of education. In addition, each of these philosophies of learning can be placed on a continuum with coloniality at one end and decoloniality at the other.

A fourth conceptualisation of this relationship refers to the values we hold. Such values are embedded in a worldview, with the characteristics of a worldview being: a person's dynamic capacities and affordances, and the environments within which they are situated; relations between a person and their environments; accounts of understanding, learning and change; and inferences from these premises and conceptualisations about representations, media for representations, learning environments, practical actions and the degree to which they represent a colonial or decolonial epistemology. A training model has a particular view of these characteristics and capacities, as does an educative model, and they are significantly different.

A final set of possible relations between the two concepts focuses on their manifestations as power stratagems, and as colonial or decolonial discourses. Training and educative models have different types of relations attached to them, such as one-to-one or one-to-many, strong or weak, vertical or horizontal, corrosive or developmental, endogenous or exogenous, convergent or divergent, framing or reframing, and categorising or recategorising. And what this means is that in every act of representing the world and every action we undertake in the world (see Brandom, 2022, and Chapter 1 in this book), and there are many of these, power relations of different types are brought to the surface and utilised, changing the arrangements of resources and persons, in limited or extended ways.

The representings[3] we make in colonial or decolonial discourses are therefore always suffused with power relations, and this includes judgements that we make about other people and their life-projects. In addition, there are different trajectories of power (in history) and consequently different power arrangements can be associated with the use of each of our two seminal concepts, training and education. Educative models give greater amounts of agential freedom to the learner, and these are sometimes denied to learners

in training models. Training models are generally more popular among colonial state bureaucrats and policy-makers, and the reasons for this are clear – a training model acts to reinforce the strength of the hierarchical arrangement of goods and people, and it provides a greater degree of control over its workforce.[4] In addition, each of these concepts has a different history and genealogy. Fundamentally, the various valuations given to each of these concepts change over time. Many of the activities that were previously thought of as educative are now thought of as embracing a training ethos.[5]

A learning model, such as training, has apperceptive and conceptualising elements. A learning configuration consists of discursive and material objects, object-relations and other object configurations joined together and persisting over time. Apperception, then, has a number of stages, which characterise most, but not all world-to-mind and mind-to-world processes. The sensory input in the apperception process goes through a number of phases: perceptual, neuronal, linguistic, conceptual, reflexive, and praxical or contemplative. For skill-based, dispositional or embodied forms of knowledge, and, in particular, training or instructional forms of learning, the apperceptive or learning process is amended to fit with the essence of the object itself, discarding some stages and giving a greater emphasis to others. The object or objective of this process of learning is a fully functioning and trained human being, who thinks, reacts, speculates, and performs their everyday activities in the prescribed manner. This is the military or colonial model of learning and not an educative or agential form of learning. Dispositional learning takes a different form from sense-datum learning in the apperception process, although it shares many of its features, such as educative, ethical, temporal, and object-related elements. The dispositions that we associate with a training model of learning are: being obedient and conformist, habit-forming and various forms of avolition. Learning discourses and judgements, and consequently (though not inevitably) practices round the world, have been dominated over the last twenty years by empiricist knowledge frameworks and forms of instrumental rationality, exemplified by new institutional structures in schools, colleges and universities, and reductive evidence-based policy prescriptions.[6]

Deagentising Coloniality

Coloniality, then, comprises a deagentising process. Michel Foucault (1978) attempted to resolve the problem of the singular[7] (or otherwise) notion of subjectivation and identity. What he meant by this was twofold: first, people should practise processes of desubjugation by acting in an ethical sense to resist becoming subjects, in the sense of becoming something for someone else; and second, they should act to criticise the limits of the discourse itself (and in the process expand the opportunity to think and conduct themselves

in the world that is in opposition to what the discursive formation allows them to do). This is the essence of a decolonial discourse.

In a colonial discourse, control is always exercised against a standard or norm. It acts against a notion of agency – it is a deagentising process with deagentising consequences. It is, therefore, an activity that restricts, impedes, reduces, delimits the agency of an individual and – in a large class of cases – restricts the agency of a population[8]. There are, of course, other forms of colonial deagentising: forcing, imprisoning, murdering, propagandising, falsifying, de-educating, de-resourcing (changing the level and type of resources available to people and populations) and regulating (through the passing of laws and through other means). All these forms of deagentising work by changing the constitution and make-up of those discursive and material objects, those object-relations, and those material and discursive object-configurations, that a person has to confront in their everyday life. In addition, deagentising as a concept can only be understood as a reaction against a set of intentional and volitional acts that characterise a person, and thus a population.

These technologies of power, sometimes referred to as technologies of truth (Foucault, 1969) or colonial mechanisms or repressive bureaucracies, were attempts to explain notions and practices that related to power. They were used by Foucault to make three central points. The first of these is that the same procedures that were being used to control nature, production and time were being used to manage human beings in institutional and colonial settings, an example of which is contemporary university management practices in the UK and in many other parts of the world. Secondly, power should be understood in a productive sense as that which shapes, and, more importantly, enables, human behaviour, rather than simpliciter in a purely negative or repressive sense. A third meaning that Foucault gave to technologies of power was that so powerful are these positive forms of power that they can operate to override moral ordinances and beliefs about appropriate conduct. Furthermore, in the field of education it is striking how psychology as a discipline in conjunction with other disciplines that share its epistemology have now assumed an ascendency, even with people who do not profess to be psychological theorists. As bureaucratic mechanisms they embrace a training model of learning, rather than a formative, developmental, educative and progressive learning model, with all its complexities and rich understandings of human apperception and conceptualisation. This, after all, is the missing ingredient in the now-dominant analytical tradition of philosophy in the UK, a tradition that fits well with colonial forms of knowledge.[9]

The Colonial Curriculum

Five important curriculum tendencies at both theory and practice levels can be identified, although these have to be treated as ideal models, and not as

what actually happened or is happening: the systemic-technological, the critical-reconceptualist, the constructionist, the interpretive and the instrumentalist. To these should be added neo-liberal colonial curriculum frameworks, focusing on competences, and extra-national single surface comparative and assessment-driven implementation mechanisms. In the last chapter of this book we examine the possibility of decolonising the curriculum, what this might mean for learning, and indeed what a decolonised curriculum would actually look like.

What is noteworthy about a systematic-technological curricular framework is the underpinning belief in science as the model for the essential practical activity of determining what should be included in a curriculum and how it should be delivered. Atomism, pre-specification and control are therefore foregrounded, with the curriculum conceptualised in terms of behavioural objectives and an input–output model of schooling. Curriculum-making is understood as a linear process which starts with the development of clear objectives or goals, proceeds through to the selection of content that is specified in behavioural terms[10] – its acquisition must be an observable or testable process – and finishes with the evaluation of that process to see if those objectives have been met. This is underpinned by an empiricist and colonial view of knowledge that is central to the way the curriculum works.

Critical-reconceptualist approaches are instrumentalist in design and underpinned by a belief that schooling and the curriculum always represents a preparation for, and legitimation of, a preferred way of life. It seeks, through pedagogic means, to surface, and in the process disrupt, conventional forms of understanding which serve to reproduce undemocratic, racist, sexist and unequal social relations. The task of critical pedagogy is to unmask and critique these ideologies with the political and ethical purpose of helping to empower learners and, more generally, the social groups to which they belong. Unlike some postmodern viewpoints, critical pedagogy is predicated on a clear ethical position with regards to society and to the way society reproduces itself, although some versions of critical pedagogy emphasise the need to disrupt conventional school knowledge structures and the reproductive processes that accompany them, without specifying alternative frames of reference for learners. The end point becomes the disruptive process rather than the re-forming of schooling and society in a particular way. In essence this is, what we might want to call, a decolonial curriculum.

A particular iteration of socio-cultural or constructivist theories is cultural-historical activity theory. That there now is a three-generation model of cultural-historical activity theory is part of its formation as an established theory (see Engeström, 2001). This and each generation of activity theory can be understood in two distinct ways. The first is in terms of its historical trajectory, so it is possible to understand a theory of mediation as a reaction

against what it emerged from, i.e. it sought to replace the stimulus–response model of the behaviourists because it became apparent that there were aporias, gaps, contradictions and muddles in the theory itself (the theory in short was inadequate); or it can be understood as an attempt to frame the concept as a universal category. Both of these versions have meta-theoretical and thus universalising elements, insofar as the first requires a theory of history and the second requires a theory of social psychology. However, these universalising elements are framed in different ways.

The fourth curriculum tendency is interpretivism. Those studies that broadly fit into this framework understand the curriculum from a phenomenological or ethnomethodological position. This framework sought to emphasise the role of interpretation and human volition both in understanding the curriculum and in projects of implementation.[11] It is directed in the first instance to the things in themselves that are the objects of consciousness. This entails a learning methodology which foregrounds subjective experiences and understands them in their own terms, both linguistically and conceptually, whilst at the same time treating these two modes separately. This presupposes that the experience of others is accessible to us, even if with the greatest of difficulty. And this points to the break with behaviourism that phenomenologists generated. Whereas behaviourists were concerned above all with the behaviour of individuals and eschewed the inner workings of the mind, phenomenologists understood behaviour and consciousness as essential to any theory of learning. They are different aspects of the same phenomena; the world as it is lived by the individual and as it is known by that individual and others.

There are also various types of curriculum instrumentalism. Autonomous instrumentalists argue that it is possible to provide a justification for the contents of a curriculum by focusing on the acquisition of certain virtues or dispositions. There are two problems with this approach: there is a difficulty with establishing what the good life is or what an appropriate virtue might be, and there is an equal difficulty with identifying experiences for children in school which will lead to the development of dispositions to allow the individual to lead the good or virtuous life when they leave school. This perspective therefore incorporates an idea of the good or virtuous life as the end point and indeed determinant of what should and should not be included in a curriculum. The point is that, even if this cannot be precisely articulated, it can still act as a means for determining a way forward, an ethical desideratum.

Economism understands the aims and purposes of formal education as directly to produce trained workers for an efficient and effective economy, whether market-based or state-controlled. It is the reduction of all social facts and processes to economic phenomena. This has implications for the curriculum, such as the exclusion of other curricular purposes than purely economic ones. In broad terms, instrumentalism has several different forms,

and even critical pedagogy, underpinned as it is by a normative model of society, can be thought of as instrumentalist. Instrumentalism has come to be associated with any normative view of life as the endpoint and purpose of formal schooling.

Governments round the world and coordinators and curriculum developers of systems of education at the end of the 20th century and in the early part of the twenty-first century, with a few notable exceptions, have reached an agreement about the nature of the school curriculum, learning approaches and assessment practices. This consensus now operates at all levels of education systems, and can be expressed in terms of a number of propositions: traditional knowledge forms and strong insulations between them need to be preserved; each of these knowledge forms can be expressed in terms of lower- and higher-level domains and the latter have to be taught before the former and sequenced correctly; knowledge can be construed in behaviourist terms; certain groups of children are better able to access the curriculum than other children, and, as a result, a differentiated curriculum is necessary to meet the needs of school learners; the teacher's role is to impart this body of knowledge in the most effective way, and, consequently, their brief cannot concern itself with the ends to which education is directed, but only the means for its efficient delivery; and the school's role is to deliver a public service that meets the targets set for it by governments and other such educational systems. These neo-liberal practices are in essence colonial.

Learning Configurations

A learning configuration consists of discursive and material objects, object-relations and other object-configurations joined together and persisting over time. With regards to learning as a concept and as a practice, it is possible to identify seven such configurations, which we can give names to: experiential, representative, technical-rational, transmissive, reflexive, transgressive and a *Bildungstheorie*. We are dealing here with apperceptive and conceptualising processes, with distinctive stages or parts – from particular object to sensation, to learning, to thought, to configuration of thought, and so on, with changes being made at each stage to the particular object going through the process. There is also another process that we can give some linguistic shape to and this is the reverse of the apperceptive or conceptualising process described above – from configuration of a thought, to a thought, to a learning instance, to a particular object. And further to this, we can say that some minded objects or objects-in-the mind do not have a direct relationship with the outside world in the first instance, although in the second instance they may influence discursive objects, languaged objects, even material objects, although even here we are pointing to certain things in the world rather than saying what they are.

The educative or learning element of the process can be construed in the following way: as at an entry point or access portal to the mind of a person; as a fundamental change element; as a meeting point between world and mind and then, ultimately, between mind and world (where world includes other minds); in a semantic sense as a valued or valorised attachment at which the values attached to the object are changed or reworked in relation to the fields of valorisation currently in use; in an epistemic sense, where sense data are construed as transferring and transformational information, as modality, as evaluative description, as minded capacity, as normative categorisation, as *Bildung*, as distinguishing marker, as ethical desideratum, as beyond human capacity and more. All of these are decolonial or post-colonial elements and configurations.

Experiential learning, focusing on experience above all else, was a reaction against the idea that the unit of experience was self-contained, episodic and self-generated, and it led to new pragmatic, semantic and phenomenological pictures of the world. These models of learning then, rather than understanding experience as an input, a precursor, to learning, conceptualised having an experience as the process of learning in itself. In addition, they were more successful at incorporating into their worldview and their view of learning human processes of intentionality, volition and agency.

A representative learning configuration is underpinned by a particular view of world-to-mind and mind-to-world relationships. Representationalist theories of mind identify an inner realm of representations and an outer realm of objects in the world, which are placed in some form of identity relation. Learning is understood as the making (and then expressing in language) true and correct pictures of the world, which have already been formed outside of the person's mind and are independent of that mind's conception or understanding of them. If we reject this approach, the focus of our work should be the relationship between the two.

Technical-rationality learning configurations bypass contemplative or reflexive processes, and treat knowledge, that is every type of knowledge, as a set of technical issues, as problems to be solved without recourse to theory or experience. Theoretical knowledge is floated off into a context-free vacuum, the matter of knowledge is detached from its locating background and researchers, knowers and learners are cast as ideal knowing machines who can know the world only by being outside it, even though they still seek to control it.

A transmissive learning configuration uses traditional pedagogical methods, and its purpose or aim is the transmission and subsequent assimilation of pre-existing knowledge, theories, strategies and models. This approach is therefore colonial, non-reflexive and deagentising. Apperceptively, it understands world-to-mind and mind-to-world processes as unmediated and assimilative. These theories of learning identify the basic mechanisms of

learning in terms of the representation and storage of information. Reflexive theories of learning or learning configurations, on the other hand, internalise the processes of learning. Reflexivity is about exploring how meanings, including the meanings given to and generated by learning activities, are discursively constructed within apperceptive and conceptualising processes. This is a notion of reflection, or even reflexivity, which is a way of saying that a human being can be disposed to reflect back on itself.

There can be no definitive conceptualisations of transgressive or critical learning because transgression itself entails a subversion of rules, categories, types, contexts and connections (object-relations) and borders between objects, object-configurations and people. Transgressive learning can be understood as a set of contextually diverse techniques and practices that aim to bring about change in social, political, economic, categorical, colonial, and epistemic arrangements and frameworks.

A *Bildungstheorie*[12] is fundamentally a decolonial curriculum. It is future-oriented, semantically-conceived, fundamentally values- and virtues-based, ethically-and compassionately-driven (at curriculum, pedagogic and learning levels) and life-long, and it fulfils Martha Nussbaum's (2000a) requirement for a philosophy of equal esteem for all human beings – the equality principle. The key relations in this *Bildungstheorie* are: maturation (reaching a state of full or complete development), progression (as a simple supersession, a sequencing supersession, or a hierarchical supersession), narration (we structure our sense of reality through a narrative or set of narratives), possibility (discursive and material objects and object-configurations that are sourced from the original object), projection (for Heidegger [1962], existence, being what it is, always confronts us with the issue of which possibilities we should project into the future and thus into our future self or selves), praxis (comprising a thought as in some way becoming an action), edification (the ethical, social, political or epistemic improvement of a person), justification (the development of a set of good reasons for doing something in the world) and teleology (from τέλος,[13] telos, end, aim, goal or finality). In a colonial curriculum, these essential elements are either forgotten about or they are disfigured in one way or another.

Bildung was a central concept in the normative thought of many late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century German thinkers associated with romanticism and idealism.[14] However, it never developed into a specific school of thought but became part of the conversation about generative and appropriate learning and learning arrangements. *Bildung* can mean ethical formation, development, education, or culture; it has roots both in ancient Greek notions of culture or paideia, and in Christian understandings of human creation and re-formation. In its early formation and conception, *Bildung* was understood primarily as a process of development, and as operating in different ways at the sub-individual or psychological level, the

individual or autobiographical level, the ordinary level of living, the functional level (where the concern is with relational roles such as capitalist and worker or shop owner and customer), the structural level (as in the functioning of whole societies or their parts, i.e. the economy or the political sphere), the mega-level of whole traditions and civilisations, and, finally, the planetary or cosmological level where the person's immediate concerns are with the planet (or cosmos) as a whole.[15]

Later, it came to be understood as a cultural acquisition, concerning taste, sensibility and good living, with its inevitable class associations, and as a form of cultural capital. Another strand of thinking in relation to a *Bildungstheorie* was aesthetic. Immanuel Kant's (2007) notion of aesthetic judgement comprises a configuration of understanding, imagination and pleasure. If we are ever to achieve a *Bildung* in this sense then we have to become genuinely moral beings: balanced, rational, sensible and affective. Romantic *Bildung* was a political ideal as much as it was an ethical or dispositional one. In the German-speaking world today, the term *Bildung* is simply synonymous with education, although it is still broadly associated with the ideals of a liberal arts education. A *Bildungstheorie* is decolonial in essence and cannot be described as a training model.

A *Bildungstheorie*, then, has as its central component a notion of learning and this is learning understood as a multisemic concept. Learning can be construed as a site of knowledge-development. Learning can be understood in a technical sense as the absorption of information, as a sponge absorbs water. Learning can be thought of in praxical terms, as an action or activity in the world. Learning, however, can also be understood as an essential reference point in a *Bildung*, which is perhaps best construed in relational terms as a maturation, a progression, a narration, a series of possibilities, a projection, a praxis, an edification, a set of justifications and a telos. From this discussion of colonial and decolonial forms of learning, curricula and pedagogies, we move on to examine in much greater depth the idea of decoloniality.

Notes

1 These small atomistic parts are then treated as foundational or as truthful or as factual, and used as the base from which more complicated theories are inferred. That we should ever have thought that these decontextualised representings are adequate or truthful tells us more about how power works in modern societies rather than what has actually happened.

2 Margaret Archer's (Archer, M. (2002) 'Models of Man: Transcendence and Being-in-the-World', *Discerning Values and Beliefs*, pp. 123–51, editor: E. Cassidy, Dublin: Veritas; Archer, M. (2007) *Making our Way through the World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) morphostatic and morphogenetic structure/agency theory is deficient because it assumes a direct theory of realism rather than an indirect and mediated theory.

3 To borrow a term from Robert Brandom (Brandom, R. (2022) *The Spinoza Lectures: Pragmatism And Idealism: Rorty And Hegel On Reason And Representation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press).
4 And indeed over other workforces. An example of this would be the institutions in which we work, where teachers are trained for their roles in schools.
5 This is construed by some as a movement from an inefficient system to a more efficient system, rather than a movement from an educative model to a training model.
6 Consequently, knowledge-development is understood by many politicians and policy-makers as a means for separating out facts from values and norms, or by journalists who refuse to accept that their carefully managed accounts of events and happenings in the world are always ideologically framed both in relation to their content and to how they are presented, or, of course, by many academics, not least in the field of education in which we work, whose brand of knowledge is both dangerously reductive and philosophically naïve.
7 As in unisemic.
8 We have seen this many times over, in acts of genocide, in the adoption of teacher training models, in suppressions of free speech in different parts of the world.
9 Analytical philosophy is a broad contemporary movement or tradition in Western philosophy and especially in anglophone philosophy. It can be traced back to the long line of what can be loosely called empiricists – from Locke, to Hume, to Russell, to early Wittgenstein to Ayer, to modern-day empiricists etc. It is in opposition to a different and conflicting tradition of philosophy, which can loosely be described as from Kant, to Sellars, to late Wittgenstein, to Brandom, to Gadamer, to Heidegger, to Bhaskar and beyond (we should add here this refers to early Bhaskar and not late Bhaskar). Neither is in a real position to make a valid judgement about the work of the other because their foundational principles are fundamentally different.
10 Behaviourism is a philosophical theory and has been used specifically within the discipline of education to provide an explanation for the play of social and educational objects in history. It makes three interrelated claims. The first of these is that if investigators are trying to understand the psychology of a human being, they should not be concerned with what is in the person's mind but with how that person behaves. The second claim is that behaviours can be fully and comprehensively explained without recourse to any form of mental construct or event. The source of these behaviours is the environment and not the mind of the individual. And the third claim which behaviourists are likely to make, and which follows from the first two claims, is that if minded terms are used as descriptors then they should be replaced by behavioural terms or, at least, those minded constructs should be translated into behavioural descriptors.
11 Phenomenology is a meta-philosophy that focuses on the three key aspects of learning, the relationship of the individual to and with the world involving a process of change, the subsequent conception and activation of being in the world, and how our descriptions, words, schema and theories can provide us with some purchase on that world. The focus is on the givens of immediate experience and this is an attempt to capture that experience as it is lived, both by the individual and by the external observer. See Husserl, E. (1913 [1900/01]) *Logical Investigations*, trans. J.N. Findlay, London: Routledge; and Husserl, E. (1973 [1939]) *Experience and Judgement*, trans. J.S. Churchill and K. Ameriks, London: Routledge).

12 Two German words are used in this chapter, *Bildungstheorie* and *Bildung*, and these are not used to obscure the meanings that we are seeking to explicate, but to show or indicate the origins of these words and word-sets, given that there is a lack of obvious words or word-sets in the English-language that can capture the meanings that inhere in these two words.
13 From the original Greek word.
14 Such as Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Johann Gottfried Herder, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, Friedrich Schleiermacher and Ludwig Uhland.
15 See Bhaskar, R. (1997) [1975] *A Realist Theory of Science*, London: Routledge; Bhaskar, R. (1998) [1979] *The Possibility of Naturalism* (3rd edition), London: Routledge; Bhaskar, R. (2008) [1993] *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*, London: Routledge; Bhaskar, R. (2010) [1987] *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation*, London: Routledge; Bhaskar, R. (2011) [1991] *Philosophy and the Idea of Freedom*, London: Blackwell.

Part II

Decolonisations

In Part II of this book the focus is on decolonisations, as opposed to colonisations, although these should not be understood exclusively as opposites of each other. Decolonisation can be understood as epistemic, as a type of knowledge, although this is not the only meaning we can give to it. In defence of this position, we are suggesting both that epistemic decolonisation is the most important use to which it can be put, and that what this does is place decoloniality in direct opposition to what we have been calling here Western knowledge or European Enlightenment knowledge or colonial knowledge or occidental cultural knowledge. As with all designations of this type, we have to be careful about the meanings we can accrue from them – concepts such as these are multisemic, semantically contested, networked, interactive, powerful and dynamic.

This part of the book consists of six chapters. Chapter 8: *Epistemic Decolonisation – truth, justification and ethics* is the first of these and in it we examine the general metaphysic of decoloniality. In the next three chapters (Chapter 9: *Feminist Decolonisations – the women's rights movement*; Chapter 10: *The Gay Rights Movement – decoloniality and universality*; and Chapter 11: *Anti-racist Strategies and Praxes – taxonomic decolonisation*), we look at three decolonial practices (feminism, gay and alternative sexualities, and anti-racist strategies and pedagogies), conscious all the time that there are many other decolonial practices that we could have chosen, such as those concerned with intelligence, dis-ability, cuisine and others. In Chapter 12 (*Indigenous and Colonial Knowledges*), we try to develop a notion of universal ethical dispositions or, as Martha Nussbaum (2000b) called them, central functional human capabilities. In the last chapter of this part, and of the book as a whole (Chapter 13: Coloniality/Decoloniality), we look at what is perhaps the most important, and justifiably so, issue that decolonialists have had to grapple with – the decolonisation of the curriculum.

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8 Epistemic Decolonisation

Truth, Justification and Ethics

Between 1904 and 1908 Germany conducted a campaign of ethnic extermination against the Herero and Nama peoples in German South West Africa (now Namibia). The Herero uprising, in early 1904, resulted in the deaths of between 123 and 150 German settlers. They were joined in their rebellion in October of the same year by the Nama people. Calls for the total eradication of the Herero and Nama peoples came from the Reichstag, the German parliament, and the Head of State, the Kaiser. Germany sent an expeditionary force of 10,000 troops in June of 1904 to quell the rebellion. In August, the main Herero force was surrounded and forced to surrender at the battle of Waterberg.

What followed can only be described as an attempt at exterminating the Herero tribe and expelling those who remained from the land occupied by the German settlers. Alfred von Schlieffen (Chief of the Imperial German General Staff) approved of what he described as a racial struggle, understanding this as a need to 'wipe out the entire nation or to drive them out of the country'.[1] There was some resistance to this policy of extermination – this was largely because colonial officials looked at the Herero people as a potential source of labour and thus as economically important (see Mamdani, 2001).[2] At the end of 1904, the surviving Herero prisoners were herded into labour camps, where they were given to private companies as slave labour or used in medical experiments. Estimates of the mortality rate at the camps are between 45% and 74%.[3] Many Herero and Nama people were literally worked to death. According to the Whitaker Report,[4] the population of 80,000 Herero people was reduced to about 15,000 between 1904 and 1907. In 1915, during the First World War, the German settler colony was taken over by the South African Authorities at the time, and they received a League of Nations mandate over South West Africa on 17 December 1920.

The original inhabitants of what is now Namibia were the San and Khoekhoe peoples. The Herero tribe migrated to Namibia during the early part of the 18th century, seizing vast areas of arable land to graze

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their cattle. At the same time they enslaved the indigenous peoples of the area, driving many of them into the dry, rugged hills in the south and east of the country. The Herero way of life was dependent on cattle and the many uses they could be put to. The Herero language, for example, contains more than a thousand words for the colours, markings and uses of cattle. At the time of the German colonisation, the area was occupied by the Herero and was known as Damaraland. The Nama were pastoral people and traders who lived to the south of the Herero.

The German coloniser and settler wars at the beginning of the 20th century were always intended to be genocidal, as this was understood as the most efficient way to clear the land for the new African Germany. The native populations were to be eliminated, or at least subjected to slave labour, and their lands distributed to settlers and companies. Inevitably, this involved the dismantling of their traditional governing structures. One of the major issues was control of the land. In 1903 the German settler community sought to divide the territory with a railway line, setting up reservations for the indigenous peoples of the area. This issue of land ownership was further exacerbated by the use of racialist conceptualisations of Herero and Nama peoples. For example, the *Reichskolonialbund* (German Colonial League) argued that in legal matters the testimony of seven Africans was worth the same as a single German colonialist. The German settlers often referred to Black Africans as baboons and treated them like animals. This contempt and sense of racial superiority expressed by the settlers manifested itself in the practice of concubinage, where native women were raped and imprisoned by male German traders and ranchers. We can be critical, unequivocally, of this racial genocide committed by the German settler community, and of understanding it, as many did at the time, as a cleansing of the land by a different racial group.

Genocide

In this account of a genocide, or what has been called a genocide, the obvious difficulty is that we really do not know what a genocide is.[5] We are given some hints, some suggestions, some possible pointers, to what it could be: the extermination of an ethnic grouping, an unspeakable horror, a familial annihilation, a land appropriation, an immoral breaching, a colonising exigency and more. But these do not, even if taken together, give us a clear impression of what a genocide is. Claudia Card, in her article, *Genocide and Social Death*,[6] suggests that it can be understood as the eradication of social vitality, and she explains this difficult idea as being those intergenerational social relations that animate, articulate and characterise particular social groups and which give meaning to the lives of its people. These then are social and ethical norms which, taken together, constitute the collective life

of a people. What this requires is a further articulation of the ethical element and a deeper understanding of these shared (exclusively in some cases) patterns of meaning, thinking, uttering, prescribing and being that are manifested in their social life and their individual agency.

The word genocide is a recent invention. Some think that it was coined by Raphael Lemkin at the end of the Second World War.[7] The word itself comes from the Greek, *genos*, for race or tribe, and the Latin, *cide*, for killing (see *Online Etymology Dictionary*). Lemkin intended it to refer to not just mass murder, but also to the destruction of social and cultural formations. In his unfinished '*Introduction to the Study of Genocide*' he described these formations as having shared languages, arts, traditions and collective histories (see Jacobs, 2012). What this account failed to address, however, was the way these shared norms impacted on individuals within the group. In Chapter 1, we suggested that the key relationships in any social theory can be expressed as world-to-mind and mind-to-world relations. These relations have ethical and epistemic elements. These views of learning and ethics are underpinned, then, by the important relationship between what and how we think and what is there in the world (its contents), understood in different ways, with a learning model forming the centrepiece of the argument that we are making in this book – there are three sites of knowledge: the world and its contents; the mediating arena between the contents of the world and objects in the mind where learning takes place; and the contents of the mind that allow us to make judgements, perceive the world and reflect on what we have perceived. These are ethical judgements. The Hegelian interrelation of individual agency and social structure is of some importance here. It accounts for the mediative nature of reality and shows how harm to a group can entail harm to its members and vice versa, as in genocidal relations with other groups. It also incorporates a relation between the existential (identity, agency, meaning) and the structural.

Georg Hegel's (1977) concept of the ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*) refers to the way Spirit operates in a society's customs, institutions and shared interactions.[8] Furthermore, this ethical life must also be historical, insofar as any flourishing of a society or group of people may well depend on an engagement with past and present-past forms of disintegration, renewal, reformation and the like. The life gets its vitality from its past (see Gillian Rose, *Hegel Contra Sociology*, 1981[9]), even if that past life includes genocidal relations. Hegel's metaphysic is generally understood as the culmination of a rational ethic, leading to a sense of completeness. However, it can be understood as knowledge generated through the operation of norms, norms which govern the determination and use of concepts – the possibilities that inhere in these important concepts, such as genocide. These norms, for Hegel, are not givens, nor are they entirely fixed. Ethical and epistemic norms, then, continually vivify, generate, regenerate, formulate and reformulate our sense

of ourselves, what our world is like, our activities in that world, and our relations with each other. These norms are also apperceptively received, and they have universal qualities.

However, Hegel condemned the fetishism that suggests that norms are objective features of the non-human world and thus as having an independence from our attitudes towards them and as being simply there in the world. For Hegel the ultimate authority for the norms (personal, epistemic, social, political, dispositional, spatial, temporal and ethical) that we are committed to, and which commit us to follow, are grounded in our cognitive practices. Hegel's particular model of normative statuses, then, is that it must include reciprocal recognitive attitudes on behalf of those who commit themselves to these norms and what this means unequivocally is that this commitment is therefore embedded in normative relations of authority, power and responsibility in representational settings and moments of representing (representings) – there are many of these in a person's lifetime. For our purposes here, and for the time being, we will leave it at that, but the point is that a clear distinction can be made between an objective and mind-independent world and a world that is, in part, understood as attitude-dependent. Colonial forms of knowledge, as we have seen, are fixated on notions of objectivity, objective worlds, unmediated access to those worlds and ethical norms that operate outside of the norms that we all follow in different ways (see back to Chapter 1). And what this also means is that we should look for, as our core concern, reasons and reason-giving activities in the world.

Ethics and Criticality

The central issue that concerns us here in this book is whether it is possible to reject colonial forms of knowledge in their entirety, or whether some aspects of the overall package can be discarded without doing damage to the general metaphysic. We have argued above that genocide is unequivocally wrong and that there are no exceptions in this judgement. We also suggested that Hegelian metaphysics employs a variety of universals, an example of which is that norms are always apperceptively received. John Searle (2011) argued for a realist metaphysic which incorporated a number of statements in language which are appropriate for the world as it is now, the world as it was, and the world as it will be. What this means, if we accept this general metaphysic, is that coloniality and decoloniality have some, or at least should have some, common and truthful elements. Here is a list of possible assertions of this kind. Reality exists independently of human representations. At least one of the functions of language is to communicate meanings from speakers to hearers, and sometimes those meanings enable the communication to refer to objects and states of affairs in the world that exist independently.

Knowledge is objective, that is, it can be shared amongst a community of knowers. Logic and rationality are formal systems of communication. Truth is a matter of the accuracy of representation. A statement is true if and only if the statement corresponds to the facts. There are both objectively and intersubjectively valid criteria of intellectual achievement and excellence.

We can and should reject some of these propositions; however, the point is that in this rejection, in this decolonial move, we are replacing some of these universal propositions with other universal propositions, such as that reality is always mediated through apperceptive processes, and that in language we can never have any certainty about what the world is really like. For example, with regards to the concept and practice of genocide, we may be absolutely certain in our own minds that it is unequivocally wrong, and yet it is still possible to provide an argument for suggesting that in the long term there may be some merit in it. What this tells us is that decolonial ethics with their decolonial metaphysical underpinnings and the sense they have of criticality, have some credibility as universal linguistic configurations.

Adopting a critical approach ineluctably implies that a state of affairs is flawed or incomplete and therefore needs to be replaced by an alternative that is not flawed or incomplete in the same way. Here, there is a need to focus on the argument used by Roy Bhaskar (2008) in his book *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*. This is that from the premise that people have needs and that these needs are unfulfilled, then we are logically enjoined to meet those needs, and thus we have moved from two factual statements without recourse to the addition of a value statement or even a practically prescriptive statement to a value conclusion. Identifying a need implies that it must be met – this is a value-laden and valorised assertion; however, it drives a coach and horses through the Humean assumption that we can separate out facts and values. We can only conclude that inherent in an explanatory critique there is a statement of value and a means for deciding between correct and incorrect actions; in other words, the argument is practically adequate.

Ethicists make truth claims about objects in the world. However, in the social world the objects of knowledge include the ideas that people have about those objects, and, further to this, those ideas do not just operate as descriptions or explanations but may causally effect and thus transform the original objects. Many of these ideas seek to explain the characteristics of that same society. If we want to explain society, and our explanations differ from those held by people in society, then both cannot be right. All this shows is the possibility of critique and, we want to argue, decolonisation. This is different from the natural sciences because physical objects have no conception of themselves and no means of providing an explanation for what they do; in short, they cannot be reflexive.

Ethicists can go further than identifying inaccuracies in the accounts that people in society hold about their lives; they may also want to explain why these false beliefs are held. What is the false-belief-causing mechanism? Once this is identified, logically and ineluctably, the next step is a negative evaluation of it. If we say that some institution or structure causes us to misdescribe objects in the world, then necessarily we are criticising it and seeking to ameliorate its harmful effects, and thus change it – all three of which are legitimate ethical activities. Furthermore, even just reporting the results of an evaluation not only subverts the false-belief-causing mechanism, but in addition has the potential to undermine its false-meaning-making powers. Explanation, therefore, has the three-fold purpose of describing, explaining and subverting.[10]

Criticality, however, is a multisemic concept. Indeed, this is part of the problem, for the term itself has a complex range of connotations and applications. The *critical* can be said to be marked by a disengagement from the scientific as conventionally conceived, with an accompanying critique of its distinguishing features such as objectivity, value neutrality and the strict separation between knowing subjects and objects to be known, or, to put it another way, the ethical self and the world.

Decolonial, but not decolonising,[11] ethicists take everyday experience and ordinary life as their subject matter and ask how meanings are constructed and social interaction negotiated in social practices. Human action is inseparable from meaning-making, and experiences are classified and ordered through interpretive frames; that is, through pre-understandings mediated by tradition. The task of working out how we should behave is then to work with, and make sense of, the world, through the frames and pre-understandings that are already in circulation. The process of meaning-making and negotiation over meaning is always a practical matter for individuals in the sense that it is located in their social practices. This means that explaining the social world involves understanding or making sense of it, and it involves understanding the meanings that both construct – and are constructed by – interactive human behaviour. The goal becomes that of providing interpretations of human actions and social practices within the context of meaningful, culturally-specific, arrangements,[12] and this, after all, is the essence of a decolonial approach.

Since knowledge always involves interpretation within historical and cultural contexts, it is grasped not by eliminating subjectivity but through the intersubjective relationship between the knowing subject and the object to be known. Knowledge is not a matter of subject and object becoming identical but of them entering into a necessary dialectical relationship. Here, an analogy between literary texts and social phenomena becomes useful, since both are complex systems of meaningful elements that are in need of interpretation. Interpretivism is the view that human life is essentially historical,

and that human societies and behaviours need to be read like a complex text. Thus, what is involved in understanding is translation, empathy, dialogue, participant observation and thick description. As a hermeneutic enquiry the task becomes one of working out as many meanings as possible of a complex social life (and, in relation to concepts, of trying to understand their possibilities in a Wittgensteinian sense[13]).

In the fusion of horizons,[14] the term horizon refers to our standpoint or situatedness (in time, place, culture, gender, ethnicity, etc.) and the standpoint or situatedness of what we are trying to understand. The fusion results from an understanding that is grounded in both standpoints, neither of which can be bracketed out. We could say that a fusion of horizons occurs when authors and readers, us and you, both of whom are historically situated, create shared meanings. Because it is situated, every horizon is inevitably limited, but it is also open to connecting with other horizons (perspectives or standpoints). The resulting fusion is an enlargement or broadening of our horizons through a process of learning that leaves open the possibility for continual reinterpretation and different meanings as horizons move and change. It is the outcome of intersubjective agreement where different and conflicting interpretations are played out and possibly harmonised. Through the comparing and contrasting of various interpretations, a consensus can be achieved, despite differences, indeed because of differences.

Interpretivists, critical theorists and postmodernists therefore sought to provide an alternative to a view of theory-building which prioritised reduction to a set of variables, a separation between the knower and what they sought to know, a means for predicting and controlling the future, and a set of perfectly integrated descriptions of the world with a view of the social actor as mechanistic and determined. Decolonialists provide one possible alternative. They generally focus on the meanings that social actors construct about their lives and in relation to the world and argue that human beings negotiate these meanings in their social practices. Human action, then, cannot be separated from meaning-making, with our experiences organised through pre-formulated interpretive frames. Decolonialists believe that we belong to traditions of thought, and the task of the theorist is to make sense of these interpretations, even though such interpretive activity is mediated through the theorist's own frame of reference. This is a practical matter for each individual, although of course they cannot develop meanings on their own, since all meaning-making is located within cultural, ethical, linguistic and historical communities of practice (see Wittgenstein's (1953) arguments against the idea of a private language and thus against private meaning-making practices). Being in the world is therefore understood as a practice, primed for investigation, but resistant to algorithmic and mechanistic methods for describing it used in the natural sciences.

Theorising is too important to simply ignore the supposed problems of representation alluded to above. Indeed, we need to understand how our theories are constructed and how power is ever present in their construction. This is because theory-development is conducted with and through other people (some of them more powerful than others), and the theorist is always in the business of collecting, collating and synthesising accounts by social actors of their life worlds and activities in the world. One of the key concepts implicated in these epistemological debates, as we have observed, is criticality and we now want to address the issue of its use (and thus for Wittgenstein [1953] its semantic possibilities) in discursive and methodological frameworks, such as learning, colonising, decolonising and ethicising.

Counter-conducting

An example of decolonial ethicising, as a form of resistance or resisting[15] or as a form of criticality, is the practice of care, fundamentally and especially the care of the self. Michel Foucault (1983: 263)[16] argued for a notion of counter-conducting for human beings. It is an ethic and praxis of relationships, and, for Foucault, it comprised 'the kind of relationship you should have with yourself' and with objects, relations, configurations, and persons in the outside world. It acts as a counter and an opposition to prevailing discursive and material object-configurations. People are encouraged to look at their own conduct, not in a condemnatory way, but as a seedbed for personal and political action. In the first instance, this is a process of refusal: 'maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are but to refuse what we are' (Foucault, 1980b: 336) – there is a refusal being proposed here to accept the grounds on which our subjectivity is being constructed and a desire to subvert those grounds. At learning sites and in everyday life this would involve a plurality of refusals, resistances and struggles against power, working through a pedagogy of imagination. They involve a denaturalisation of the categories and fit with a notion of thought that prioritises as a praxis, as a way of opposing, the meanings that inhere in categories as they are currently operating and in the pedagogic practices that institutionalise and reproduce them.[17]

A more direct form of decolonial resistance is a notion of *conscientização* or critical consciousness, and this is a central element in Paulo Freire's (1970) theory of emancipation. A *conscientização* is a response to the oppressive conditions of life for most people. This is an act of learning and as with all acts of learning there is a pedagogy involved and a particular arrangement of learning resources to facilitate it. This pedagogy, as Freire understood it, comprises the creation of a set of conditions for the person to realise their own agency, to understand themselves as a person rather than as a material object (discursive, material, relational or configurational). There are

essentialist and realist elements here, as well as an acknowledgement that the struggle is not just personal but also political and social. It happens through work and in particular people working on the world. The pedagogy involved is dialogic and eschews settings in which there are unequal relations between teachers and learners. Freire also argued that the status quo, which he called a banking model of education,[18] was counter-productive and regressive. His concern was with intentionality and agency in the process of learning.

The world, and this is shorthand for anything that might exist which is external to our minds, such as other people, mountains, rivers, human activities before we were born, books that were written by people who were not alive when we were born, and thoughts that could not have entered our minds before they did, can be read, understood, appreciated, assimilated as texts, *and* ideological and historical texts as well. Historical and ideological texts can be read in terms of their pre-texts – each social and discursive formation in place and time has its own way of arranging language, discourses, and writing. Furthermore, each text has a sub-text, which operates beneath the text, but which gives it its meaning – those epistemologies and traditions of knowledge which are historical, and which allow a particular reading. Texts refer to observations, evaluations and reflections of discursive and material objects, relational objects, configurational objects of various types, and persons.

Several approaches to reading texts have been developed. The first of these is monosemic and this means that an authoritative reading can be made of a text – a sacred text, for example, such as the Torah or the Christian Bible or even a work of philosophy by a person favoured by the reader. A second approach is also monosemic, but here the primary focus is the intentions of the author. The text allows an unequivocal reading because that reading is consistent with these intentions. A third approach focuses on reading the text and its enframings. The text and the way in which it is read are enframed.[19] There are several solutions to the problems created by the assertion that textual reading is immersed in history and society. The first of these is to accept that any interpretation that is made is partial, and that is as far as anyone can go. The second possible solution is that we can, in some way, transcend the historicity of our own interpretative stance. Instead of proposing that an unequivocal reading of a text is possible, if we can understand the different contexts and pre-texts of a text, then this in itself constitutes a better way of reading it.[20] A text under this conception can be a life, an episode in a life, an experience in that life, a praxis, a book, a sign, a technology, a feeling or emotion, a coloniality and a decoloniality, a framing and an enframing, and much more.

Another decolonial form of resistance is an attempt to subvert the categories by which we live. Difference as a concept can be understood in several ways. There is the common use given to the term, where difference is

understood as not being or as being opposite to something else – words and signs only have meanings within other arrangements of words and signs, from which they differ. In this book we are trying to understand how coloniality and decoloniality differ as concepts and practices. Another way we can understand the idea of difference is by conceptualising it as a particular arrangement or spacing, so that what we should be concerned about is the process that differentiates social elements from other social elements.[21] Processes of classifying and reclassifying change the nature of objects, object-relations, and object-configurations. Indeed, all references to the world involve the identification, manipulation, transformation and reconstruction of the categories, and we cannot avoid this, especially if we are concerned with the ethicality of concepts.

Absenting is another decolonial form. Roy Bhaskar (2010) criticised the meta-notion of ontological monovalence, which suggests that reality is only positive and present. He suggested that the positive undermines the negative or sense of non-being, so that change becomes impossible. By not including the negativity of reality and by emphasising positivity over negativity, reality can only be thought of as positive and this implies that unequal relations do not exist, and praxis and change are not necessary. To correct this error, Bhaskar (2010) positioned as central to his work on dialectics, the concepts of absence, negativity, and change, asserting that they have real ontological features such as having causal effects in the world. So, while the notion of negativity was used to indicate nothingness, that is, indeterminate absence, Bhaskar used instead the notion of determinate absence, in the sense that an entity can be absent in terms of not being there in a particular space or time-moment or because it has never existed or due to its dissolution. By looking at what is absent in a specific situation this will give us a clue as to how it can change; change is a process of movement in which an object becomes something else and in the process ceases to be what it was. In order to restore or resolve these contradictions, Bhaskar (2008) suggested that absences should be absented, and this can be achieved through expanding the totality of objects by adopting more inclusive arrangements.

Transframing as a form of resistance or counteractivity comprises a movement between onto-epistemological frames or framings, describing them as such because our knowledge of the world always has ontological dimensions. In the first chapter of this book we identified a variety of frames or framings that, in a transformational sense, might enable people to resist or counteract those oppressive forces that are ineluctably a part of modern societies: the frame of molecules and atoms; the frame of associations between variables; the function or use-in-the-world frame; the frame of events; the linguistic frame; the universal hermeneutic frame; the frame of structure and structuring; the semantic frame; and the universal or transcendental frame. These frames, then, are manifestations of difference and, in

particular, the determining difference between the different levels or frames. The truth of something or other, as a consequence, is frame-specific and this includes what many people construe as facts. Deframing or trans-framing, as an act of decoloniality (and learning), is a movement upwards or downwards or sideways, but always a repositioning of the way we can see the world.

Another form of resistance is practice on ourselves, and this locates the source of practice in individual reflection. This internal conversation has three conditioning structures. The first is that it is a genuinely interior phenomenon, and this implies that we have private lives. The second conditioning structure is that this sense of a person's subjectivity has a first-person ontology – it relates directly to a particular person. The third conditioning structure is that it possesses causal powers, in that material and discursive consequences could follow directly from particular internal conversations.

This is a notion of reflection, and we might even understand it as a form of decolonial reflexivity, which is a way of saying that a person can be disposed to reflect back on herself. Here the life of the mind is characterised by an internal conversation that is a part of the whole process of learning. The second type of reflexive action can be called autonomous reflexivity and here the processes of the internal conversation are foreshortened and may be automatic and involuntary, in so far as they lead to actions. Then there are meta-reflexive processes, in which the principal focus is the internal conversation; interiorisation and exteriorisation processes are marginalised. There may also be fractured reflexive processes, in which the interrogation by one part of the mind of another part does not proceed smoothly and coherently, leading to the learner being distressed and disorientated.[22] However, the most important form of resistance in learning is praxical.

These praxical relationships can be seen in important and ground-breaking political movements: the women's rights movement (see the next chapter, Chapter 9), the alt and gay rights movement (see Chapter 10) and anti-racist strategies and pedagogies (see Chapter 11). It is interesting to note that these movements were (and are) designed to create the conditions for the delivery of inalienable and universal rights to minority populations, denied by majority or historically dominant populations. Rights, inalienable or otherwise, clearly have currency in the modern world. All of these movements are and were in effect ethical praxes.

Praxis is not just action for this would render the concept as meaningless insofar as everything we do in the world would be a praxis. It involves some form of conversion of thought into action, or at least the construction of a particular thought or set of thoughts in such a way that certain actions inevitably flow from it and other actions are set aside. As with all thoughts or thinking, this praxis is embedded in histories, archaeologies, and genealogies of that thought or concept and what that thought or set of thoughts

allows or disallows. Praxis has four elements: practice on practice, practice on thought, practice on ourselves, and practice unfolding from thought. The first of these refers fundamentally to doing something in the world, such as the various campaigns for gay rights[23] in the UK and round the world over the last thirty years – those activities evolved in scope and form over the period of the activity (see Chapter 10). The second refers to thought working on the practice of thought over a period of time and in response to a particular conceptual and practical problem such as patriarchy (see Chapter 9).

The third possibility is practice on ourselves – a key decolonial activity – and this locates the source of practice in individual reflection. We have already suggested that an activity of the mind can be construed as a notion of inner speech, where parts of the mind talk to or communicate with other parts of the mind. Reflexivity can be consequently thought of as an emancipation. There is a fourth sense that can be given to the notion of praxis, and this is where work on thought drives practice in a particular way – thought and practice are so intertwined that in criticising or subverting the one, we are also criticising and subverting the other. An example of an object-relation or object-connection operating at the discursive level over time is the relation between a theory or set of propositions about objects, relations and arrangements of objects – how they might work in the world – and a set of future arrangements of objects and relations in the practice setting (from description to practice). For those of us concerned to provide accounts of coloniality, decoloniality, learning and ethics, conceptualising the relationship between the theory we produce and the practice we are describing is central to our activities. In short, how this relationship is understood is important both because it affects the type of account produced and because it impacts upon the workings of practices per se. In the next chapter we provide an account of feminism as a concept and as a praxis.

Notes

1 Source: Alfred von Schlieffen, Biography and Facts, *Britannica Encyclopaedia*.
2 Mahmood Mamdani (2001) *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
3 See Clarence Lusane (2002) *Hitler's Black Victims: The Historical Experiences of European Blacks, Africans and African Americans During the Nazi Era* (Crosscurrents in African American History), pp. 50–51, New York: Routledge.
4 Whitaker Report (United Nations). A report into genocide by special rapporteur Benjamin Whitaker, for the *Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities*, UN Document E/CN.4/Sub.2/ 1985/6, July 2, 1985.
5 For a fuller analysis of genocide as a concept see Bunyard, T. (2021) 'Spirit and Social Death: Hegel, Historical Life and Genocide', *Ethics and Social Welfare*, 15(4): 410–27.
6 Card's conception of social death was first presented in a paper titled 'Pernicious Injustice: The Case of Genocide' in 2000. An expanded version of this paper was

then published in *Hypatia* in 2003, under the title 'Genocide and Social Death', and a significantly revised and expanded version of that article appeared in 2010, as a chapter in her book, *Confronting Evils: Terrorism, Torture, Genocide*.

7 See Jacobs, S. (2012) *Lemkin on Genocide: Introduction to the Study of Genocide and History of Genocide*, London: Bloomsbury.

8 There are two opposing views of Hegel. The first view is that Hegel was committed to a teleological spirit monism. The second view is that Hegel tried to bring together Kant's transcendental notions with a culturally specific conception of Spirit. Robert Brandom (Brandom, R. (2004) 'The Pragmatist Enlightenment (and its Problematic Semantics)', *European Journal of Philosophy*, 12, 1: 2–24; Brandom, R. (2009) *Reason in Philosophy*: *Animating Ideas*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press) supports the latter interpretation.

9 Gillian Rose's book, *Hegel Contra Sociology* (Rose, G. (1981) *Hegel Contra Sociology*, London: Athlone), argues that Hegel shows that both poles of continuums (values and validity, subjectivity and structures) are revisable and historically constructed. Neither one nor the other should be reified, and their emergence from the actual conduct of life should be acknowledged.

10 Martyn Hammersley (Hammersley, M. (2002) 'Research as emancipatory: the case of Bhaskar's realism', *Journal of Critical Realism*, 1(1): 33–48) criticised Bhaskar's emancipatory realism with regards to research and in particular to this argument.

11 Decolonising is the process of moving away from coloniality; decoloniality is the end state.

12 Some elements of knowledge, which we may want to describe as transcendental, could be an exception to this.

13 See Wittgenstein, L. (1953) *Philosophical Investigations*, translated by G.E.M. Anscombe, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

14 This is a term used by Hans-Georg Gadamer (Gadamer, H.-G. (1989 [1960]) *Truth and Method*, 2nd revised edition, trans. J. Weinsheimer and D.G. Marshall, New York: Crossroad) to denote an inter-relationship between self and others.

15 'Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power' (Foucault, M. (1978) 'La société disciplinaire en crise', interview-lecture delivered in Japan, in *Dits et écrits*, Volume 3, 1976–9: 532: 95–96).

16 Michel Foucault refused to be categorised as a man: 'my objective, instead, has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects'. (Foucault, M. (1980a) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, edited by Colin Gordon and translated by C. Gordon, L. Marshall, J. Mepham and K. Soper, New York: Pantheon Books: 77).

17 For Foucault (Foucault, M. (1980b) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, edited by Colin Gordon and translated by C. Gordon, L. Marshall, J. Mepham and K. Soper, New York: Pantheon Books: 154), this comprises the challenge of 'creatively and courageously authoring one's ethical self'.

18 A banking model of education refers to the metaphor of students as containers or vessels into which educators must pour in or fill up with knowledge.

19 As we suggested in Chapter 1, this is a word used by Martin Heidegger (Heidegger, M. (1962) [1927] *Sein und Zeit*, translated as *Being and Time* by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, Oxford: Basil Blackwell), translated from the original German word, *Gestell*, to denote those social, geo-historical, temporal,

epistemological, political, and discursive frames within which our thoughts and utterances are ineluctably embedded.

20 Hans-Georg Gadamer (Gadamer, H.-G. (1989 [1960]) *Truth and Method*, 2nd revised edition, trans. J. Weinsheimer and D.G. Marshall, New York: Crossroad) suggested this, although it is not a complete solution.

21 See Derrida, J. (1978) *Writing and Difference*, translated by Bass, A., Chicago: University of Chicago Press; Derrida, J. (1982) 'Différance', *Margins of Philosophy*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press; Derrida, J. (2016) *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.

22 See Archer, M. (2002) 'Models of Man: Transcendence and Being-in-the-World', *Discerning Values and Beliefs*, pp. 123–51, editor: E. Cassidy, Dublin: Veritas; and Archer, M. (2007) *Making our Way through the World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for an account of reflexivity and the internal conversation.

23 The gay rights movement was successful, or at least partially successful (there is more work to do), because of (amongst other reasons) their appropriation of the word 'gay', from an adjective meaning carefree, loose morals and sexual licentiousness to its use in the world to describe a particular form of sexuality in a positive way (see Chapter 10).

9 Feminist Decolonisations

The Women's Rights Movement

Feminist campaigns in the United States of America have been described as wave-like in form and substance.[1] In employing this metaphor, there is a danger of oversimplifying a complicated history, since each movement or type of feminism coexisted with the others. There are then four broad manifestations of feminist praxical movements. The first organised movement (or first feminist wave) aimed at gaining rights for American women began in July 1848 with a convention organised by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott at Seneca Falls in New York State. Delegates signed the Declaration of Sentiments, which argued for equal rights for men and women and called for a full and equal suffrage.

A second wave of feminism focused on other areas of women's lives and experience, and built on the gains made by women in the 19th and 20th centuries in relation to legal rights and suffrage (the first wave of feminism). In the aftermath of the Second World War women's lives in developed countries such as the UK and the US were transformed not least by household technologies and medical advances. Despite these changes, cultural attitudes (especially relating to women's work) and legal precedents still acted as impediments to real sexual equality. Women in the US and, to a lesser extent, in the UK were beginning to read feminist works such as Betty Frieden's *The Feminine Mystique*[2] and were inspired to engage in political action, designed to achieve equal pay and protection against employment discrimination. The National Organisation for Women, which was convened in 1966 by a small group of feminists, including Frieden and Pauli Murray, was dedicated to actively challenge sex discrimination in all areas of American life. This feminist organisation found it difficult to settle on a set of clearly understood objectives – it initially only achieved a consensus on six measures: enforcement of laws banning employment discrimination, maternity leave rights, child-care centres, tax deductions for child-care expenses, equal (with men) educational opportunities and equal job-training opportunities for poor women. Many of these demands were rejected on the grounds of cost by male legislators and by vested interests in society – those who had an

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economic stake in the continued exploitation of women in the US. Two other demands were treated with even more disdain: an immediate passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the US Constitution, guaranteeing equality of rights regardless of sex, and greater access for women to contraception and abortion. These last two issues split the movement in half. Liberal and radical feminists understood the purposes of the organisation in different ways.

In response, a variety of radical feminist groups were established, diminishing the power and influence of the movement as a whole (this perhaps constitutes a third wave). However, the enthusiasm for the cause did not diminish. In September 1968 activists descended on Atlantic City, New Jersey, to protest against the exploitation of women's bodies by the Miss America pageant. In February 1969 the Redstockings, a radical feminist offshoot, published *The Bitch Manifesto*.[3] The Redstockings helped to develop the concepts of consciousness-raising groups and speak-outs on rape to focus national attention on violence by men against women, including domestic violence. In November 1969, the National Organisation for Women organised a congress to unite women, which attracted more than 500 feminists to New York City, but met with little success in uniting the liberal and radical wings of the movement.

Despite these divisions and dissentions, the women's rights movement achieved a great deal in a short space of time. In 1965, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission mandated employers to provide timetables for increasing the number of women in their workforces. In the 1970s, divorce laws were liberalised, employers were barred from firing pregnant women, and many women studies courses were set up in the nation's universities. In 1972, legislation was enacted by Congress prohibiting sex discrimination on any educational programme receiving federal funds. A year later, the United States Supreme Court legalised abortion in its *Roe* v. *Wade* ruling (although this was subsequently reversed in 2024).

Although the women's movement had been successful in persuading Congress to pass the Equal Rights Amendment Act, its effect was diluted when it failed to achieve the requirement of ratification by Congress within ten years of its passing. A backlash against the women's movement was organised by women such as Phyllis Schlafly, who argued that passing the ERA would invalidate state sodomy laws, outlaw single-sex restrooms in public places, legalise same-sex marriage and make taxpayer-funded abortion a constitutional right.[4] The failure to achieve full ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment Act precipitated a general decline in organised activism, and a change in the aspirations of the women's movement in the USA.

Feminism is now understood as political rather than transformational, in that the purpose is conceived of in two ways (a fourth wave). Firstly, it is thought of as a means by which women are given equal status in important

and powerful positions in society, in the boardroom, in the legislature, in the judiciary, in the armed forces, as top earners, and in the media. The argument that this will change politics, business, the enforcement of the law, media opinion and the like to a more consensual, democratic, and softer form of governing relations in society has been abandoned, with the impulse now towards a general balance of men and women. The result is that existing structures and institutions in society are left relatively unscathed. The second strand is to embrace and participate in libertarian practices, much favoured by the right-wing patriarchy in the political process.[5] The intent is an equalising of pleasure and liberty between the different sexes. This amounts to limited forms of change in society, that can be easily accommodated by capitalist or neo-liberal structures and arrangements.

A Feminist Epistemology

We now need to engage with the idea of a feminist epistemology and, more importantly, with what its contents might be. Before proceeding further, a necessary first step is to be clear about the relationships between epistemology, methodology and praxis since these important concepts are frequently misunderstood and misused. We have discussed the notion of epistemology in Chapter 1 and we noted there that traditionally it is the study of what constitutes knowledge, thus supposedly enabling decisions to be made about the validity of knowledge claims. It is the branch of philosophy that attempts to answer questions such as: How do we know that we know? How is knowledge produced? Is it derived solely from reason or from sense-experience? How is it best formulated and communicated and can anyone be a knower? Methodology, in contrast, is the conceptual framework and principles through and by which a piece of knowledge is constructed; it is a theorisation – and hence a justification – of the methods and procedures used to arrive at valid knowledge.

A feminist praxis, the last of the three relationships, is not just an action in the world for this would render the concept of feminism and all the other concepts that have a direct relationship with it as meaningless, insofar as everything we do in the world would be a praxis. It involves some form of conversion of thought into action, or at least the construction of a particular thought or set of thoughts in such a way that certain actions inevitably flow from it and other actions are set aside. As with all thoughts or thinking, this praxis is embedded in histories, archaeologies, and genealogies of that thought or concept[6] and what that thought or set of thoughts allows or disallows. And, of course, praxes become, or may become, settled and persistent configurations, discursive or material.

Initially, we will focus on the critique which radical feminists make of traditional epistemological conceptions of what constitutes true or valid

knowledge about the world. It is important to bear in mind that a feminist epistemology does not comprise a single way of constructing knowledge because feminism itself encompasses many perspectives and positions. Even though these perspectives and positions are important and relevant, the main emphasis will be on radical feminism, understood as the third wave movement. This should allow us to provide an account of the complex historical and cultural contexts within which knowledge is produced. Radical feminism, for example, converges with decoloniality in critiquing the epistemology bequeathed by the Enlightenment. Both offer a means of interrogating and reconfiguring the categories of thought that are usually taken for granted.

Feminism raises questions about the epistemology that underlies dominant approaches to knowledge-construction. Indeed, it could be argued that feminism's most significant contribution so far is the critical contribution it has made to the debate about epistemology by suggesting that the issues raised are not simply of a technical nature. Radical feminists have argued that we need to not only recast the way we understand the contents of knowledge but also problematise the very notion of epistemology as it has been generally understood. The argument is that unless this is done, it is impossible to understand how women and their interests have been excluded or devalued in knowledge-creation processes. Although women have been actively involved throughout the centuries in building societies, they have been marginalised when it comes to the production of knowledge about societies and social activities. Radical feminists ask, therefore, how epistemological categories are implicated in defining masculinity and femininity, how they function to define what people are, how they work to attach valuations to their skills and capacities, and how gender difference is a category of analysis around which every society is structured.

Feminist Theory

These questions about how knowledge is produced and who is involved in its production underpin every discussion about particular feminist perspectives we have. They lead to a questioning of the analytic categories which are taken for granted, in particular how these structure outlooks and dispositions and provide the criteria for evaluating social experience. Feminist theory is not a unified or homogeneous set of ideas and knowledges, but rather encompasses a variety of different perspectives and approaches. The common factor is that the development of feminist theory has always been allied to a politics of change, although each perspective and approach defines its theoretical and political focus differently.

Liberal feminism is widely represented in the contemporary Euro-American world, and has many colonial implications. Since the 1960s, the relationship

between liberalism and feminism has underpinned the equal opportunities paradigm so influential in education and social policy. The emphasis is on removing barriers to women's participation in all aspects of public life and arguing for a greater share for women in the rights, privileges and opportunities enjoyed by men. This type of feminism is founded on the emancipatory impulse of liberalism, itself a significant aspect of Enlightenment thought. Its key elements are a belief in a fixed human nature, a commitment to progress and a trust in rationality. Liberal feminism espouses an egalitarian politics, arguing that if men and women are treated equally in political, social and personal terms, then rationally their views and activities would be invested with the same degree of significance as men's. What prevents this is female subordination and oppression. This can be best understood as a problem of sexism, defined as the unwarranted differential treatment of women, which can be identified empirically and eradicated through appropriate policies and programmes.

By the 1970s, feminists were attempting to integrate their approaches into mainstream critical theories such as neo-Marxism. These feminists argued that gender inequality derives from capitalism and that men's domination over women is a by-product of capital's domination of labour. Class is regarded as the fundamental category of social structure and gender difference and inequality a secondary feature of the economic exploitation practised by the control of one class over another. The site of women's exploitation is sometimes argued to be the family, whilst the focus is on the ideological rather than the material relations of capitalism.

A number of feminists from both conservative and radical positions have united around a position that advocates the privileging of traditional feminine values. They accept the view that women are different from men and that women excel in relational and nurturing practices. If rationality is associated with the domination and control of the natural world, with all its destructive implications, women are fortunate not to be associated with it. They go on to argue that the characteristics associated with femininity such as caring, relatedness and community should, therefore, be valorised over male characteristics. In other words, they all, irrespective of emphasis, accept the rational–irrational binary and its association with masculine–feminine difference, arguing simply that the hierarchy should be reversed with a consequent privileging of all aspects of the feminine over the masculine.

By the 1980s, many feminists had become disillusioned with the political project of making women equal to men as they found mainstream discourses particularly resistant to their challenge, or incapable of being broadened to include women. These experiences of being rejected and alienated led to a growing awareness of the deep-rooted patriarchal nature of such discourses. Even if sexism was eliminated with both sexes participating fully, the patriarchal nature of structures and value systems would still ensure that men

and women were positioned unequally in terms of power, with female experience still defined as marginal and of lesser significance to male experience. Even if women were to be incorporated into a patriarchal discourse, it would be on the basis of their sameness to men, their specificity as women not being acknowledged. In other words, women had to become surrogate men. The development of a more radical feminism, therefore, was a response to the perceived limitations of other approaches, which, it was argued, were based on irresolvable contradictions from which women could not escape inferior definition and unequal positioning.

In radical feminism, the focus shifts from equal opportunities to the phallocentric nature of all systems of representation and to all the representings we make in the world; that whenever the two sexes are represented by a single model, the specificity of the feminine is always collapsed into a universal model represented in masculine terms. Theoretically, feminists have analysed how the general concepts, assumptions and categories of Western thought have been organised around hierarchies which, by association, privilege masculinity and devalue femininity. Regardless of which academic discipline radical feminists are working within, there is widespread recognition that epistemological issues do not exist in a social vacuum but rather exert a powerful influence on concepts, ideals and values. The way we make sense of the world is through broad categories and central questions to do with the nature of reality, subjectivity, knowledge-construction, morality and ethics, and political rights and responsibilities. The development of feminist theory has stimulated questions about how philosophy is implicated in defining masculinity and femininity, how it constitutes the essence of people, the values attached to their skills and capacities, and how gender difference is a central analytic category around which every society is structured.

It is now common to argue that Western thought is caught in a crisis of legitimation with decolonial theorists questioning the epistemological foundations bequeathed them from the Enlightenment. Although each has a different focus, both radical feminism and decoloniality are at one in challenging the defining characteristics of this epistemology. The key issues that they are both concerned with are similar and revolve around questions of how knowledge is defined, how it is validated, and who can legitimately be a knower. Here are some of the key epistemological assumptions that are challenged by both feminism and decoloniality. Knowledge is objective, neutral, impartial and benevolent in its effects. There is only one set of methods (scientific method) whose proper use guarantees the validity of knowledge and hence its truth. The self is autonomous, stable and unified, with an inherent capacity of rationality. This self can separate itself from emotions, interests and values, from historical and cultural contexts, and from those whom it is interacting with in order to produce valid knowledge about the lives and activities of individuals and groups. The argument is that these

taken-for-granted epistemological assumptions need to be problematised since they are not simply descriptions of what is, but are powerful means by which dominant knowledge is produced and maintained. Furthermore, problematising these assumptions exposes their internal contradictions and thus opens up opportunities for different and more varied ideas and practices to emerge.

A decolonialist would argue that instead of offering a transcendental view of the world, there is a need to recognise that there can be multiple perspectives, none of which has any necessary authority over the other, although not all need to have equal value. Decolonialists do not generally prioritise gender issues, instead they argue that it is in the very foundational structures of modernist thought, in binary oppositions such as rational–irrational, subjectivity–objectivity, nature–culture, and, above all, masculine–feminine, where women are deprivileged and regarded as inferior. Both decolonialist and radical feminists do not accept that the task is to put into effect the assumptions of an Enlightenment epistemology in their accounts of the world and their interactions in it.

All this constitutes a challenge to the powerful view that the purpose of epistemology is to discover universal truths purged of distorting historical and cultural influences. Instead the argument is that we need to recognise that all knowledge is made not discovered, produced out of an interaction between thought and action, and usually inscribed. Furthermore, in the production of knowledge it is impossible to make a neutral distinction between the objective and the subjective; and thus all knowledge is shaped by historical and cultural influences. Thus, modern science, far from offering an exclusive model of knowledge production, is actually rooted in certain specific and historically located assumptions about the way the world is – it too is contextually located.

This approach to knowledge undermines the universalistic claims of scientific knowledge (and also some versions of colonial knowledge) and brings out a further point: that knowledge is intrinsically connected with interests, values and politics. If understanding is always from a particular perspective, we need to acknowledge that our values, interests and prejudices are implicated in knowledge production. This argues for a reflexivity that takes account of our stances and locations. Since power is not exterior to knowledge or to social relations generally, but embedded within their very conditions of existence, this reflexivity allows the operation of power in our daily lives to be more readily foregrounded and critiqued. There are then convergences and commonalities between contemporary feminist thought and decoloniality. A decolonial approach is sceptical of dominant beliefs concerning truth, knowledge, power and the self, all of which are seen as aspects of the legitimating discourse of contemporary Western culture that shapes modernist thought.[7] These beliefs include: notions of the coherent unified

self; the need for knowledge to have secure foundations; the universality of reason; the transcendent nature of the scientific method; and the separation of knowledge and power.

Radical feminists have added the insight that when notions such as rationality, knowledge and the self are deconstructed, their gendered nature is revealed, so that concepts which have been taken as neutral and universal are shown in effect to be masculine. The privileging of the rational is at the heart of modernist epistemology, yet this is a form of rationality that itself privileges the masculine.[8] The claim of an empiricist/positivist epistemology that rationality, objectivity and abstraction are the only guarantees of truth is actually a specifically masculine claim. Furthermore, each of the oppositions that structures modernist thought are derivative of the most fundamental opposition of all: that of masculine–feminine, male–female. In all binaries, the male is associated with the first element, the female with the second. In each case the male element is privileged over the female and maintains its position by its capacity to define itself as a universal norm against which the subjective, the emotional, the aesthetic, the natural, and, above all, the feminine, is judged and found wanting. Through the very dualities of modernist thought,[9] women's significance is defined as inferior to the rational, objective, abstract qualities of scientific[10] method, which not only guarantees truth but also positions masculinity and man as a legitimate knower, capable of discovering truth. Once this kind of analysis is accepted, all the other common-sense stereotypes about gendered identities which feminists attempt to counter fall into perspective.

There are some interesting parallels between feminist analyses of modernist and colonialist dualities and the irresolvable disputes between empirical/analytic and interpretive approaches in social and educational research.[11] Those working in – and with – an interpretive paradigm tend not to challenge the subjective–objective binary on which empiricism rests because they believe that the strength of social and educational research and knowledge-construction is that it can be objective, but in a subjective way. Despite their efforts, however, the objectivity defined by empiricism remains the gold standard against which all other variants, including interpretive approaches, are judged. It is because this opposition is not challenged that the privileged element maintains its power of definition. Some feminists find themselves in the same dilemma. Essentialists try to exalt the virtues of female nature and related notions of community, caring, relatedness, as opposed to the male virtues of control, mastery, abstraction and rationality. But these arguments are unconvincing because they have not challenged the very opposition through which the female is defined as inferior in the first place and hence they cannot succeed in privileging the female over the male. Equal but different simply cannot succeed in a world where knowledge is constructed hierarchically. What emerges, therefore, is that if particular binaries are not

reversed and ultimately dissolved, oppressive structures of thought and knowledge will continue to exert their power.

Contemporary feminists ask that each of us practises reflexivity about the power relations assumed within any theoretical framework and engage in a deconstruction of the phallocentric models which reduce women to a necessary dependence on men. However, feminism's project cannot remain solely reactive and critical. To do so would imply an affirmation of the very positions it wishes to critique; to remain an anti-sexist project only means that feminism accepts its location within a politics and economy of sameness or equality with men where men define what constitutes the similarity and difference.

Decolonial Feminist Practices

At this point we think it appropriate to highlight some of the characteristics of feminist and decolonial approaches which have implications for knowledge in general, in that they provide a radical perspective which can guide the practice and concept of feminism. The first characteristic is that instead of being committed to notions of truth and objectivity as defined by mainstream, particularly positivist, knowledge paradigms, radical feminists argue that discourses are regimes of truth that construct the subjects and objects of research. Rather than being for or against the regimes of truth of any one mainstream knowledge paradigm, there is a need instead to pose the question of the discursive nature of these discourses, how they come to be as they are as discourses, and the criteria and assumptions that they operate with in presenting themselves as speaking the truth. This is directly relevant to the colonial devices that now operate in the modern university round the world.

A second characteristic is that feminists need to be reflexive in coming to a position on the nature of knowledge, on what knowledge is. Feminism has to accept its own status as context-specific, the product of historical and political struggles, some of which we have documented at the beginning of this chapter. It needs to own up to its points of view, specific aims, desires and political position within power relations. At the same time, it acknowledges that its interests are those of women whereas patriarchal theory fails to address its own gendered specificity and privileging, because to do so would be to undermine its own rationale.

A third characteristic is that no discourse can openly disassociate itself from a political position. The personal is always political and equally the political is always personal. Feminist theory does not claim to be objective or subjective, absolutist or relativist, but seeks to question, undermine and replace these oppositions – it argues that all theory is relational and linked with a whole range of practices. It is not a question of being neutral or indifferent to diverse experiences as so many approaches are which adopt

colonial criteria; nor is it a matter of complete licence – in language, there are constraints and limitations as to how we can understand the world. Feminists argue that we must recognise the functioning of power relations and the necessity of occupying a position that is political in both public and private spheres of life.

A fourth characteristic is an acceptance that gender divisions are fundamental categories around which all social structures are organised and meanings created. Radical feminism, in particular, rejects the 'add women and stir' approach found in many decolonial discourses. This is a recognition that human thought is based on the dominant conceptions we have all internalised about masculinity and femininity. The context for thinking about gender is to see it as a social relation rather than a set of opposite and different characteristics. In doing this, we can illuminate how our thinking becomes implicated in power/knowledge relationships, both between the sexes and within each category; in other words, how men treat other men, how women treat one another.

A fifth position is that we need to recognise the potential in all knowledge-construction for both expressing and uncovering relations of dominance, especially those which we can describe as colonial, and perhaps also in some decolonial discourses. All varieties of feminism try to show how gender relations operate in favour of male hegemony and their aim is to help effect a redistribution of power towards women. This may often imply the writing of histories or giving expression to voices and views that have been suppressed, poorly articulated or denied. Models of investigation which assume homogeneity or an economy of the same as their starting point fail to acknowledge difference and insist that women can be represented as having the same characteristics as men. However, there is also the implication that not all women have some universal experience which can be a standpoint for the building of feminist theory and practice. The category 'woman' is not unified; women's experience is differentiated through such factors as class, ethnicity, race, religion and many others. This means that we need to be sensitive to this diversity of female experience and to the power relations which are present among women.

A sixth position is the need to deconstruct opposites and reconstruct them as continuities. Instead of simply accepting that thought must be structured through oppositions which separate and exclude, a feminist position would argue for oppositions being more properly regarded as continuities and for discourses to be created that avoid dualities, essences and hierarchies. The dualisms of masculinist thought need to be displaced by a fluidity that transforms categories which have positioned women as inferior or lacking. In any discussion of the equality versus difference debate, we need to argue for the interdependence of oppositions, the implication being that we should not see equality and difference as opposites but rather that differences are the

very meaning of equality itself, and this applies as much to the coloniality/decoloniality duality as it does to the male/female dyad. Indeed, challenging the way knowledge is constructed through the notion of difference is relevant for all knowledge and knowledge-construction activities. By following this approach, women or any other oppressed group can avoid being defined as inferior or lacking in relation to the universalising categories of rationality and objectivity.

Finally, we should refuse to accept the separation of the subject and object of knowledge. In accepting a mainstream epistemological definition of objectivity, we are also accepting the notion of a knowing subject, free of personal, social, political and moral interests; in other words, an epistemological subject free of social context and uninfluenced by prior ideas and knowledge. A feminist and decolonial approach, on the contrary, recognises the inter-relationship between subjects and objects so that knowledge creation always involves an immersive process in history, context and specificity.

Feminist Knowledge

Epistemology has been defined as the study of how knowledge is constructed about the world, who constructs it, and what criteria are used to create meaning. Each of us understands our own identity through the meanings we learn to attach to gender differences; society's institutions and structures are organised around divisions of a gendered nature. Every approach to knowledge and knowledge-construction is the product of a specific combination of historical, cultural and political influences and this is as true of coloniality as it is of decoloniality. Each has a point of view that should be interrogated from a stance that assumes that no perspective produces disinterested knowledge and each represents particular positions within power relations. The aim is to multiply the criteria for what is considered to be rational and to be critical of norms which are discriminatory in their assumptions.

The organisation of knowledge into discrete disciplines is a vexatious issue that feminist knowledge-constructors and decolonialists cannot avoid. Given the oppositions which structure thought and which are enshrined in the disciplines, it follows that feminists must be alert to the ways that disciplines function to deny or silence female experience. By presenting theory as universally applicable, those working within disciplines successfully disguise the specificity of their theories.[12] Feminist and decolonial approaches challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions made by disciplines about a coherent self and the representational conception of knowledge of the social world – all those representings that we do in our lifetimes, as Robert Brandom (see 2022) so frequently reminds us. We have now, through the work of Michel Foucault and others, become sensitised to the intimate connections between knowledge and power. In producing knowledge about the world,

feminists and decolonialists should refuse to defer to the self-ascribed status of disciplinary knowledge which excludes and suppresses voices and discourses different to itself.[13] It is a key aim of a feminist and decolonial approach to knowledge to blur and undermine the rigidity and boundaries of disciplinary knowledge.

Feminists and decolonialists challenge the notion that the objectivity of knowledge and knowledge(ing) requires a separation of knower and known and that reality cannot be a mediated and apperceptive affair. This presupposes a certain kind of coherent unified self which feminists reject. Instead of accepting this rigid separation feminists argue that objectivity and subjectivity are continuities. The most important thing is that knowledge needs to be reflexively organised – it must be capable of accounting for its own cultural prejudices and disciplinary allegiances and how these are implicated in the choices made at all the stages of the knowledge-generating process. A feminist approach emphasises inter-subjectivity in this process, a shared or collective response to knowledge between knower and known. This requires empathic understanding and a clear position of non-exploitation, with regards to relations of respect, openness, sharing of information, joint involvement in the commentary and evaluation of other peoples' lives. Clearly, they are not without ambiguity, but if the task is to represent as much of the full complexity of social life as possible, we need to form decolonial relationships that allow for the expression of what is most significant in the lifeworld. Another influential praxical and decolonial movement concerns gay rights.

Notes

1 See, for example, 'What Is Third-Wave Feminism? A New Directions Essay' by R. Claire Snyder, *Signs*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Autumn 2008), pp. 175–96.
2 Friedan, Betty, *The Feminine Mystique*, New York: Norton, 1963.
3 See Freeman, J. (1969) *The Bitch Manifesto*. Retrieved from the Digital Public Library of America, https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/r3hm5j. (Accessed November 4, 2024).
4 Phyllis Schlafly, a conservative activist, commentator, and author, led a successful campaign against the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment in the 1970s.
5 Michel Foucault (Foucault, M. (1979) [1976] *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*, London: Allen Lane), in his later work, positioned the notion of desire as operating in particular arrangements in society.
6 See Foucault, M. (1980a) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, edited by Colin Gordon and translated by C. Gordon, L. Marshall, J. Mepham and K. Soper, New York: Pantheon Books.
7 Although, as we have seen in Chapter 8, some decolonialists, such as Marie Battiste, want to still argue for a unitary onto-epistemology and that colonial versions should be replaced, in a totalising sense, by collegial, ecological and natural ones. We certainly have a great deal of sympathy for this position.

8 But not, of course, men in general.
9 And these are perhaps defining features of colonial thought.
10 The word 'scientific' is sometimes given an added significance by being inscribed with a capital first letter. This is not how it will be treated in this book.
11 Which all three of us are engaged in.
12 An example of this type of knowledge domain is the self-styled body of knowers, who operate under a banner of social realism (see Young, M. (2005) *Bringing Knowledge Back in: From Social Constructivism To Social Realism In The Sociology Of Education*, London and New York: Routledge).
13 This is never more so that with the construction and enactment of subject didactics.

10 The Gay Rights Movement
Decoloniality and Universality

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning and intersex (LGBTQI+) people in Uganda face legal, taxonomic and social impediments in their lives. Same-sex sexual activity is illegal in this previously British colony. This type of sexual activity was originally criminalised under British colonial laws, when Uganda became a British protectorate in 1894, and these laws have been retained since the country was granted its independence in 1962.[1] Since independence anti-gay colonial rhetoric and efforts to introduce harsher discriminatory laws have gained momentum, resulting in the Anti-Homosexuality Act (2023), which prescribes up to twenty years in prison for the promotion of homosexuality, life imprisonment for homosexual acts, and the death penalty for aggravated homosexuality (this was later changed to life imprisonment). Within this broad definition were serial homosexual offences, sexual intercourse with a person not consenting or unable to consent or younger than 18, same-sex rape, sex in a position of authority or procured by intimidation, sex with persons older than 75, sex with the disabled and mentally ill, and homosexual acts committed by a person with a previous conviction of homosexuality. And further to this, the promotion of homosexuality in whatever form was now punishable by imprisonment for up to 20 years. The Act came into force in 2023 and superceded a previous homophobic statute, which had been declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court of Uganda on technical grounds.

On 29 September 2005, the president of Uganda signed a constitutional amendment prohibiting same-sex marriage. The social norms surrounding sexuality, gender, marriage and even biological sex were being reformulated by legislation and presidential fiat, in an increasingly hostile climate for the LGBTQI+ community. Simon Lokodo, the minister for Ethics and Integrity, described homosexuality as being akin to bestiality, and that it was introduced to the country by White settlers and is un-African. The Anglican archbishop, Stanley Ntagali, in 2020 argued that 'homosexual practice is incompatible with scripture', thus giving a biblical justification for the enforcement of these social norms and the suppression of LGBTQI+ activity.[2]

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Male same-sex activity was commonplace and largely seen as unremarkable in precolonial Ugandan society,[3] and this seemingly contradicts the popular view that homosexuality is un-African or Western or non-African-centric or alien to Africa. Furthermore, the promotion of LGBTQI+ rights was viewed as a form of neo-colonialism, as the imposition of external cultural values on Africa. Male homosexual relations were accepted and tolerated in precolonial Ugandan society. The Baganda and Luganda peoples, who made up the vast majority of the population in precolonial Uganda, did not regard same-sex acts with any form of disapproval. Among the Lango people, individuals who engaged in homosexual relations were believed to belong to a third gender, in addition to male and female. Homosexuality was also accepted as normal among the Teso, Bahima, Banyoro and Karamojong peoples. All of this changed with the arrival of the British colonialists and the creation of the Protectorate of Uganda.[4]

In Britain, the colonising country, as recently as 1988, the Conservative government at this time passed the Local Government Act,[5] which, in part, forbade local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales from intentionally promoting homosexuality or publishing material with the intention of promoting homosexuality, or 'promoting the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship'. This part of the Act is sometimes referred to as Clause 28 (or as Section 2A in the case of the Scottish legislation). It caused many organisations and LGBTQI+ support groups to either close down, restrict their activities, or delimit their contribution to society. In addition, Clause 28 and Section 2A had a widespread impact on schools across the United Kingdom, in part because of the uncertainty surrounding the legitimacy of promoting homosexuality. Both Clause 28 and Section 2A were subsequently repealed by the New Labour government which came to power in 1997.

Homosexuality

Ideas influence human practices, which means that both ideas and practices have histories. The contemporary division of heterosexual and homosexual terms made no sense to the ancient Greeks, although there were regional variations on understandings of sexuality. Same-sex relations, for example, were celebrated in some parts of Greece, whereas in parts of Ionia they were prohibited. Physiological differences between the sexes were considered to be of less importance than beauty in either of the sexes. What was regarded as important was whether the person exercised moderation in their sexual dealings. In addition, status had a gendered and aged dimension so that a freeman having sex with a woman or a boy was considered to be acceptable, but sexual relations between freemen were more problematic. The most important distinction was not physiological, but the taking of active or

penetrative roles as against passive or penetrated ones. The latter roles were only appropriate for social inferiors, such as women, slaves and male youths.

The early period of the ancient Roman Republic had similar attitudes towards sexuality. With the formation of the Empire, attitudes began to change, even before Christianity became influential. There are few criticisms of same-sex relations in the gospels; however, early Christian Church fathers spoke out strongly against such relationships. Generally, the expression of sexuality and, therefore, of same-sex sexuality was not considered to be sinful. With a greater emphasis placed on marriage (understood as between two people differentiated by their reproductive capabilities) by such renowned scholars as St Augustine, same-sex relations were prohibited and, indeed, in some parts of the now Christian world attracted horrific punishments. For example, in Emperor Justinian's code of 529 AD, persons who were caught engaging in homosexual sex were executed, although different provisions applied to those who repented. This rise in intolerance towards certain types of sexual behaviour, i.e. same-sex relations and sex outside of marriage, had important regional variations. As the Roman Empire weakened, to be replaced by a number of disparate barbarian kingdoms, a general tolerance towards both of these prevailed; and, indeed, there were few legal prohibitions in Europe against homosexuality right up until the middle of the 13th century. All of this changed with the onset of the Gregorian reform movement in the Catholic Church, which argued for licensing natural kinds of sexuality and, therefore, for prohibiting unnatural kinds, such as homosexuality, extramarital sex and non-procreative sex within marriage.[6]

This appeal to natural law[7] became a defining feature of the spread of ideas concerning sexuality over the next six hundred years and is only now beginning to be played out. However, we should be careful about these distinctions in the early and late medieval periods, because, for example, a sodomite was understood in a different way from our modern conception of the notion of being a homosexual or even, in some circumstances, a heterosexual married person. It was not so much being a certain sexual type but engaging in acts of a same-sex nature that was of concern. And, in addition, if the person repented, then they could be excused punishments that were reserved for sodomites. Gender again is not significant here.

Despite the risk of severe punishment, homosexual cultures flourished in many European cities in the 19th century. In addition, there were significant reductions in legal penalties for sodomy (not just homosexuality), with the Napoleonic Code decriminalising it. However, there were moves, supported by new frameworks of ideas, to reinforce strong boundaries between the sexes, and this, in turn, meant that same-sex relations between people of roughly the same age became – or at least were becoming – the norm. Scientific accounts of sexuality at this time led to views of sexuality as biologically given or innate to the person. Medieval views that, for example,

sodomy was freely chosen by the individual were giving way to ideas of the passive homosexual, and that, as a consequence, it became possible to portray homosexuality as defective or even pathological, with all the authority that the medical model could muster. In the twentieth century, sexual roles were transformed. Premarital intercourse became an acceptable norm, as did the association of sex with pleasure, in opposition to some sections of the Catholic Church, which still understood sex as exclusively procreational. Gay sex became increasingly celebrated. The American Psychiatric Association in 2013 removed homosexuality from its list of deviant sexual acts, and legal equality for gays and lesbians became permanent features of European and North American life.[8]

In addition, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, queer/questioning and intersex (LGBTQI+) identities were being recognised and accepted. What is distinctive about these moves is, firstly, the fluid nature of gender and sexuality (although resisted by many who position themselves at the extremes of the political spectrum), with people moving between different sexual identities over time. Secondly, and perhaps paradoxically, newer forms of sexual identity were being created, and for some these became well-defined markers of identity and lifestyle. Thirdly, it should be noted, because this has consequences for public policy, that many of these new forms of sexual identity were deliberately crafted as oppositional and transgressive. For example, the recent revival and use of the word 'queer' denotes an oppositional stance in the politics of sexuality. Sexuality is different from other forms of difference because it is essentially and fundamentally embodied, although learnt in the first place. This has a number of implications: firstly, this means that it may be learnt without any conscious decision being made by the person concerned; secondly, it persists over a long period of time; and thirdly, the actual desires are powerful and generally resistant to change.

Here is a list of distinct and normalising sexualities, inevitably framed by time and space: heterosexuality, where the sexual attraction is between members of the opposite sex; homosexuality, where the sexual attraction is between members of the same sex; bisexuality, where the sexual attraction is both to the opposite and same sexes; asexuality, where there is a lack of sexual interest in others; polysexuality is a sexual attraction to more than one gender, but this is different from bisexuality as the latter implies that there are only two sexes; pansexuality is a sexual attraction towards other people regardless of gender, where gender is thought of as insignificant in determining whether they are – or are not – sexually attracted to other people; and transsexuality is where a person identifies themselves with a gendered position that is different from their own biological one, and this has profound implications for their sense of sexuality. A different list would include paraphilic desires such as towards non-human objects, the suffering or humiliation of oneself or one's partner, children, and non-consenting persons.

Indeed, one source has listed as many as 549 different paraphilic behaviours.[9] What this illustrates is that these different lists are valorised; that is, they have values embedded within them. In this case these values comprise notions of deviance, coloniality, difference and normalisation.

The Gay Rights Movement

Beginning in the mid-20th century, an increasing number of gay organisations were formed across Europe. The *Cultuur en Ontspannings Centrum* (Culture and Recreation Center), or *COC*, was founded in 1946 in Amsterdam. In the United States the first major male organisation, founded in 1950–1 by Harry Hay in Los Angeles, was the *Mattachine Society*, while the *Daughters of Bilitis*, founded in 1955 by Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin in San Francisco, was a leading group for women. In addition, the United States saw the publication of a national gay periodical, *One*, which in 1958 won a US Supreme Court ruling that enabled it to be mailed through the US Postal Service. In Britain in 1957 a commission chaired by Sir John Wolfenden issued a ground-breaking report recommending that private homosexual liaisons between consenting adults be removed from the domain of criminal law; a decade later, the recommendation was implemented by Parliament in the Sexual Offences Act.

The gay rights movement was beginning to win victories for legal reform, particularly in Western Europe, but perhaps the single defining event of gay activism occurred in the United States. In the early morning hours of 28 June 1969, the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in New York City's Greenwich Village, was raided by the police. Nearly 400 people joined a riot that lasted 45 minutes and resumed on succeeding nights. This came to be commemorated annually in June with Gay Pride celebrations, not only in American cities but also in several other countries (Gay Pride is held at other times of the year in some countries).

In the 1970s and 1980s, gay organisations proliferated, particularly in the United States and Europe, and spread to other parts of the globe, although their relative size, strength, and success, and toleration by authorities, varied significantly. Groups such as the *Human Rights Campaign*, the *National Gay and Lesbian Task Force*, and *ACT UP* (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) in the United States, and *Stonewall* and *Outrage!* in the United Kingdom, along with several dozen similar organisations in Continental Europe and elsewhere, began agitating for legal and social reforms. In addition, the transnational *International Lesbian and Gay Association* was founded in Coventry, UK in 1978. The movement for gay rights, using some very clever strategies, continued to attract attention in countries round the world.

The issues and concerns of gay rights groups have varied since the 1970s in time and place; different national organisations have promoted policies

specifically tailored to their country's cultural arrangements. For example, whereas in some countries, particularly in Scandinavia, sodomy statutes never existed or were struck down relatively early, in other countries the situation was more complex. In the United States, with its strong federal tradition, the battle for the repeal of sodomy laws initially was fought at the state level. In 1986, the US Supreme Court upheld Georgia's sodomy law in *Bowers* v. *Hardwick*; 17 years later, however, in *Lawrence* v. *Texas*, the Court reversed itself, effectively overturning sodomy laws in Texas and 12 other states.

Other issues and concerns for the gay rights movement in the US since the 1970s included: combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic and promoting disease prevention and funding for research; lobbying government for non-discriminatory policies in employment, housing, and other aspects of life; ending the ban on military service for gay and lesbian individuals; expanding hate crime legislation to include protections for gay people, including transgender individuals; and securing marriage rights for same-sex couples.

Sexuality and Gender

Taking a non-binary position is a re-classification of gender and not of biological sex, such as male, female and inter-sex. Nor is it about sexuality, for example, lesbian, asexual, queer/questioning, autosexual, intersexual, gay, bisexual and other types of sexual identity. The category of non-binary is also sometimes known as genderqueer, agender, bigender and genderfluid. Gender, then, is a social category that is learnt rather than given, and consequently has an ethical component. The problem with these three sets of categories, sex, sexuality and gender, is that they are frequently conflated with each other, both linguistically (for example, male is used both as a biological category and as a gendered category) and semantically (for example, lesbians are always female in both a biological and a gendered sense). Gender, then, has as its primary meaning and use those social, psychological, cultural and behavioural characteristics that we attach in a fluid sense to sex differences. Gendered differences are fluid, dynamic, powerful and contested.

A colonial endorsement of monogamous sexual relations, clear and essentialist boundaries between different genders, proscriptions of bodily transformations, traditional marriage structures and normal sexualities[10] refers to the bipolarity of descriptions and dispositions, that is, an object-descriptor is defined in terms of another object-descriptor of which it is the mirror opposite. As a result, certain words, phrases, descriptors and concepts are understood in bipolar terms, which determines how they can be used as a resource for understanding the world. Non-binary identities have been recognised by many cultures and societies round the world and historically. Some non-binary people choose to undergo medical procedures to align

their bodies with their chosen gendered identity. While some transgender people are non-binary, some transgender people have a gendered identity that is male or female or intersex. Issues of gender identity cause many people pain and suffering and the reasons for this might be that gender is understood as being central to identity constructions and exclusionary practices, that sex, gender and sexuality are frequently conflated, and that gendered differences are an important aspect of a conservative and reactionary political agenda.

Categories, divisions and binaries can have a supersessional form. There are three types: simple supersessions, sequencing supersessions, and hierarchical supersessions. In the first case, a category gives way to another category, where this is demonstrably superior to the original category in some or every way – it has superior qualities. These states of affairs may be material (although most categories are exclusively discursive and exclusionary) and can refer to different types of categories in the world (discursive, material, relational, configurational and person-oriented). With sequencing supersessions, a category is part of a sequence of other categories, so that each part of this sequence is superior to the one directly below it in the sequence because it has superior qualities. There is no requirement for it to be of a particular length as a sequence. With hierarchical supersessions, a category is part of a sequence of events that culminates in an end state that is complete, insofar as it cannot lead to a higher state of being. This form, therefore, suggests that all the other events are inferior or incomplete for a variety of reasons. The key, then, to understanding categories and concepts lies with the types of relations that exist between objects, object-relations, object-configurations and persons in their formation and reformation, and as they play out or have played out in antecedent, contemporaneous and applied semantic settings. Categories and category constructions have taxonomic, ethical, social, colonising, psychological, cultural and behavioural characteristics.

Heritability

Here is an account, a set of ideas, of genetic influences in society. A number of claims about human sexuality are made by the neurobiological community – a colonial form of accounting. The first of these is that the brains of some people seem to be wired towards some sexual orientation rather than others – a differentiation and innatist claim. Further to this, there is a neurological basis for this claim, in that specific genes have been shown to generate cellular properties associated with sexuality. There are three accepted means (although disputed by decolonialists amongst others) for determining cellular difference in people: brain imaging, genetic association studies and a combination of transcriptomics, and cellular neuroscience. In addition, neurobiologists commit themselves to an atomistic

framing for their understandings of the world. This commitment incorporates a physicalist view of consciousness, a belief that consciousness and individual thought is an illusion, a non-intentional view of change, a reductionist methodology, and a causal relationship to other levels of explanation or other frames[11] – all characteristics that would fit within the corpus of coloniality.

There are perhaps three ways that we can understand the relationship between genetic capacity and the influence of the environment in the life-world. The first of these is a neurobiological account in which all the significant characteristics of a human being, including their sexuality, are derived from their inherited capacities, the unique DNA pattern that all of us have. What this means is that our dispositional character, our physical characteristics, our sexuality, our thought patterns, are inherited from our biological antecedents. This is a determinist, reductionist and physicalist view of the relationship between nature and nurture, or heritability and environmental influences.

An alternative view of these relations might be called epigenetic. Epigenetics is an account of how human behaviours and changes to the environment can affect the way heritability or individual genetic arrangements work. Genetic changes are irreversible, whereas epigenetic changes are potentially reversible. The reason for this is that epigenetic changes are only concerned with how a person's body reads a DNA sequence, whereas an individual's genetic make-up, with the exception of radical surgical transformations, persists over the lifetime of the individual. Epigenetics, then, is the study of how cells control genetic activity without changing the DNA sequence. Epi- means *on* or *above* in ancient Greek and epigenetic refers to those factors which are beyond the genetic code. The question still remains as to which aspects of the human condition are influenced by the epigenetic relationship between a person's genetic make-up and those environments within which they position themselves. Examples of these non-genetic factors are sexuality, intelligent activity, volitions, utterances and ethical behaviours.

The third position that can be taken with regards to genetic heritability is a learning perspective, where learning is understood in epistemological terms as one of three sites of knowledge: the world and its contents; the mediating arena between the contents of the world and objects in the mind where learning takes place; and the contents of the mind that allow us to make judgements about the world and reflect on what we have perceived. What this means is that most human traits, behaviours, actions, attributes, characteristics and properties are not genetic or epigenetic in orientation and substance. For example, there is no such thing as a sexuality gene – we are homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual, asexual, polysexual, pansexual or transexual or a combination of these and can move between them,

even if with the greatest difficulty. Sexuality is a learnt and formative characteristic.[12]

These processes also contain plurisemantics, disputes, contestations and different interpretations of what is real in the world. They can also be said to influence, or have influence over, the formation and reformation of the person. Because the agential process – the agent or person acting in and on the world – is apperceptive and staged, the sensory input in the apperception process goes through a number of phases: world-to-mind (perceptual relations), initial sensory formation as a thought (neuronal relations), thought-through-language (linguistic transformation), language-into-thought (conceptual integration), thought-on-thought (reflexive integration), and manifestation of the thought in action (praxis) or reflection (contemplation) (see Scott, 2025). These world-to-mind and mind-to-world relations are also implicated in the adoption and use of various colonial ethical frameworks, acquired through the apperceptive process.

Colonial Sexualities

The French philosopher Michel Foucault created a taxonomy of ethical forms,[13] one of which referred to sexuality.[14] Confessing to sexual misconduct had long been an important part of the practice of religious confession, and while the Christian doctrine of the 17th and 18th centuries meant that these confessions were allowed to be less explicit, the range of what could be confessed became much wider. People were no longer just interested in confessing sexual deeds, but were also interested in confessing desires, thoughts, dreams, anything that could be associated with sex.

Thinking and writing about sex also extended far beyond the realm of the religious confessional. Sex became something to be studied rationally, to be analysed and classified and understood as a statistical phenomenon. In the 18th century, people began to study demographics as a means of regulating the population. The sex lives of citizens became an important object of public scrutiny, as statistics regarding birth rates, fertility rates, illegitimate births, and so on became important for public use. Foucault argued that sexuality in the 19th century was, in its essentials, repressive. Consequently, sex was treated as a private matter, which was rarely talked about except in an excessively prurient way, and was generally confined to marital relations. Sex outside these parameters was repressed, and may even have been prohibited. Here, there was an attempt to prevent sex outside marriage, and also to make it unthinkable, to reconfigure it so that it was not talked about as a wholesome pleasure. This repressive hypothesis also suggests that there were particular outlets of confession, where sexual feelings could be safely assuaged, such as in prostitution and psychiatry. The 20th century was no different. Tighter controls were being placed on how people could talk and

write about sex. In other words, there were efforts made to control sex at the level of language, which were generally unsuccessful.

While discourses on sex had previously dealt solely with marriage – what one was allowed to do and what one was prohibited from doing – they came increasingly to focus on those who fell outside the category of marriage: children, homosexuals, the mentally ill, and so on. A distinction was created between legal violations of marriage bonds and natural violations, with the latter being seen as sick or demented. Since the 18th century, efforts have been made to identify, characterise, and classify non-marital sexual practices and sexual perversions. There are three ways this played out. The first of these takes us beyond the notion of repression with regards to studying child-sexuality, with the result that strong and impermeable boundaries were established between adult-sexuality and child-sexuality. Children are excluded from the realm of sexuality, with an attempt being made to desexualise them; however, this had the perverse consequence that, instead of restricting and limiting the discourse about sexuality, it had the effect of extending it to a number of different areas, such as gendered relations, legal prohibitions, and the like.

The second element is identity formation, with, for example, the modern concept of homosexuality now going much deeper and becoming a fundamental part of a person's identity. Homosexual relations before the 19th century was quite simply understood as criminal acts, and nothing more. Over time, homosexuality ceased being just a behaviour or an action, and was now understood, existentially, as the base or core of the person. This meant that the sexuality of the person became the key to interpreting what that person was. Rather than striving to eliminate homosexual acts, the growing discourse surrounding homosexuality saw these acts as central to and constitutive of a person's identity.

This confessional act was seen as therapeutic – the third element. In the 20th century, psychiatrists and psychoanalysts tried to turn the intimate confession of the person being investigated into a scientific discourse, or, as Foucault called it, a confessional science of sex. He suggested that this amalgamation of confession and science worked in five ways. The first of these is through the adoption of specific methods, such as therapy, free association and even hypnosis; and these were designed to regulate the process of extracting a confession. Secondly, by widening the purview of sexuality and understanding it as a possible cause of a variety of different behaviours, a more precise and exact form of confession was formulated. Thirdly, sexuality was understood as latent and concealed, which demanded the invention of methods that would bring it to the surface. Fourthly, the psychoanalytical process now embraced a notion of confessional dialogue between the investigator and the person being investigated. And, finally, perceiving confession as therapeutic gave it the ambience of a medical procedure.

Here the tradition of the confessional is being combined with a scientific discourse and this contributed to our colonial notion of sexuality. Consequently, sexuality is not properly understood if all we do is treat it as a repressive mechanism, although this is clearly an important part of a colonial discourse. What we need to do is understand it as a socially constructed form of power relations. Our modern concept of sexuality serves as a network that joins together physical sensations and pleasure, the formation of specialised knowledge, the development of a colonial discourse, and political forms of resistance in the fields of ethics and the law. In the next chapter we discuss the issue of race and decolonial discourses and practices associated with it.

Notes

1 See Han, Enze (3 May 2018) *British Colonialism and the Criminalization of Homosexuality*, London: Routledge.
2 See Rao, Rahul (2020) *Out of Time: The Queer Politics of Postcoloniality*, New York: Oxford University Press.
3 Uganda Documentary on Gay Love in Pre-colonial Africa, ILGA, 8 June 2012.
4 While under British control, Uganda was never designated a colony. It was a protectorate, a territory over which British governors exercised political and economic control more through indigenous proxies than through direct governance.
5 Local Government Act, 1988, UK Government.
6 The source of these remarks is Boswell, J. (1980) *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
7 Natural law is a term much favoured by colonial jurists, who argue that human beings have certain natural rights and protections.
8 American Psychiatric Association, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th ed., American Psychiatric Press, Washington, DC, USA: 2013.
9 See Aggrawal, A. (2008) *Appendix 1, Forensic and Medico-legal Aspects of Sexual Crimes and Unusual Sexual Practices*, CRC Press: 369–82.
10 As we have seen in the case of Uganda.
11 Here are some specific frames or framings that might enable us to do this: the frame of molecules and atoms, for example, neurophysiological explanations, the frame of associations between variables, the function or use-in-the-world frame, the frame of events and event(ing)s, the linguistic frame, the hermeneutic frame, the structural frame, the semantic frame, and the universal or transcendental frame.
12 What do we know about sexuality? i) There is no trace evidence or reasons to support the idea that babies have a sexual orientation; ii) there is no evidence or good reasons to support a theory of a sexuality gene; iii) there is no direct evidence or good reasons to support an epigenetic theory of sexuality, in that we can understand this as a physicalist relation between our genes and the cellular contents of our bodies, which is unidirectional – from our bodies to our minds; iv) there is plenty of evidence and plenty of good reasons to suggest that decisions we make in life can affect cellular arrangements in the body; and v) if we accept these four arguments, we are therefore compelled to accept a mind–body,

non-deterministic, non-physicalist, dualism, and sexuality would be one of the prime candidates for inclusion in this perspective. This doesn't mean, however, that every aspect of the human condition is non-deterministic, non-physicalist and not genetically or epigenetically sourced.

13 In using Foucault's work extensively in this chapter, this in no sense commits us to understanding his texts and all his work as fundamentally correct or as foundational.

14 See Foucault, M. (1979) [1976] *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*, London: Allen Lane; Foucault, M. (1992) [1984] *The History of Sexuality Volume 2: The Use of Pleasure*, London: Penguin Books; Foucault, M. (1990) [1984] *The History of Sexuality Volume 3: The Care of the Self*, London: Penguin Books; Foucault, M. (2021) [2021] *The History of Sexuality Volume 4: Confessions of the Flesh*, London: Penguin Books.

11 Anti-Racist Strategies and Pedagogies
Taxonomic Decolonisation

Apperception, resulting in a set of moral, sensory, epistemic and conceptual norms, has a number of stages, which characterise most but not all world-to-mind and mind-to-world processes. The sensory input in the apperception process goes through a number of phases: world-to-mind (perceptual relations), initial sensory formation as a thought (neuronal relations), thought-through-language (linguistic transformation), language-into-thought (conceptual integration), thought-on-thought (reflexive integration) and manifestation of that thought in action (contemplation or praxis). In mind-to-world processes, in general terms, the reverse happens. However, different types of apperceptive processes (ethical, valorising, empirical, visual, aural, reflective and more) are sequenced differently. Of the many examples of colonial epistemologies that we could have looked at, perhaps the most important is race and racial classification.

At the perceptual stage, in the act of perceiving something, there is a received valuation of the object, whether it is a race, an act of racial discrimination, or a racial category. One way of justifying this received valuation is to argue that it is natural, or is a part of the natural order of things, or that it is transcendentally justified. For example, there was a family of views in the late 18th century that understood the natural as an inner source of motivation and action. It is possible to place these under the collective term of expressive romanticism, although we should be careful about placing all its many iterations under one single banner or label. Each of these iterations has some elements in common.[1] In contrast to the classical emphasis on form, tradition and harmony, some romanticists argued for the expression of feeling and imagination in the construction of knowledge.[2] There are two consequences of this. The first is expressive in a fundamental sense, so that we can talk about the nurturing of an inner voice. The second is entering into a particular relation to nature, one of conservation, respect and care for it. In this sense, nature means more than just the environment but also extends its meaning into what is considered natural. Consequently, some racial practices[3] were considered to be natural or given. This is a naturalistic

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ethic in which our behaviours, intentions and thoughts are aligned with a natural norm. This is also a form of legitimation in that human beings now had a clear way of distinguishing between those activities which are natural and those which are abnormal, and consequently those activities which they should own and those activities which they should disown.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau[4] subscribed to a form of naturalism with regards to learning, with the natural process of the development of the child being commended and the unnatural or cultural view of education being an imposition, an unjustified and almost certainly injurious intervention, with damaging consequences for the life of the child. For Rousseau, our access to the natural is, first and foremost, inwards-looking and internal. It is also the harbinger of a notion of fulfilling our potential, an idea which was transposed in various forms into a harsh and unyielding expression of innate and racial differences between people. This process[5] reached its apotheosis in the revival of eugenics in the last part of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century, and also, of course, in the Holocaust in Europe in the middle of the last century. These racist theories persist to this day.

Racial classification is an example of the boundaries we develop between people, objects and concepts. There are many ways of describing and redescribing the world and, thus, of dividing it up into objects, object-relations and object-configurations. And what this means is that, firstly, all of these kinds are constructed human activities in history and have colonial implications; secondly, these kinds of object are brought to life by human beings living with each other in physical, social, discursive or epistemic communities; and thirdly, if those kinds can be formed, then they can also be reformed. Processes of classifying and reclassifying change the nature of objects, object-relations and object-configurations. All references to the world involve the identification, manipulation, transformation and reconstruction of the categories, and we cannot avoid this. The scientific method, with its claims for the possibility of positional objectivity, that concepts can be reduced to measurable constructs, and that we should adopt a representational ontology, is negligent of these.[6]

Categories, orderings and boundaries between objects, object-relations and object-configurations are central elements in any social theory, and especially in a philosophy of dispositional or conceptual realism. An argument in favour of differences between natural and social kinds is that social kinds depend on our attitudes towards them, whereas natural kinds do not. Attitude-dependent kinds are called by Searle (1995) institutional kinds,[7] although this does not and cannot differentiate between discursive, material, relational, configurational and person-oriented kinds, with institutional kinds usually being thought of as configurational (discursive or material). Another argument is that natural kinds are non-conceptually based, whereas social kinds are concept-dependent. A third argument is that natural kinds

are enframed in physicalist meta-theories, whereas social kinds are enframed by intentionality, reasons and reason-giving strategies.

The most important issue is the existence, status and nature of social, and, in particular, learnt entities, using this last term to point to objects which are different from other objects. We can perhaps concentrate on three category-types: social facts (for example, the fact or fact(ing)[8] of racial distributions); social kinds (for example, the existence of racially discrete groupings); and social groups (for example, Black school or university communities). There is a view that social facts are only credible by virtue of a sense of collective intentionality or minded actions involving a number of people. What this suggests is that binary categories, such as Black/White, are not natural or definitive divisions, but constructed categorisations (formed and reformed by human beings in society) which allow certain types of political, economic and social arrangements, that we find in many colonial discourses. An extreme version of this argument is that there are no meaningful natural divisions or differences between social objects – similarities and differences between objects can only be attributed to the functioning of the relevant concepts and not to any natural processes. Any activity in and about the world is dependent on a human being or human beings acting in the world, and this applies as much to concept-development as it does to other worldly practices.

Racial naturalism signifies – and is an example of – old biological and essentialist views of race, in which races or divisions of people have heritable, biological features; these are shared only by members of the group and are used to explain behavioural, characterological, and cultural predispositions of people who belong to that group. Very few people, and then only those who place themselves at the extreme end of the political spectrum, believe in these biological and essentialist race theories. They are imagined forms of social identity. Racial constructivism is an argument for suggesting that even if biological race theory is false, races and racial divisions exist because they have some form of credibility in particular societies, and that credibility is supported by the racial categorisations used by governments in censuses and the like – these being prominent in colonial discourses and colonial forms of expression.

The concept of race has been used to signify a division of people into different groups. (This is only one way it can be used.) Under this conception, racial divisions are said to have some type of biological foundation, and this generates discrete racial groupings, so that members of each group share a set of biological characteristics that are not shared by members of other groups. These characteristics are inherited from other members of the same racial grouping; and it, therefore, becomes possible to identify the geographical origin of each race. These inherited characteristics are usually thought of as physical phenotypes, such as colour of hair, skin colour, eye shape

and bone structure; however, and this is where it becomes much more complicated and divisive, sometimes these characteristics are used to refer to behavioural phenotypes such as intelligence or criminality. For example, in 1735 Carl Linnaeus divided human beings, Homo Sapiens, into four distinct groupings – Europaeus, Asiaticus, Americanus and Afer – and associated each of them with a different humour or personality type, sanguine, melancholic, choleric and phlegmatic, respectively (see Anderson, 2009, for an account of this).[9] Indeed, he described the first of these groupings as 'active, acute and adventurous', and the last of these as 'crafty, lazy and careless'. A belief in the concept of race as it is understood and defined here leads to certain social and political practices that discriminate against particular people, and, in addition, to the formation and reformation of racial categories, and subsequently to the development of social, colonising, cultural and pedagogical practices associated with them.

In North America and, as we have seen in Chapter 6, in many other parts of the world, racial classifications emerged as forms of social division, predicated on the idea that these were natural differences between types of human beings. This discursive configuration consisted of a systematic and institutionalised set of beliefs and attitudes, that can be characterised in the following way. All the peoples of the world can be divided into biologically distinct populations called races, and each person only belongs to one race. Phenotypical features, or visible physical differences, are markers of racial identity and status. Each race has distinct qualities of temperament, intelligence, morality and disposition, and they are naturally unequal in esteem and rank. The attributes or characteristics of each race are inherited and innate, and therefore fixed and unalterable. Consequently, it was argued, distinct races should be segregated and allowed to develop their own institutions, communities and lifestyles, but only so long as they did not interfere in the institutions, communities and lifestyles of other races. Given how fundamental these beliefs are, how they have penetrated to the core of most human beings in the world, it is hard to see how these colonial beliefs can be reformed or decolonised.

Anti-racist Strategies

A note is in order here about the languaged concept of race. As with all concepts, to understand and use a concept in a book about a group of people's experiences in the lifeworld is also to position it within antecedent, contemporaneous and applied networks of meaning. This means that we are not using the concept in essentialist, de-theorised or positivistic ways. We are acknowledging that language and language systems are value-impregnated to their core, and we are using the term to suggest that there are several different interpretations of the Black–White dyad. We are also restricting

ourselves in the main to the terms, Black and White, and this does not signify an attempt to use a concept in a non-normative or positivistic way – a concept without any sense of value attached to it – since a Black person is not linguistically a White person. We are using these terms, because they are used in the world and can be used in the world without irony, contempt, mockery or reproach, even though they can be and are used in derogatory ways by many people. The issue about language that this raises has come up time and time again in this book and is of some significance.

In the first instance, we want to focus on racism and its converse, anti-racism, as concepts and as practices, and their historical, archaeological and genealogical connections and relations – this includes past and present-past[10] occurrences. We need to consider how these three types of event-methodologies, which refer to events in the past and in the present-past, can be distinguished from each other. Historical, archaeological and genealogical methodologies are framed by time, although these core categories are construed differently in each of them. An anti-racist concept, framework, discourse, learning arrangement or pedagogy can be framed as: liberal anti-racist, multiculturalist, critical and intersectional anti-racist, de-naturalist, as a part of a critical race theory, and as an attempt at decategorising racism. These discursive object-configurations are, and can be, conceptualised in different ways. The key, then, to understanding what they are lies with the types of relations that exist between objects, object-relations, object-configurations and persons in their formation and reformation.

An important binary that has had real effects in the space of learning and the space of ethics – the areas of life that are fully focused on learning and ethics – is the Black–White binary, an oppositional coupling of two word-objects, and this implies a relationship between these two descriptive terms, both of which can be problematised. In addition, the strength, type and probative force of this relationship is central to the ethicality of the discourse that we choose to adopt. We therefore need to examine, in the first instance, its characteristics. We hardly need to give an account here of how Black people have been treated with contempt, disparagement and cruelty in the history of the world, because there are many of these accounts already there and because our account would not do full justice to this history. This has implications for how epistemic differences are constructed to conceptualise Black and White people, how these key categories function to define the nature of people, and how they work to attach different valuations to their dispositions and capacities. The anti-racist strategies and configurations that we discuss below are not histories, archaeologies or genealogies. They are models of what these praxical formations might be, and they consist of discursive objects, sets of discursive objects, configurations of discursive objects, and discursive and material arrangements of people, predominantly connected by logical relations.

The first model that we need to consider is liberal anti-racism. The emphasis here is on removing barriers to Black people's participation in public life and proponents argue for a more equal share for Black people in the rights, privileges and opportunities enjoyed by White people. This rendition of anti-racism is founded on the emancipatory impulse of liberalism. Its key elements are a belief in an essential human nature, a commitment to progress and a trust in an abstracted form of rationality. There are two possible iterations of liberal anti-racism, the first of which is what some people have called egalitarian-liberal anti-racism. This discourse is understood as a set of inalienable rights, freedom as the ability and capability to live a life of their own choosing, and a sense of political autonomy, where Black people are the co-authors of the structural conditions of their lives. Black people's needs and interests currently are insufficiently reflected in the arrangements of material and discursive resources in society, and, consequently, these arrangements lack credibility. Egalitarian-liberal anti-racists believe that the State, or the government which represents the State, should be reformed to allow these personal and structural freedoms to be realised. They follow classical liberal notions of freedom, exemplified in the writings of John Stuart Mill (2015). A second form of liberal anti-racism has been called equity anti-racism, which understands the State as the primary source of Black people's oppression. They therefore seek to abolish or limit government, and this includes those laws in which governments have granted special privileges to Black people.

Multiculturalism and the practices associated with it are underpinned by the view that cultures, races and ethnicities deserve a special acknowledgement (in the political, economic and social domains) of their differences in society. That acknowledgment comprises a recognition of their contributions to the cultural life of the political community as a whole, and it may also involve a demand for special protection under the law for certain cultural groups – identity politics, then, becomes an important part of these actions. Multiculturalism is both a response to cultural pluralism and a way of compensating cultural groups for past exclusions, discriminations and oppressions. Multiculturalists seek to be inclusive of minority ethnicities and at the same time they reject calls for their complete assimilation into the dominant culture. Some more radical multicultural theorists have claimed that minority cultural groups need more than recognition to ensure the integrity and maintenance of their distinct identities and contributions.

An alternative anti-racist perspective is an attempt to integrate these approaches into mainstream critical theories such as Marxism, structuralism and post-structuralism. Anti-racists of this persuasion argue that racial inequality derives from capitalist economic and social relations and that White men's domination over Black men is a by-product of capital's domination of labour. This form of oppression is structural and resistance to it

can take an intersectional form. The purpose of intersectionality is to develop a single framework for analysing power that encompasses sexism, colonisation, racism, class oppression, heterosexism, and other axes of oppression, as they play out in history and society.

A different anti-racist perspective is that there are indeed significant differences between Black and White people, culturally, epistemically, ethically, dispositionally, and that Black values are virtuous in their own right, with a call for these values to be valorised over existing dominant values. Anti-racists of this persuasion accept the view that Black people are different from White people. They then go on to argue that the characteristics associated with Black people (i.e. warmth, conviviality, decoloniality and commitment to other people) should be favoured over those associated with White people (i.e. coloniality, rationality, objectivity and disinterestedness). Anti-racists of this persuasion are operating with and through a notion of essentialism, and an essentialism defined in relation to homeland divisions, skin colour divisions, geographical divisions, primordialist divisions, self-identifications, and non-White divisions, arguing simply that it should be reversed with a consequent privileging of all aspects of the Black person over the White person.

Critical Race Theory is a discursive construction, intellectual and social movement, based on the premise that race is not a natural, biologically-grounded feature of a physically distinct subgroup of human beings, but is, as we have suggested, a socially constructed and epistemically invalid category that is used in the world to oppress and exploit people of Colour. In Chapter 6, we saw that these categories are institutionalised in most societies round the world and how they are made to work. Critical Race Theorists were and are opposed to liberal anti-racist beliefs and practices because of their emphasis on equitable treatment under the law for all races, and this colour-blindness rendered it incapable of recognising those racist practices which were indirect, subtle or systemic.[11]

Richard Delgado (2012) suggests that there are six basic components of a Critical Race Theory. First, race is socially constructed, not biologically natural. This biogenetic notion of race – the idea that the human beings can be divided into distinct groups on the basis of inherited physical and behavioural differences – has been thoroughly discredited. There is now a general agreement that the notion of race is a social construction (although there is no consensus regarding what exactly a social construction is or what the process of social construction consists of). Some Critical Race Theorists argue that race is an artificial association or correlation between a set of physical characteristics – including skin colour, certain facial features, and hair texture – and an imagined set of psychological and behavioural tendencies, with subsequent valorisations and values attached to these beliefs. These associations have been created and maintained by dominant groups in

colonial ways to justify the oppression and exploitation of other groups on the basis of the latter's supposed inferiority, immorality, or incapacity for self-rule.

The second characteristic of Critical Race Theory is that racism is normal, not aberrational – it is the ordinary experience of most Black people. Although extreme racist attitudes and beliefs are less common than they were before, and explicit racist laws and legal practices have been largely eliminated, most Black people continue to be routinely discriminated against or otherwise unfairly treated, both publicly and privately. Many instances of racist behaviour directed at Black people take the form of micro-aggressions, which are verbal or behavioural slights, generally subtle and often unintentional or unconscious, that communicate a stereotypical or negative attitude towards a Black person and thus indicate an implicit bias based on race.

The third characteristic of Delgado's Critical Race Theory is what he called *interest convergence* or *material determinism*. Any apparent legal or otherwise improvement in the lives of Black people is, at some level, motivated by fulfilling an interest of a dominant White group. The racial hierarchy that characterises most societies may be unaffected, or even strengthened, by ostensible improvements in the legal status of oppressed or exploited people. A fourth characteristic is that members of minority groups are subject to negative stereotypes, and attributions. Such stereotypes are often reflected in popular culture (for example, in films and television) and literature, as well as in the news media, and they have even influenced the content of curricula in schools. For example, Black people were widely depicted as simple-minded, childlike, servants and labourers who were content in their subordination to (and segregation from) White people. Black people (and especially Black men) came to be viewed as prone to violence or as lazy, living off social welfare programmes, paid for by hardworking White people.

Delgado further suggested that in line with a notion of intersectionality or anti-essentialism, no individual can be adequately identified by membership of a single group. A Black person, for example, may also identify as a woman, a lesbian, a feminist, a Christian and so on. The final characteristic of a Critical Race Theory is that people of colour are uniquely qualified to speak on behalf of other members of their group (or groups) regarding the forms and effects of racism. This consensus has led to the growth of a storytelling movement, which argues that the self-expressed views of victims of racism and other forms of oppression provide essential insights into the nature of that oppression.

Radical anti-racists shift the focus from equal opportunities, the liberal panacea, to the racialised and divisive nature of all systems of representation: that the general concepts, assumptions and categories of thought have been organised around hierarchies, which, by association, privilege sexism,

colonisation, racism, class oppression, heterosexism, and other axes of oppression. Regardless of which academic discipline or framework radical anti-racists are working within, there is a widespread recognition that ethical and epistemological issues do not exist in a vacuum but rather exert a significant influence on concepts, ideals and values. The way we make sense of the world is through broad categories and answers to questions to do with the nature of reality, the mind, subjectivity, knowledge and knowledge-construction, objectivity, morality and ethics.

There are other directions that anti-racists have taken. The first of these is political in a proactive sense. All action and thought can be construed as political or value-embedded, so that anti-racism is understood as a means by which Black people are given equal status in important and powerful positions in society, in the boardroom, in the legislature, in the judiciary, in the armed forces, as top earners, and in the media. The argument that this will change politics, business, the enforcement of the law, media opinion and the like to a more consensual, fairer, democratic, and softer form of governing relations in society has been abandoned, with the impulse now towards a general balance of colour, ethnicity, and majority/minority groupings. The result is that existing structures and institutions in society are left relatively unscathed.

Another direction that the anti-racism movement has been exploring is category subversion between Black and White people, between Caucasians and Negroid peoples, and between those of different ethnic origin. This involves a direct challenge to the idea of natural differences between these categories and, in a more fundamental sense, to the whole idea of difference.[12] Crude versions of these different relations are hegemonic in modern societies. Difference can be understood in several ways. There is the common use given to the term, where difference is understood as not being or as being opposite to something else. Then there is the meaning given to the term by Jacques Derrida (1982). Words, concepts and signs only have meaning within other arrangements of words, signs and concepts, so that what should concern us is the process that distinguishes social elements from other social elements, and consequently engenders binary oppositions, such as Black/White, and endlessly narrativised hierarchies of order, as in government statistics and UK census categories.

All these varieties of anti-racism show how race relations operate in favour of White and colonial domination, and their fundamental purpose is to help effect a redistribution of power towards Black and ethnic minority groups. However, the category of *Black* is not understood in the same way by everyone, and nor is the category of *Coloured*. This means that we need to be sensitive to this diversity of experience and to the power relations that are present among different ethnic groupings.

Anti-racist Pedagogies

A concept, such as pedagogy, is both a material and discursive object and consequently has all the characteristics that we have come to associate with these types of objects. In the real world, boundaries are drawn between objects. As a discursive object, the concept of pedagogy can be understood as being polysemic, semantically contested, networked, interactive and dynamic. In addition, as an object it has causal powers, both as a conceptual object and also because it is in the world, or at least in a world.[13] The concept of pedagogy then can, in part, be understood by and through the trace-objects that constitute its past; these trace-objects are, however, only fragments of the meanings that people gave to the notion.[14] A conception of *Bildung* has as its central concern a notion of learning and, therefore, ineluctably a notion of pedagogy. These two object-relations, connecting *Bildung* and learning and *Bildung* and pedagogy, operate discursively, and are binding relationships, in that it is impossible to think about a *Bildung* or construct a *Bildungstheorie* without at the same time incorporating some notion of learning and some notion of pedagogy.

There are many different views as to what a pedagogy might be and how broad it is as a concept, with three overarching theories in existence.[15] The first is a model[16] of pedagogy that can be developed from the idea that knowledge is transposed from many different locations and time-points, and that it emanates from outside the learner. It is the means by which knowledge evolves in the world and is transposed from location to location and from one time-moment to another. The second is a functional model of pedagogy that is understood as a carrier of something, such as identity, social positioning or concept-acquisition.[17] A third approach is that pedagogy is a mechanism (using this word without its mechanical and deterministic elements) or apparatus, and has properties including causal powers that operate in the churn of other objects (discursive, material, relational, configurational and, perhaps more importantly, human). Pedagogy, then, as a concept and as a praxis, can be understood in several different ways, and in a *Bildungstheorie* as the means by which we develop as human beings.[18]

This *Bildungstheorie* has several forms: negating, absenting, progressing, intensifying, extending, unfolding, articulating and realising. Negating is a process of semantic realignment. As such, it connects an expression of an object, object-relation, object-configuration or person to another expression of these objects with a meaning that is opposed to the meaning of the original expression. Absenting is both something which is not there and an active process of making something absent with the intention of bringing it back into the fold.[19] Progression, in one of its many pedagogic forms, can be thought of as intensification. Whereas extension refers to the amount or range of progression, intensification (or complexity) refers to the extent to

which a sophisticated understanding of a concept or a praxis has replaced a superficial account or activity. There is also a type of progression, abstracting, which involves moving from a concrete understanding of a phenomenon to a more abstract one.[20] A pedagogic response to this type of progression is to revisit and reconstruct a set of ideas or operations at different levels of complexity at different stages in the learning programme or different moments in the life course (see Bruner, 1996).[21]

The idea of progression can be understood as a process where the result is already present at the first moment and is openly revealed at the second moment. This model of the unfolding of the enfolded understands learning not so much as learning something that is external to the learner, but as the realisation of an implicit potential that human beings have. This is a pedagogy of completion or realisation. A notion of progression is implicit in an increased capacity to articulate, explain or amplify an idea or construct. The learner retains the ability to deploy the skill, and, in addition, she can now articulate, explain, or amplify what she is able to do and what she has done. If we want to articulate an experience, there are several conditions: knowledge of the object; knowledge of the process; and knowledge of how the object and the process can work. These iterations of progression are all pedagogic forms and learning approaches.

Etymologies and Antecedents

We can examine the etymology of the word, *pedagogy*, or at least what other people have thought is its etymology, whilst also at the same time accepting that an etymology is not the same as how the concept was used in the past, both discursively and in a material sense. Its common late-16th-century meaning, 'the science of teaching', was derived from the medieval French word, *pédagogie*, which, in turn, was derived from the Latin word, *paedagogia*, and from the Greek word, *paidagōgia*, which roughly can be translated as 'education, attendance on boys' (giving us a marked gendered description of the word). The word, *pedagoge*, was first used in the 14th century to refer to 'a schoolmaster, teacher of children', and versions of it can be found in the old French, *pedagoge*, meaning, 'teacher of children', which, in turn, is derived from the Latin word, *paedagogus*, and the Greek word, *paidagōgos*, meaning 'slave who escorts boys to school and generally supervises them' (see *Online Etymology Dictionary*). Later, a new meaning seems to have been attached to the word, 'a teacher or trainer of boys', from the word, *pais*, meaning child, and *agōgos*, meaning leader, and *agein*, meaning to lead – to drive, draw out or forth, move. In the 17th century, the word acquired a new meaning: 'a dogmatic and narrow teacher'.[22]

The word, *pedagogy*, then, has continued to change its meaning and, consequently, how it can be used, so that it now reflects a different set of

commitments than it did before. These are etymological derivations and not exclusively conceptual derivations. In ancient Greek society, a distinction was made between the activities of teachers or pedagogues (*paidagögus*) and subject teachers (*didåskalos*). A pedagogue, and consequently a pedagogic activity, became divorced from the idea of a subject teacher and from a notion of didactics or learning a subject or subjects. Immanuel Kant (1992a), for example, writing in the latter part of the 18th century, distinguished between the nurturing of the child and formal instruction; the point being that pedagogy was at this time understood as more than just instruction. Kant further distinguished between the two in so far as he suggested that instruction is a training for school and guidance is a training for life.[23] The distinction between education and training had not yet taken on its modern meaning (see back to Chapter 7). The instructional element in pedagogy had earlier been introduced, at least in an informal way, by John Comenius (2012) in his book, *The Great Didactic* (*Didactica Magna*).[24] This new meaning of didactics suggested that the point of life was to develop as a rational, self-regulated and devout human being. It gradually morphologised into a notion of subject didactics.[25]

Another way of framing the concept is through determining what counts as a pedagogic activity. The curricular emphasis is now on instrumentality and examinability as criteria for certain types of knowledge being included in a curriculum and others being excluded. Indeed, the concept of pedagogy is now understood as exclusively didactic, with this borrowed idea more in line with how pedagogy is used as a concept in Europe. Didactics has acquired a more instrumental function. A praxis of critical pedagogy, in contrast, is designed to produce habits of thought that underpin and go deeper than our everyday thinking. Paulo Freire (1970) argued for an educational approach which encouraged learners to think critically about their education by making connections between their own individual problems in life and the social context or indexicality[26] of their lives. This emancipatory pedagogy is a praxis in which the learner engages in a cycle of developing theory, applying that theory, evaluating the results, reflecting on them and then theorising anew. Social transformation is the purpose and intention of this praxis at the collective level.

An Anti-racist and Decolonised Pedagogy

There are perhaps six elements of a decolonised and anti-racist pedagogy: a regular and repeated reflection on the Eurocentric assumptions of curricularised knowledge, knowing and coming to know; the adoption of critical learning approaches, so that the learning pedagogy fits the object or objective being taught; the assessment or evaluation of any anti-racist programme of learning cannot be divisive, summative or punitive, but should reflect the

principles of holism, contextualisation, dialogism and care; the contents of the learning programme requires the use of materials that reflect the scholarship, research and first-hand experiences of minoritised groups, especially those groups constructed round the concept of race; high-impact learning activities should be given priority; and learners need to engage with material (texts, contexts, intertexts, subtexts) in real-world settings.

These learning objects or objectives have dispositional elements, and, consequently, learning about the activity of slavery is in the first instance a process of understanding how it is enframed in a complicated network of concepts and what things are, for example. Stanley Cavell (1979: 177) described this enframing in the following way: 'In learning language, you do not merely learn the pronunciation of sounds, and their grammatical orders, but the "forms of life" which make those sounds the words they are, do what they do – e.g. name, call, point, express a wish or affection, indicate a choice or an aversion, etc.' Grammar, then, is a semantic idea;[27] in trying to understand the grammar of a collection of pedagogic processes and learning objects that are relevant to our decolonial purposes, we are always looking at what is meant by them and their arrangements. Grammar is not understood in terms of its linguistic reference, but rather in terms of how it can show meaning.

A learner learns by using their imagination and being allowed to use their imagination. The reason for this is to develop and extend their ability to determine the possibilities of objects, object-configurations and minds, and this includes an argument that learning is about developing the imaginative possibilities of how a concept, such as anti-racism, can be used in a way of life. This supports the notion of learning as being about dispositional concepts and acquiring these dispositional concepts as they are used in the world and as they fit within a framework or network of other dispositional concepts. This is achieved by determining the possibilities of use and being that inhere in these objects (conceptual or otherwise), even if only for a brief period of time. In the next chapter, we examine indigenous ways of knowing and coming to know (furthering our understanding of the decolonial pedagogic dimension).

Notes

1 Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblances comes from the two books that, we think, best encapsulate his mature thinking: Wittgenstein, L. (1953) *Philosophical Investigations*, translated by G.E.M. Anscombe, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing; Wittgenstein, L. (1969) *On Certainty*, New York: Harper and Row.

2 The romantic elevation of aesthetic feeling and the creative imagination did not mean that they abandoned reason altogether. Friedrich Schlegel, for example, opened his *Lectures on Transcendental Philosophy* by arguing that philosophy is 'a striving towards a knowledge…of the whole person' (see Stone, A. (2005)

'Friedrich Schlegel, Romanticism, and the Re-enchantment of Nature', *Inquiry*, 48: 3–25).

3 What is a racial practice? The answer to this question must be that a practice can be considered to be racial if, and only if, it refers to race in essentialist terms, is justified by a concept of racial difference between people, or dehistoricises the whole concept of racial distinction.

4 There are some fundamental difficulties with the educational philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (see Rousseau, J.-J. (1979) *Émile, ou De l'éducation*, translated by Allan Bloom, New York: Basic Books).

5 Eugenics was a perfectly respectable doctrine in late Victorian and early Edwardian society with Francis Galton from the university, University College London, that two of us work in, one of its most prominent advocates. James Watson, one of the discoverers of the DNA sequence, more recently argued along eugenicist and racist lines.

6 Sir Francis Galton (1822–1911) is best known for his research into heredity and race, but also worked in the fields of statistics and meteorology. Galton is regarded as the father of the now-discredited discipline of eugenics.

7 In his book, *The Construction of Social Reality* (Searle, J. (1995) *The Construction of Social Reality*, London and New York: Free Press, Simon Schuster), John Searle suggests that many institutional categories are coextensive with what I have been describing here as social categories. For Searle, natural entities are associated with social entities and properties through status functions. A status function specifies the relationship between a social entity (a status) and a natural entity. Furthermore, statuses are only real because they have been collectively endorsed by a community.

8 The word 'facting', a derivation from a fact, is being used here to indicate an activity where a person gives credence to a truth-carrying proposition by referring to it as natural and therefore beyond dispute or discussion.

9 Anderson, M. (2009) *Carl Linnaeus: Father of Classification (Great Minds of Science)*, New Jersey: Enslow Publishers.

10 We are using the term present-past to affirm the Heideggerian idea that the present is always the past even if for a brief millisecond it didn't refer to what has already happened.

11 Donald Trump, the 47th President of the United States of America, is set to ban critical race pedagogies from US schools.

12 Difference as a concept, then, is both multi-perspectival and contested.

13 Pedagogy, then, can be understood as a concept in the traditional propositional sense, and, in addition, as a practice.

14 It can be only partly understood because there are two other dimensions of meaning: the antecedents of the concept and how it fits in a vast network of other concepts in the world.

15 Alternative views of the concept of pedagogy inevitably technicise the notion.

16 We are using the term *model* here to suggest a set of objects with logical relations between them and projectable capacities.

17 Basil Bernstein (Bernstein, B. (2002) 'From Pedagogies to Knowledges', in A. Morais, I. Neves, B. Davies, and H. Daniels (eds.) *Towards a Sociology of Pedagogy: The Contribution of Basil Bernstein to Research*, New York: Peter Lang Publishing) suggested that pedagogy was the means through which the accumulated knowledge of a society could be produced, distributed and allocated, then transposed into an institutional form, and finally changed into a set of criterial standards.

18 Maxine Greene (Greene, M. (2007) *Imagination and Becoming*, New York: Bronx Charter School of Arts: 102), for example, talked about its meaning-making qualities: 'Each one's life-history, in fact, is a history of emergencies and transformations. Consciousness arises, writes Merleau-Ponty [1945], in the realisation that "I am able", meaning the realization that one can reach beyond what is immediate, make horizons explicit and transcend what is a field of presences towards other future fields. What were once perplexing shapes and fragments on the fringes of the perceptual field are thematized, transmuted into symbolic forms. Naming occurs; interpretations occur; meanings are built up; intersubjective relations entered into; gradually, the embodied consciousness constitutes a world.'
19 See Bhaskar, R. (2010) [1987] *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation*, London: Routledge.
20 Abstracting in this sense has been superseded semantically by a notion of abstracting as a summary of an argument.
21 A spiral curriculum, a concept widely attributed to Jerome Bruner (1996), refers to a type of curriculum in which key concepts are taught throughout the curriculum, but with deepening layers of complexity, or in different applications.
22 A fuller account of these etymologies can be found in Scott, D. (2021) *On Learning: A General Theory of Objects and Object-Relations*, London: UCL Press.
23 In *On Pedagogy – Über Pädagogik* (Kant, I. (1992a: 1) *On Pedagogy — Über Pädagogik*, in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*, edited by P. Guyer and A. Wood, 1992–2026, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), Immanuel Kant suggested the following: 'Man is the only being who needs education. For by education we must understand nurture (the tending and feeding of the child), discipline (*Zucht*), and teaching, together with culture. According to this, man is in succession infant (requiring nursing), child (requiring discipline), and scholar (requiring teaching).'
24 *The Great Didactic* (*Didactica Magna*) (Comenius, J. (2012 [1633–1638]) *Didactica Magna*, London: Akal) was first published in Czech in 1648, Latin in 1657 and English in 1896.
25 Much more needs to be said about this move. We will restrict our remarks here to the observation that subject didactics cannot carry or have attached to it any universal meanings because by virtue of what it is epistemologies, knowledge classifications and meanings reside in each subject or discipline or construct.
26 Indexicality is the phenomenon of a sign pointing to (or indexing) some object in the context in which it occurs and in relation to a taxonomy of objects.
27 A view endorsed by Ludwig Wittgenstein (Wittgenstein, L. (1953) *Philosophical Investigations*, translated by G.E.M. Anscombe, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing) in the Philosophical Investigations.

12 Indigenous and Colonial Knowledge

Marie Battiste and James (Sa'ke'j) Youngblood Henderson (2000, location 309–317, Kindle Edition) have suggested that indigenous ways of knowing can be expressed in the following terms:

> From the beginning, the forces of the ecologies in which we live have taught Indigenous peoples a proper kinship order and have taught us how to have nourishing relationships with our ecosystems. The ecologies in which we live are more to us than settings or places; they are more than homelands or promised homelands. These homelands do not surround Indigenous peoples; we are an integral part of them, and we inherently belong to them. The ecologies are alive with the enduring processes of creation itself. As Indigenous peoples, we invest the ecologies with deep respect, and from them we unfold our structure of Indigenous life and thought.

And further to this, they suggested that:

> ecological insight creates a vision of the animate "natural" world. It informs our communion with the land, our wisdom, and the various dimensions of our faith and our hopes. Indigenous order, consciousness, and heritage are shaped and sustained by ecological forces and by the relationship of their changing forms. Ecologies are not static or general; they are places of eternal and often violent change. Indigenous orders are not singular modes of existence but are manifested in different ways. We carry the mysteries of our ecologies and their diversity in our oral traditions, in our ceremonies, and in our art; we unite these mysteries in the structure of our languages and our ways of knowing. The forces and aspects of our ecologies are manifest in our stories, which are to us what water is to plants.

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Marie Battiste (adapted from Battiste, 2013) identified a set of criteria for determining what indigenous knowledge is, with this indigenous knowledge designed to apply to all indigenous knowers in the world, even if they are separated in time and place.

1 Knowledge of unseen powers in the ecosystem
2 Knowledge that all things in the ecosystem are interdependent
3 Knowledge that reality is conceptualised by concepts that are well-known to participants in the indigenous practice
4 Knowledge that personal inter-relationships are central to personal, community and ecosystem practices
5 Knowledge that sacred traditions and persons should have as their primary function initiation to the next generation, i.e., the preservation of specialised forms of knowledge
6 Knowledge that the infrastructure of families passes on this specialised knowledge.

Battiste (2011: xvii) also made some explicit connections between indigeneity and colonisation:

> Through our sharing, listening, feeling, and analysing, we engaged in a critique of the trauma of colonization. We examined the frameworks of meaning behind it, we acknowledged the destructiveness that it authorized, and we imagined a postcolonial society that embraced and honoured our diversity. We shared many sides of a box that we came to know more fully. We came to see colonization as a system of oppression rather than as personal or local prejudice. We came to understand that it is the systematic nature of colonization that creates cognitive imperialism, our cognitive prisons.

This is a characterisation of indigenous knowledge.[1] It offers a universal perspective on knowledge; however, we should be clear that this is only one perspective, there are many others. The implication is also that this form of knowledge has been damaged by the imposition of colonial forms of knowledge, and that the decoloniality process will restore this type of knowledge to those people concerned.

Battiste's indigenous knowledge, then, has a number of characteristics. An indigenous worldview suggests that knowledge and knowers or learners are intimately connected, in contrast to many scientific or colonial forms of this relationship. What this amounts to is a rejection of a hard distinction between the world and mind or minds and the acceptance that knowledge has this active and experiential element. It is also a rejection of reflexive elements in

mind-to-world and world-to-mind relations and of notions of individual agency. In addition, indigenous approaches to living are strongly place-based, rather than being, as in Western scientistic[2] discourses, word-based. Objects in the world have set meanings attached to them, which have to be venerated and preserved. With and in these indigenous apperceptive processes, the purpose of life is not to be critical or transgressive but to be open to the natural world and to attune our senses, body and spirit to what is considered to be timeless and given (see Cajete, 2000). The land is tied inextricably to the construction of identity, both in a personal sense and in a collective sense, in contrast to the common Eurocentric and colonial notion of land as a commodity. Indigenous sciences or knowledge-gatherings are ways of knowing and being about indigenous sacred traditions. They are context-based and experiential, in contrast to many Western and colonial scientific traditions. In addition, indigenous sciences and knowledge-gathering processes are framed by understandings of networks or nexuses or connections being there to be discovered by people as part of larger cosmic webs. Everything in the world is composed of interrelationships between people and other people, people and material and discursive objects in the world, *and* by people and relational objects. Learning in a pedagogical sense is, therefore, conducted through intimate relationships between a knower and what has to be learnt and usually only when the knower or learner is ready to receive it.

It should be emphasised here that there are many different versions of indigenous knowledge, although some versions have a greater currency in eurocentric and colonial discourses than others. These others might emphasise the way indigenous knowledge is simply an adaptation to the environment and habitus, and this inevitably means that there are a variety of indigenous knowledges round the world, or they might reflect the historical contingency of a people's history, such as adaptations to external threats. What these variations show is a different emphasis being given to the four forms that knowledge can take, which we referred to in Chapter 1: knowledge of how to do something (process forms of knowledge); knowledge of something (judging that claim in terms of its relations within and to a network of concepts, and making the subsequent commitments that this entails); conceptual knowledge (interacting with the world in a specific way); and embodied forms of knowledge (assimilating an action and being able to perform in the spaces associated with that action), although this in itself positions indigenous knowledge in colonial discourses. And this, in turn, suggests that we should try to avoid using stark and opposing dualities, such as coloniality and decoloniality, and treat concept-dualising as a form of knowledge in particular discourses and contexts. An example of this dissolution or partial reconceptualisation can be seen in the discussion of colonial and decolonial medicine below.

Colonial and Decolonial Medicine

Western medicine is firmly grounded in science. It is science that gives allopathic doctors the authority to speak on physiology, diseases and treatments of disease. There are many different systems of health and illness – the biomedical model is only one of these. Biomedicine uses the language of science that divides the body into different systems using anatomical categorisations – the muscular, the cardiovascular, the lymphatic, and so on. In indigenous forms of medicine, a person is seen as more than the sum of all these different systems. In biomedicine, the domain of disease and its causes is restricted to biological, chemical, and physical phenomena. There is an emphasis on laboratory research and technology, and a discounting of medical practices that cannot be validated by randomised clinical trials, or natural experiments. Biomedicine embraces a physicalist view of mind–body relations and is, therefore, reductionist in its approach. There are two opposing senses we can give to biology: a valuation through which life excludes (and, therefore, medicine is nothing but applied biology), and a valuation through which life includes (and, therefore, offers up an intangible vitalising spirit). The first of these senses is consistent with biomedicine; the second is typically not.

Biomedicine is also framed neurophysiologically. As we suggested in Chapter 3, there are a number of different frames or enframings: the frame of molecules and atoms, the frame of associations, the function or use-in-the-world frame, the frame of events and event(ing)s, the linguistic frame, the hermeneutic frame, the structural frame, the semantic frame, and the universal or transcendental frame.[3] This list places these frames in an order. However, this is not a straightforward hierarchical order where the atomic frame is the lowest point (has the least purchase on the medical problem that we are seeking to resolve) and the transcendental frame is the highest point (has the most purchase on the medical problem as it is defined), with other levels equally distanced between the meanings given to the first and last frames. Here different criteria are being applied to these different frames, and this complicates the description of the relations between them. However, placing biomedicine in the first of these frames, the frame of molecules and atoms, has implications for how we might understand consciousness and volitional processes.

There are a number of theories of consciousness in use and these largely divide between physicalist theories, mind–body separations and separate functioning systems. Physicalist theories vary enormously in their scope and direction. For example, some type-type identity theories deny the notion of consciousness altogether, whereas others argue that since the conscious property and the neural property are of the same type, then there is no need to explain how the one can cause the other or give rise to it. Most physicalist theories of consciousness are not of this type but aim to understand the

world in terms of some form of psycho-physicalist relation, in which the two are not identical. All of these theories come up against the existence of free will, and all of them are essentially deterministic.

Those who subscribe to dualist theories argue that some operations of the mind fall outside the realm of the physical and cause–effect–cause relations, as they are generally understood. These dualist theories mark out a clear distinction between the properties of the mind and the properties of a physical reality; and it is hard to see how any theory of consciousness could be anything other than vacuous if a purely physicalist theory is endorsed. A typical dualist position is that substances and processes in the mind cannot be directly subsumed into physical substances and processes, which means that there are significant differences between the two.[4] However, we do not have at present, and possibly ever, a language for describing states of the mind, even if we can provide good grounds for suggesting that they are different from bodily states. What this means is that we cannot provide a convincing account of what these states are and what the relation between states of the mind and physical states might be, although we can infer that differences exist between them. Consciousness under this view is more than what we already know about the mind and the brain, and more than we can ever know.

Separate functioning systems theories are dualist in essence because it is argued that there are two different systems in operation, one of them being more powerful than the other (although the use of the word, powerful, gives a greater authority to a physicalist view of the mind, the world and the relations between them, than to a form of consciousness that prioritises intention and reason-giving over a brute physical reality). The first system, then, is irreducibly physicalist, an example of which might be taking a narcotic substance, leaving a person less aware, less alert and feeling carefree, and, this is the important point, overriding the normal processes of consciousness, those of reason-giving, inferencing, and acting intentionally. The second system is concerned with volitional behaviours, meaning-making processes and semantic evaluations. Both operate in conjunction with each other; however, both of them do not operate in the same way. Consciousness is thus too complicated to explain using the methods of physicalism or neurophysiology alone. What physicalist notions of consciousness cannot do is explain in a satisfactory manner those striations and divisions (gender, race, dis-ability, intelligence, sexuality and social class, for example) that embody our social and political arrangements and what we should do about them. However what we can say about consciousness is that it is a place or space for the resolution of apperceptive and thus contemplative/praxical actions, and, in addition, a way of recollecting, to use a word much favoured by Robert Brandom (2022: 105), how things, entities, sensory objects in themselves, show up for 'consciousness (the reality behind what are now visible as appearances of it)'.

Biomedicine is not simply the area of overlap between biology and medicine. It is a framework, a set of philosophical commitments, a global institution, woven into Western culture and its power dynamics, and more. The biomedical model is so ubiquitous that it is easy to overlook how philosophically weighty (and contentious) its core commitments are: that health phenomena must be understood in terms of physical/biochemical entities and processes; that experimental techniques are the preferred means of acquiring and assessing health-related knowledge; and that human bodies are best understood as composed of a collection of subsidiary parts and processes (see Krieger, 2011). In addition, biomedicine adopts a unisemic framework for health and disease, values reductionist thinking and downplays economic, political and social concerns about its use.

Biomedicine as a global institution evolved alongside and with its associated underpinnings and framings. It only came into its own during the period of economic and social transformation in industrialised Western countries that followed the Second World War. In industrialised countries, the post-Second World War era was also characterised by important increases in public funding for medical research, the extension of health insurance to large parts of the population (a process that, in nearly all the Western countries, the United States excepted, was also supported by the State), and the rapid growth of the pharmaceutical industry (see Löwy, 2010). Many different frameworks for health existed before the rise of biomedicine; some have been influenced by, or merged with, biomedicine. For instance, osteopathic medicine has evolved from an alternative system of medicine (focusing on the manipulation of the body via pressure, stretching and other means of readjustment of bodily structure in order to rebalance internal processes), to an alternative track of medical education/practice that has, in large part, converged with the biomedical/allopathic framing of medicine.

Naturopathic medicine is grounded in a set of guiding principles that inform its holistic approach to healthcare. It recognises the body's inherent ability to heal itself. Naturopathic practitioners attempt to support the body's natural healing processes, rather than working against them. Naturopaths are committed to using non-invasive treatments that reduce, if at all possible, the risk of harm. They take an holistic approach to healthcare, which takes account of physical, mental, emotional and even spiritual aspects of a person's well-being. Rather than focusing exclusively on the symptoms of disease, naturopaths aim to identify and address the root causes of illness. Practitioners view themselves as dialogic and collaborative educators in the healing process, and they emphasise the importance of prevention of disease by the adoption of healthy lifestyle regimes that support overall wellness.

An example of an indigenous form of healing is classical Chinese medicine. This can be characterised as having a process ontology in which relations

between bodily events and processes are foundational, rather than discrete objects such as the liver. Furthermore, these relations embedded within whole frameworks are the source of disease or ill-health and therefore need to be attended to in the healing process, paying careful attention to balance and the interconnections between all the various processes. And secondly, the universe and everything in it, including human beings, constitute wholes which are different from the sum of their parts, and which in turn are interrelated with other wholes (see Lee, 2017). Traditional Chinese medicine sets great store by seeking to restore the balance between the internal body organs and the external elements of earth, fire, water, wood and metal.

The indigenous Indian medical system, also known as Ayurveda, is based on ancient writings that rely on a natural approach to physical and mental health. Ayurvedic medicine is one of the world's oldest medical approaches and remains an important part of India's healthcare system. Ayurvedic indigenous medicine takes a holistic and balance-oriented approach to the person and their health. One way this manifests in Ayurvedic practice – in contrast to biomedicine – is that the biological characteristics of two individuals might be similar, but their recommended treatments might be quite different. While biomedicine routinely offers standardised advice on what types of foods are best for someone of a given age and sex, Ayurvedic medicine rejects the assumption that such standardisation within a single age-sex grouping is appropriate. Other factors play larger roles than in biomedicine, such as bodily changes over the course of the day and internal body types, affecting, for example, how we metabolise specific foods. These two opposing systems of medicine – biomedicine or Western medicine or colonial medicine *and* decolonial indigenous forms of medicine – can coexist. A further issue is whether their underlying frameworks can be understood as having universal elements in an epistemological sense, as forms of knowledge.

Decolonial Ethics and Morality

The most important issue, then, that we have had to grapple with in this book is the question of what a decolonial morality is. What are decolonial ethicists doing when they engage in moral theorising? A number of answers to this question can be formulated. The first is that they are providing a systematic account of how we should behave in the world. These are the ways human beings in the past and in the present-past have sought to express in language (usually) those alternative decolonial sets of ethical prescriptions.

A second way of thinking about a decolonial morality, then, is in terms of dispositional learning. The argument we have been making throughout is that to understand the idea and practice of a concept, caring for example, we need to look at three nexuses or constellations of thought: the antecedents of the concept; its relations to other relevant concepts; and the way the

concept is used in the lifeworld. This guards us against using the concept of caring in essentialist, de-theorised or positivistic ways. We are acknowledging that language and language systems are valorised to their core, and we are using the term to suggest that there are several different uses of the disposition of caring, including a decolonial one.

We, therefore, need to examine this disposition, *being careful*, within our three networks of meaning, which we have called nexuses of thought. The first of these nexuses comprises the activity of genealogising. This means that caring as a disposition cannot be fully understood without due attention being paid to its genealogy, manifested in the traces of the disposition in the past and in the present-past. To care, as in the old English *carion* or *cearian*, can be understood as being anxious or solicitous, grieving or feeling concern or interest. Its derivation also extends to the Proto-Germanic, *karo*, meaning to lament, from which we can derive a notion of grief-care from the Old Saxon, *karon*, which broadly means, to lament, to care, to sorrow, to complain, and from the High German, *charon*, meaning to complain or lament. It also has connections and associations with the Gothic, *karon*, which can be translated as being anxious, and this, in turn, is said to have a Proto-Indo-European root in the word, *gar*, meaning to cry out, call or scream. The developmental sense is from cry to lamentation to grief. A different sense of evolution comes from the Dutch word, *karig*, which means scanty or frugal, and from the German, *karg*, meaning stingy or scanty. Positive senses, such as having an inclination or having a fondness for something, seem to have developed later as mirrors to some of these early negative ones. As a noun, it has similar antecedents. From the Old English *caru* or *cearu*, we can discern a sense of sorrow, anxiety, grief, burdens of mind and serious mental attention. In late Old English, it also refers to a concern or anxiety caused by the apprehension of evil or the weight of many burdens; and from the Proto-Germanic comes the word *karō*, meaning lament, grief, care (this can also be sourced from the Old Saxon, *kara*, translated as sorrow; the Old High German, *chara*, translated as wail or lament; from the Gothic, *kara*, meaning, sorrow, trouble, care; and from the German, *Karfreitag*, meaning Good Friday). These are traces of the meanings we have given to this concept in the past (see *Online Etymology Dictionary*) as it is used in an English language.

A disposition of caring is a part of a set of contemporary conceptual frameworks, composed of several discursive objects, object-relations and object configurations, such as attentiveness, beneficence, benevolence, compassion, concern, tender-heartedness, thoughtfulness, altruism, charity, generosity, help, selflessness, understanding, adoration, affection, devotion, love, and meta-concepts such as education, learning, feminism, ethics, morality, imagination, justification, edusemiotics, holism, the girl-child, play, pedagogy, creativity, inclusion, indigeneity and many more. Each of

these concepts and meta-concepts are positioned in their own networks of meaning. The third network that care as a concept and as a disposition (caring) is positioned within refers to how it is used and how it can be used as a concept and as a practice in a colonial and in a decolonial world.

We also need to provide compelling reasons for accepting and endorsing a notion of dispositional realism,[5] in that care and caring are best understood as dispositions. Things or objects in the world, whether material, dispositional, configurational, relational or human, have causal properties and thus causal powers. These are intrinsic to the nature of the object or objects. This means that these objects, networks and relations are structured and because of this they possess powers. This refers to an important element of the claim or series of claims that we have been making about caring and learning in this book and in others, which is that any coherent theory of learning or indeed of caring needs to embrace a dispositional essentialism[6] (but not an identity essentialism[7]), and, consequently, an object, whether discursive, material, relational, configurational or person-oriented, has causal properties and thus dispositional powers. If we accept this, we are committing ourselves to an approach that suggests that objects have real powers by virtue of what they are, although those powers are not always realised.[8]

Dispositions are the building blocks of a person, and indeed of any object in the world. For example, caring is a property of a person;[9] fragility and number are properties of respectively an artefact such as a glass vase and an abstraction such as a mathematical set. Dispositions, as inner states of objects, precede, condition and have some influence over actions, activities and events. Dispositions of a person, artefact or abstraction then, have a persistent quality; however, because they are time-limited, they can be modified – a person at the age of five may not have acquired the disposition of caring but develops it at some point during their life, and material and discursive objects, relations and configurations are subject to natural forms of change.[10]

There are two types of conditions for the application of a disposition. The first of these is conditions that enable or prevent the realisation of the intended disposition. An example is the human – or at least male – disposition of breeding. If there are no female human beings to breed with then his breeding disposition cannot be realised, although he still retains his disposition of fertility. The second type of condition for the application of a disposition comprises those enablements or constraints that respectively allow an object to be dispositionally active or prevent an object from exercising a dispositional capacity. If a man has a zero sperm count, this stops that man from being fertile. In the absence of the *cared-for* there can be no *one-caring* (Noddings, 1984). This distinction is of fundamental importance in that any theory of change, and decoloniality is a theory of change, whether institutional, systemic or personal, needs to take account of the nature of the

relationship between an object and its properties, and whether these properties are intrinsic or attached. If an object changes its properties, and, consequently, its powers to affect change in other objects and in the arrangement of objects in the world, it becomes a new object. However, if one or more but not all of its properties change, then we can say that we do not have a new object but only a modified one.[11]

A disposition, we are suggesting, is a functional property of a person. A property of a person is that they are, for example, caring; if they are, then that person can perform certain caring acts, although firstly those actions may not be as they were intended by the person, and secondly, may not result in what the intention suggested would happen. Dispositions have functional essences, and these are at the core of any social, discursive and physical object-ontology; indeed, the only way that dispositions can be construed is in their functional form. Being a carer, then, involves the acquisition and expression of a complicated set of abilities understood as functions of a person. Furthermore, these abilities may be fully realised, partly realised, or not realised at all.

A third way of thinking about a decolonial morality is to construe it as reasons for doing something in the world. Reasons are different from, and operate in different ways to, physical causes. There are also good and less good reasons for doing something. Robert Brandom (2000: 61) has argued that when we talk about distinguishing between good or bad reasons, or at least determining what is a better reason for doing this rather than that (this is a form of practical reasoning), we are making an inferential judgement about the specific merits of the two sets of reasons we are considering. These inferential judgements (and representings) are commitments that we make in the world and, consequently, on every occasion that we make a judgement about a good or bad reason, or a better or worse reason, we are also making a series of knowledge claims about the world, those claims being implicit in the three semantic networks or constellations within which any utterance we make, rational or otherwise, is enframed: the network of antecedent meanings, the store of current conceptual meanings, and the way concepts are used in the lifeworld.

However, transposing a reason into a commitment does not allow us to distinguish between good and bad reasons for doing something, since a commitment to anything is simply another way of saying that this is what I believe to be true. Calling these transpositionings inferential, in turn, adds very little to our understanding of how we can articulate what is in the world or say what should be there in the world. Inferential relations only have a content in relation to how they connect or attach an object to another object. We are committed, then, to the human disposition of reason-giving and justifying beliefs and actions through the giving and asking for reasons. This involves both the contents of those judgements, perceptions and notions of

the world, as well as the methodological contents of the way we can and do access the world, both empirically and meta-empirically. We also need to determine the normative dimension to these processes, and this inevitably commits us to an explication of the idea of rationality and consequently of practical reasoning. This comprises, in the first instance, examining an important element of the argument that human beings have the capacity to be rational and this involves an alignment of their intentions to a set of normative commitments. We might want to call this capacity or disposition, reason-giving.

There are several ways we can understand the idea of reason-giving. The first of these is that human consciousness is the ability to commune with reasons. Another view is that reason-giving can be understood as the way discursive activities work by searching for the best reasons for action, subconsciously or consciously. A third set of meanings that we can give to the idea of reason-giving is that it refers to the structures of thinking and acting, i.e. material and discursive objects, relational objects, configurational objects and those embodied features of the human being, such as the capacity to speak, think, believe, move, and the like. A fourth set of meanings that we can attach to it is that reason-giving is one and only one disposition of human beings that some people have acquired, in part or as a whole, and it has universal qualities only insofar as human beings have dispositions, besides other things. In addition, it has been suggested that describing human life as reason-giving or in the space of reasons is to distinguish it from deterministic, scientistic and atomistic views of the world – experience should therefore be understood as rational (the pursuit of reasons for action) rather than physicalist.

If we act rationally, the end that we are seeking may not be achieved, with the understanding that whether it is achieved or not is irrelevant to whether we have or have not acted rationally. This is because rationality can be construed and is best construed dispositionally. It has a set of qualities that allow any reasonable observer to say that this person is acting rationally. This set of qualities might include: not acting from reasons that as far as the person can see would only benefit that person and not any other person; acting from reasons that are wholly selfless; having clarity about whether the reasons the person thinks are driving their actions are indeed the prime motivators of those actions; having full knowledge of all the possible reasons there might be for acting in a particular manner with regards to a particular issue, and so on. However, in order to determine whether a person has acted in a rationally dispositional manner, we have to, in the first instance, determine a best possible set of reasons for acting in the world in a particular set of circumstances.

A reason can be an argumentative statement that attempts to explain a belief or an action, where an explanation also includes a surfacing of those

pre-texts, contexts, sub-texts and inter-texts that are there but which are only occasionally made explicit. A reason might have an evaluative sense in that it provides a justification for an action or a sequence of actions – this justification has a coherentist, logical, rational or epistemic form, or a combination of these. A third possible meaning that we can give to the term is that we have identified a state of affairs in the world, and we wish to understand what caused it. This refers to the reasons for an event or happening in the world. A reason might be used in the world to denote a capacity or attribute of a human being, as in human beings having a reason-giving capacity or dispositional concept of reason-giving, either in a communal or an individual sense. A reason might also be used to indicate a sufficient ground of explanation or of logical defence, as in a court of law. A reason might have been given the sense that it makes some event or activity in the world intelligible. A reason can also be used to mean a power of comprehending, inferring or thinking, especially in a logical and rational way, and a form of practical reasoning is that it is a general human capacity for determining what we should do. Finally, we can understand a reason as a part of the concept of rationality – a rational human belief or action is one in which a sufficient reason (or set of reasons) is provided, and this reason (or these reasons) is relevant to the belief or action.[12]

Such an argument (about reasons and reason-givings) only makes sense within a particular enframing of the object-world and in this book this is a decolonial object-world; for example, if we adopt a physicalist view of the world, with no distinction being made between mind and matter, then reasons, and separately rationalisations for those reasons, are literally irrelevant to true or apt explanations of these phenomena. They cannot play a part in the causal sequence that we might want to explain, and this includes learning activities. This would suggest that if a non-physicalist approach to volition and constraint is adopted then a notion of giving and asking for reasons as the essential characteristic of the human being is needed, and this would be in accord with a view that human beings have intentions and that these intentions are not irrelevant to any explanation we might want to make of an event or causal sequence.

A fourth sense that we can give to the notion of a decolonial morality is the sense that Michel Foucault gave to it, the ethic of care for the self. This can be understood in two ways: as a personal project and as an epistemic concept. In the first case, he understood ethics as learning in relation to a person's moral agency. Ethics, then, denotes the intentional work of a person on herself so that the person is able to act ethically in the world. This is a self-forming activity, a subjectification, which constitutes the self as a moral entity. In the second case, in contrast to those who read Foucault's work as an ethics and aesthetics of the self,[13] ethics can be understood in terms of the concept of parrhesia,[14] meaning or signifying a form of

truth-telling through which the individual, in confronting the otherness of the world, constitutes themselves as a subject of a discourse of truth. This makes it possible to separate out the concept of ethical behaviour from its private manifestation, and to reframe it as a critical disposition of learning, that is both care for the self and epistemically.

A fifth sense is to position decolonial moral norms and principles as transcendental and universal. The etymological root of transdisciplinarity is that the object under consideration is transcendent (from the 5th-century Latin word, *transcendentem*, meaning surmounting or rising above), rather than the corruption that has taken place, which positions it within those forms of knowledge, which we might want to call, generically, interdisciplinary (see *Online Etymological Dictionary*). The word-forming element, trans-, embraces a number of disparate meanings: across, beyond, through, on the other side of, going beyond. This can be traced back to the Latin word, *trans*, which, in turn, has been translated as across, over or beyond, and perhaps to its verb form, *trare*, meaning to cross. This, in turn, may have its roots in the proto-Indo-European suffix, *tra-*, or a variant, *tere*, both of which mean to cross over, to pass through or to overcome. Since we are talking here about a corruption and an evolution, and indeed about a word with multiple meanings, we can perhaps distinguish three meanings from its likely etymology. The first of these is a going beyond with the implication that it is more basic (i.e. foundational) and operates at a higher level of reality. The second of these is that transdisciplinarity is understood as the equivalence of interdisciplinarity, with the emphasis now on a bricolage or synthesis across the disciplines. The third notion is that of movement between the two, so that transdisciplinarity consists of a process of passing through or crossing over, with the implication that the knowledge developer needs to go through a process of interdisciplinarity before reaching a state of transdisciplinarity or universality. We also need to pick out from any ethical and epistemic formation those elements which we can call universal, and accept that some indigenous practices are not ethical or justifiable or as having any universal quality. An example of this last point is female genital mutilation.

Decolonial Universality

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the practice of cutting or removing the external female genitalia without medical justification or the consent of the woman or girl-child.[15] It has been illegal in the UK since the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act, passed in 1985. It was replaced by the Female Genital Mutilation Act of 2003 and was further amended by the Serious Crime Act of 2015. Most girls, who are mutilated, are cut before they reach the age of five. It can include the ritual nicking, cutting and removal of the clitoral hood and clitoral glans, the removal of the inner labia, the removal

of both labia and the closure of the vulva (though usually not all of these). The World Health Organization (2021) suggests that there are four types or processes: the partial or total removal of the clitoral glans and/or the prepuce/clitoral hood; the partial or total removal of the clitoral glans and the labia minora (the inner folds of the vulva), with or without removal of the labia majora (the outer folds of skin of the vulva); the narrowing of the vaginal opening through the creation of a covering seal, which involves the cutting and repositioning of the labia minora or labia majora, with or without the removal of the clitoral prepuce/clitoral hood and glans; and the pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterising of the female genital area, in addition to the first three of these. All of these involve pain as they are surgical operations. They are literally reconstructions of the female body.

The practice is rooted in a notion of constructed male/female difference, a going beyond what is biologically female, an attempt to control or diminish woman's sexuality, including a sense of female pleasure and desire, and is interpolated in a sexist discourse about purity, modesty, and beauty. It has some harmful side effects, including recurrent infections, difficulties with urinating, chronic pain, cyst developments, infertility, complications during childbirth, and, in some cases, fatal bleeding. Among the reasons for the practice of female genital mutilation being preserved are social acceptance and to avoid social exclusion, the need to conform to a religious authority, hygienic practices, the preservation of virginity, marriageability, and the enhancement of a certain type of male sexual pleasure. Some of these reasons are less convincing than others. Some of them are socially conformist; others are brutally misogynistic. Some of them point to hidden reasons; others are more open and legitimate. All of them incorporate a sense of value; that is, the reason itself is underpinned by a set of normative commitments.

Such practices are easy to condemn, and they cannot be defended within any of the feminist perspectives that we identified in Chapter 9 of this book. Liberal feminists, such as Martha Nussbaum,[16] focus on the perceived inequalities that such practices imply, and indeed promote, in that they are practices which reduce equal esteem, equal capability and equal functionality of men and women, and because they are physical and symbolic expressions of relations of subjugation, control, oppression, domination, and exploitation, and specific forms of master–slave relations. Nussbaum (2000a) further argues that a key concern with female genital mutilation is that in most circumstances, it is forcefully applied to children, who cannot give their consent. Coming from a universalist tradition (ethically normative), she argues that there is a significant, moral, and material distinction between social pressure and physical force, comparable to the distinction between seduction and rape. Liberal feminists want to promote an egalitarian politics in which women's views and activities are given the same status and degree

of significance as they are for men. What prevents this is female subordination and oppression, an example of which is female genital mutilation.

Structural feminists also suggest that the seeds of this oppressive practice – female genital mutilation – lie with the ideological and material relations of capitalism. Women are understood as victims of false consciousness participating in their own oppression. Feminists who accept the view that women's nature is different from men's, and consequently argue that the valorisation implicit in the male/female binary should be reversed, are appalled by these practices of female genital mutilation and the consequences of implementing them, because, rather than reversing the binary, such practices reinforce it. For radical feminists, the desexing of women and girls in this case is an example both of oppression and of a particular form of patriarchy in which women are denied sexual pleasure and the fulfilment of their sexual desires. Political forms of feminism argue for women having equal status with men in positions of power within society. Female genital mutilation is an example and celebration of difference between men and women, especially because it involves an embodied transformation, and has considerable consequences for conduct in public life. It is also an example of regressive category subversion with regards to sexuality and gender identity.

The problem with the eradication of female genital mutilation practices in the UK and round the world is that it seems to transgress the anti-colonial argument that we should not interfere in local cultural practices but respect them. Implicit within this argument is an over-extended idea of universal human rights, a characterisation of a natural human body, a failure to take account of cultural context, and an imposition of eurocentric values on other people. This last criticism goes much deeper. Some feminists argue that the eradication and elimination of these practices, even though they are forms of bodily violence against women, dehumanises and infantilises women. The principal argument that indirectly allows the practice of female genital mutilation is that there are no universals, in the form of human rights, philosophical expressions, moral stipulations or deontological ethical theories, that can be imagined or developed to justify decolonising forms of action against these practices.

Decolonial Marriage

Another example of this tension between universal and local rights and practices lies with the concepts and practices of marriage and polygamy. Polygamy is the practice of marrying multiple spouses and it is not gender-specific. Polygyny is the practice of a man marrying more than one wife at the same time; and polyandry is the practice of a woman marrying more than one husband at the same time. Different societies round the world variously encourage, accept or outlaw polygamy. Polygyny is most commonly

found in countries such as Burkina Faso, Mali, Gambia, Niger and Nigeria. Polygamy also has this sense of occurring outside of marriage and therefore refers to relationships in general. Ulrich Reichard (2003) delineated polygamy into four overlapping categories: marital polygamy (an individual is married to more than one person); social polygamy (an individual has multiple partners who share shelter, sexual relations, food and money, and live with each other); sexual polygamy (an individual has more than one sexual partner); and genetic polygamy (an individual has children who have different mothers and fathers). The concept of polygamy, then, is sometimes used to suggest a lack of sexual or reproductive exclusivity.

Monogamy in like fashion has assumed a number of different meanings. It might refer to an individual limiting their sexual activity for life to a single partner. It might also allow for pre-marital sex prior to marriage. Some monogamous communities allow an individual to move to a new monogamous relationship because of the death, divorce or dissolution of that relationship. In many historical communities, serial monogamy may have been the accepted practice rather than a lifelong monogamous bond. Polygamous and monogamous practices are variegated and sometimes accepted by the society as binding norms, both of them formalised in different ways. For example, countries which follow a conservative Catholicism have strict rules to support monogamous practices; whereas many Muslim countries, and especially those which recognise Islamic or Sharia law, allow formal polygamous relationships.

The reasons for preferring polygamous relationships, in both a formal and informal sense, are many and varied, and they coalesce into a number of broad categories: economic, taxonomic, reproductive, productive and hierarchical. James Fenske (2012) found that child mortality and ecologically-related economic shocks were associated with rates of polygamy in sub-Saharan Africa. Polygyny allows the male partner to have more children, provides them with a larger number of productive workers from the family, and enables them to establish useful ties with a larger number of other kinship groups. It may also be a consequence of levirate marriage, where the deceased man's heir inherits his assets and wife. This provides support for the widow and her children, and maintains the ties between the husband's and wife's kinship groups. Polyandry is much less prevalent than polygamy; however, it is specifically provided for in the legal codes of some countries, such as Gabon. It has been found to be most common in egalitarian societies and in societies which included fewer men (due to high rates of male mortality or migration). Monogamy and life-long monogamous relationships are of recent origin.

Marriage, whether monogamous or polygamous, is treated as a sacrament in some societies; in others, it is a purely secular affair. Most Christian societies, for instance, have rejected the concept and practice of polygamy, and

understand monogamy as the norm, even if in the past and even now some Christian groups have practiced polygamy. The Roman Catholic Church has set itself firmly against polygamy, and suggests that it is 'not in accord with the moral law' (paragraph 2387, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2000). Polygamy is contrary to conjugal love. The Quran suggests that marriage is the ideal relationship:

> And one of His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves so that you may find comfort in them. And He has placed between you compassion and mercy. Surely in this are signs for people who reflect.
>
> (Surah Ar-Rum, Quran, n.d.: 30: 21)

For the decolonial ethicist, marriage raises key concerns about the possibilities of interpersonal moral obligations and their boundaries; not to mention the question of a good human life. Secular moralists often assume that marriage morally transforms a relationship, yet contemporary philosophers have paid little attention to the question of how such a transformation could take place. The ethical issue about marriage that has the greatest urgency is whether there is some universal justification for sanctifying it, or whether it is simply a local tradition instituted for powerful and power-induced reasons, as in the control of women and women's sexuality. In both of these examples, female genital mutilation and marriage, the central issue is whether there is a universal justification for these practices, and whether in themselves they are ethical or moral or even decolonial in their use.

Transdisciplinarity

Transdisciplinarity signifies a unity of knowledge beyond the disciplines. This unity might be expressed in the form of Platonic universals (Plato, 1997),[17] a Christian Godhead[18] (cf. Van Der Meer, Battershaw and Lamb, 1961), the European Enlightenment notion of reason[19] (cf. Israel, 2001), a Hegelian notion of teleology (cf. Taylor, 1998), Martin Heidegger's (1962) phenomenological perspective,[20] Umberto Eco's (1997) conception of a perfect language,[21] Jurgen Habermas' (1981) idea of an ideal speech situation or E. O. Wilson's (1998) theory of consilience.[22] This unity implies movement from segmentation of knowledge to boundary crossing, from fragmentation to wholeness, from working alone to collaboration and cooperation, from simplicity to complexity and from detheorisation to full theorisation. In a Wittgensteinian sense, we have to be careful not to essentialise the meaning of these terms and, consequently, we should understand them as being both corrigible and semantically oriented to how they are used in the way of life we choose to belong to or to some or other way of life in another possible world.

We can take one of these, Jurgen Habermas' (1981) ideal speech situation, and examine its transcendental qualities. For Habermas, communication is a basic social need. He argued that all human communication implicitly involves the making of validity claims. A communicative transaction involves four such claims: that what is said and done is intelligible, truthful, justified and sincere. Given this, Habermas suggested that undistorted communication allows all four validity claims to be met – a situation that he referred to as the ideal speech situation.

Habermas saw the ideal speech situation as involving rational agreement reached through critical discussion, an agreement or consensus that can be distinguished from one arising from custom, faith or coercion – a critical dialogue conducted through known public criteria. Here justifications become explicit as people talk about their reasons for what they do and not just in terms of their desires. In an ideal speech situation, all participants have an understanding of the technical issues involved, in addition to having a procedural understanding of how to act appropriately and a competence to participate fully and equally. An ideal speech situation, with its absence of external and internal constraints, is characterised by openness and a commitment to deep explanation, where each participant has an equal chance of participating and, therefore, where all its validity claims can be successfully redeemed. In this way, any consensus achieved through dialogue will be based on the force of the better argument rather than the force of ideology, where this contentious idea is understood as being against an idea of a true (and thus rational) account of the world.

Indeed, the very notion of a language makes no sense without some idea of an ideal speech situation. To engage in dialogue whilst repudiating it is to contradict oneself. It follows, therefore, that the values and criteria of the ideal speech situation are universal; they are present in any language and any dialogue and are in effect context-free. However, this is not the end of the matter, for the ideal speech situation can function as a norm or regulative ideal, an idealisation of rational practice, even though most actual conditions of social interaction and communication are nothing like this. In this sense, it provides a critical measure of the inadequacies of existing forms of interaction. Thus, actual situations can be examined (an important task for researching and ultimately knowing the world) to ascertain the degree to which they deviate from an ideal speech situation, and appropriate action can be taken to bring them closer to the ideal. But, more significantly, an ideal speech situation seems to provide the ideology-free position from which ideology can itself be rationally critiqued. It is universal and transcendent, it provides public and shareable criteria for justifying and choosing, and it cannot be denied without contradicting oneself.

However, the fact that an ideal speech situation is rarely, if ever present poses other difficulties. Should we endeavour to bring it about? If ethicising,

or even our daily interactions with and in the world, our representings (see Brandom, 2022), is not to be an instrument either for the further dominance of technical-rationality or for the furtherance of human understanding and communication, then something else is needed. The ideal speech situation is the condition of possibility of language as a communicative tool. But this now suggests a further question, which is to do with what makes the ideal speech situation possible. The most plausible answer is undistorted language, because if language is distorted then the rationality that constitutes the ideal speech situation becomes distorted and in effect it becomes yet another ideology.

What is required for language to be undistorted? Such a language would have to be pure and transparent – a language free of the distorting effects of particular practices, readings and interpretations. What is being asked for here is a totally decontextualised language that can fulfil its referential function without vagueness, variation or ambiguity. It is not difficult to realise that such a view of language is highly problematic. Apart from the impossibility of finding such a language, it cannot even be posited as a norm or regulative ideal, since even if it were achievable it would actually end all communication rather than undistort it. It is precisely because language is distorted that we can communicate through it, so any realisation of an ideal speech situation, far from making for undistorted communication, would actually stop all communication in its tracks. And, therefore, we can say that the ideal speech situation as a transcendental concept is flawed. In addition, this does not (and cannot) solve some of the problems we have alluded to already, and will do so below, with transcendentalism or a monistic epistemology.

Knowledge

The issue, then, of what decolonial knowledge is, and then, of course, what decolonial ethics is, their justification, constitution and rationale, is a concern. If knowledge is understood as disciplinary-based or domain-specific, then the mode of production and justification is located within a discipline or domain of knowledge. If knowledge is understood as interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary, then its mode of production and justifying rationale is located in the spaces between different academic disciplines or knowledge domains or outside those different academic disciplines or domains altogether. What this also means is that disciplinary knowledge, discipline-derived rationales for knowledge and discipline-based epistemic practices are, in some important ways, insufficient and inadequate.

The real question we need to answer (and this is one that is frequently ignored by philosophers, ethicists, sociologists and knowledge developers alike) is: what is there in and about the world that makes interdisciplinarity

and, consequently, transdisciplinarity possible? Answering this question requires the identification of limits to interdisciplinarity as a feature of the knowledge theory, as well as the development of transdisciplinary constructs as features of it. And this, in turn, is to understand knowledge, its development, and its derivative capacity as having ontological and objectifying dimensions, and as being more than what is produced by and in the disciplines. Disciplinary knowledge, then, is always a pale reflection of deeper lying knowledge constructs.[23] Any form of knowledge and its justification and grounds for legitimacy has constructed elements; and this means that knowledge is relative to particular human environments, structured differently in place and time. For example, logical positivists such as A. J. Ayer (1936) understood the limits of true knowledge – what constitutes true knowledge and what cannot be considered as true knowledge – in a different way from Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (c. 870–950). However, underlying this and much more besides is some universal notion of what knowledge is, what constitutes true knowledge and what relations there are between the development of knowledge and what it refers to. Consequently, it is possible to suggest that almost all knowledge development requires interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary processes of one type or another. The conditions for this depend on complexity and object-dynamism, and since dynamism is an important feature of human life, all knowledge development which is concerned with human beings and their activities in the world is both interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary.

Interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity overlie and encompass disciplinary knowledge because they comprise a truthfulness and comprehensiveness that is denied to the various forms of disciplinary knowledge. If truth can be conceived in unitary terms (through the development of a unitary philosophy), then there can only be one version of truth; and, thus, there cannot be multiple truths generated from different disciplines. A solution to this problem might be to posit a hierarchy of truths, so that there are partial and whole versions of the truth. Disciplinary knowledge is frequently understood as partial, but partiality implies wholeness: it is not possible to make any sense of partiality unless it is also understood as partial to something else which is not in itself partial. What this also shows is that there is a relationship between disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity, as there must be between interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity.

These relationships are important. As a result of the interaction of these three knowledge forms, variously described and formulated, a tradition of knowledge is developed, and it is either morphogenetic or (usually) morphostatic. In the fields of ethics, and coloniality/decoloniality, a number of disciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary traditions of knowledge have been developed. In most of these cases, the trajectory of the tradition is static, resulting in undeveloped or immature configurations, such as a

tradition of knowledge which its proponents call *social realism*. The reason for this immaturity is that in each case transdisciplinary elements are neglected in its formation and reformation, with these referring in the main to four processes of validation: whether the framing of the object is empirically or practically adequate, coherent, rational and referenced to networks of meaning.

In the preceding chapters, we have suggested that the meta-concepts of learning and ethics have to be an integral part of any decolonial theory that we might want to develop, and that if we are to understand what the concepts and practices of coloniality, decoloniality, learning and ethics are then we have to look at a vast array of concepts and conceptual practices that are relevant to them. Acts of deconstructing and reconstructing concepts and conceptual frames such as justification or justifying, meaning or semiosis, indigeneity or indigenising, curriculum or curricularising, pedagogy or pedagogising, decoloniality or decolonising, autonomy or being autonomous, inclusion or including, ethics or ethicising, are therefore central to the work of this book. All of them have a direct relationship with learning and ethics. However, these relationships and connections need to be made explicit, or at least good reasons need to be provided for their inclusion in these fields. In the last chapter of this book, we look at the possibility and necessity of decolonising the curriculum.

Notes

1 We could use the term 'romanticised' here because it seems to us that this position is rooted in the Lévi-Strauss 'noble savage' or 'bricoleur' tradition. Such an argument would categorise Ancient Britons (to take just one example) as indigenous and at one with nature, and the invading Romans as viewing nature as something to be tamed to man's will.

2 A word used by Jurgen Habermas (Habermas, J. (1981) *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 1*, Thomas McCarthy (trans.), Boston: Beacon Press) to indicate that a scientific assertion is always truthful – equating science with truth.

3 Richard Rorty, in his book, *Truth and Progress: Philosophical Papers*, volume 3, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1998), suggests that the universal or transcendental frame is a fiction and that we can do without such a notion.

4 Cf. Nagel, T. (1974) 'What is it like to be a Bat?' *Philosophical Review*, 83, 4: 435–50; and Nagel, T. (2012) *Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature is Almost Certainly False*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

5 In *A Realist Theory of Science* (Bhaskar, R. (1997) [1975] *A Realist Theory of Science*, London: Routledge: 212) Roy Bhaskar endorsed the anti-Humean argument that things have causal properties and thus causal powers: '(a) thing acts, or at least tends to act, in the way it is. It should be stressed that the difference between a thing which has the power or tends to behave in a certain way and the one which does not make a difference between what they will do, since it is

contingent upon the flux of conditions whether the power is ever manifested or tendency exercised. Rather, it is a difference in what they themselves are, i.e., in their intrinsic natures.'.

6 In using the term *dispositional essentialism*, we are referring to the capacity of objects to have properties, including causal powers.
7 We are not transposing the idea of dispositional essentialism to any form or type of human identity.
8 We are drawing a distinction here between the potential powers of objects and their actual realisations, in that they have causal effects.
9 The issue of what a person might be is complicated, but it must include some notion of acquired properties that persist over time.
10 Natural change is perhaps best expressed in the fragments of writing that Heraclitus left us, as universal flux (see Bollack, J. and Wismann, H. (1972) *Héraclite ou la séparation*, Paris: Les Édition de Minuit).
11 The distinction between a modified and new object is not definitive.
12 It never ceases to amaze us how academics can write learned articles about a topic, from which they can infer certain types of normative behaviours, and yet in their day-to-day work as academics they operate through different types of normative behaviours which are in contradiction to them. For example, they endorse Foucault's (Foucault, M. (2010) *The Government of Self and Others: Lectures at the Collège de France 1982–1983*, trans. Graham Burchell, New York: Palgrave MacMillan) 'care-of-the-self' ethic, and then enthusiastically impose authoritarian and rule-bound structures on the people they have power over.
13 The origin of this remark is: Posselt, Gerald (2021) 'Self-Care and Truth-Telling: Rethinking Care with Foucault', *Le foucaldien*, 7, no. 1: 1–15.
14 See 'If we distinguish between the speaking subject (the subject of the enunciation) and the grammatical subject of the enounced, we could say that there is also the subject of the enunciandum – which refers to the held belief or opinion of the speaker. In parrhesia the speaker emphasises the fact that he is both the subject of the enunciation and the subject of the enunciandum – that he himself is the subject of the opinion to which he refers. The specific "speech activity" of the parrhesiastic enunciation thus takes the form: "I am the one who thinks this and that"' (Foucault, Michel, 'The Meaning and Evolution of the Word Parrhesia', in *Discourse and Truth: the Problematization of Parrhesia*, 1983).
15 This graphic account of female genital mutilation is given here because we are dealing with issues of torture and reformulations and reformations of the female body. It is repeated verbatim from Leaton Gray, S. and Scott, D. (2023) *Women Curriculum Theorists: Power, Knowledge and Subjectivity*, London: Routledge.
16 See Nussbaum, M. (2000a) *Sex and Social Justice*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; Nussbaum, M. (*2000b*) *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Nussbaum, M. (2001) *Upheavals of thought: the intelligence of emotions*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Nussbaum, M. (2011) *Creating Capacities: The Human Development Approach*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University.
17 Plato's (Plato (1997) *Complete Works*, edited by J. Cooper and D. Hutchinson, London: Hackett Publishing Company) solution to the problem of universals is to say that they do exist, but not in an ordinary common-sense understanding of this term. They are outside space and time, and human beings cannot have direct sensory contact with them. Nevertheless, they have an existence and can be conceived of.

18 Christianity has been the dominant cultural tradition in certain parts of the world for 2000 years. Its central belief is a transcendent creator.
19 This is the European Enlightenment notion of reason, in French *siècle des Lumières* (century of the Enlightened), and in German *Aufklärung*, in which God, reason, nature and humanity were redefined.
20 Martin Heidegger's (Heidegger, M. (1962) [1927] *Sein und Zeit*, translated as *Being and Time* by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, Oxford: Basil Blackwell; Heidegger, M. (1977) 'The question concerning technology', in M. Heidegger (translated by W. Lovitt) *The Question concerning Technology and other Essays* (pp. 3–35), London: Harper and Row; Heidegger, M. (2012) *Bremen and Freiburg Lectures: Insight Into That Which Is And Basic Principles Of Thinking* (Studies in Continental Thought), (A. Mitchell, Trans.), Indiana: Indiana University Press) phenomenological perspective is extensively referred to in the pages of this book. This perspective was a reaction to and disputation of Husserl's original phenomenological perspective, and in particular his notion of epoché (bracketing out the natural world around us).
21 Umberto Eco's (Eco, U. (1997) *The Search for the Perfect Language (The Making of Europe)*, London: Fontana Press) search for the perfect language was conducted through a belief in an Ur-language, a universal medium of unambiguous expression. As with Habermas' notion of an ideal speech situation it does not and cannot solve the many philosophical problems with universals.
22 E.O. Wilson's (Wilson, E. O. (1998) *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge*, New York: Knopf) theory of consilience describes the ultimate synthesis of all knowledge types, and especially those from specialised fields of the life course.
23 We can see this all too clearly in knowledge frameworks such as social realism (see Young, M. (2005) *Bringing Knowledge Back In: From Social Constructivism To Social Realism In The Sociology Of Education*, London and New York: Routledge) and in established sub-disciplines, such as the philosophy of education or the sociology of education in the field in which all three of us work.

13 Coloniality/Decoloniality

In this final chapter we examine and surface for attention the social, intellectual, economic and political tensions surrounding the duality of coloniality and decoloniality. We start by considering the legacy of colonialism in education, highlighting its ongoing influence on structures and curricula. Using case studies from South Africa and Tanzania, we then show how decolonial ideas are applied in practice, before assessing the limitations of current educational reforms. We also propose some decolonial alternatives, offering ways to reshape education by incorporating a greater diversity of epistemologies.

To talk about the relationship between coloniality and decoloniality is to highlight a major philosophical and epistemological tension currently spreading through public life. This is very much a work in progress, necessarily incomplete, that considers historic issues surrounding the ownership and validity of knowledge and power, whilst at the same time engaging in debates concerning sovereignty, democracy and human rights in the present day. As we have demonstrated in this book systematic consideration means going well beyond providing a narrative account of social problems, or a simplistic binary presentation along the lines of good/bad, right/wrong, inclusion/exclusion, progressive/regressive, and so on. Instead, it involves interrogating the complexities of reworking global structures of authority, often through what Badiou (2008) would frame as transformative 'events', moments of rupture that create opportunities to rethink entrenched systems of power. It requires engaging, sometimes uncomfortably, with complexity, often involving the interrogation of received wisdom. This is because what we are really seeing play out is a large-scale reworking of the structures of authority in the world, and there is little about it that is tidy or definitive, especially in a globalised, technicised, world.

Our interest here has grown out of previous books that have dealt with different forms of feminist thinking,[1] as well as explorations of what constitutes intelligence, sapience and learning.[2] In our previous books, we considered structures of knowledge, power and authority in various forms and we

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now do so here in relation to coloniality, a term advanced largely by Anibal Quijano (2000) to describe the legacies of earlier colonisation and the way they have been embedded into social and political structures. This runs a lot deeper than we might at first think. Frantz Fanon (1961), in *The Wretched of the Earth*, describes colonialism as not just a system of exploitation and oppression, but as a totalising project that imposes a worldview, eroding the humanity of the colonised. This system, he argues, limits the capacity of the colonised to imagine alternative realities. In this way, Fanon highlights how colonialism sustains its control through mechanisms that shape both the material and cultural worlds of colonised populations, ensuring the persistence of coloniality even in ostensibly postcolonial societies. This is a phenomenon clearly evident in many of the educational systems examined in this book.[3]

In this context, coloniality therefore operates as an enduring structure that conditions the production of knowledge, culture, and social hierarchies across the globe. In contrast, decoloniality seeks to dismantle these epistemic and political practices that bind postcolonial societies to their colonial pasts. It calls for a redistribution of power within both intellectual and political spheres, striving to decolonise both knowledge and governance. Mignolo (2009) frames this as challenging the eurocentric foundations of modernity (seeing eurocentrism as a function not of geography but instead of epistemology) and proposes a reordering of global knowledge systems as a mode of resistance. We should understand from this that decoloniality is not simply seen here as a critique of colonialism, but, in addition, stands in its own right. It represents a radical reimagining of how knowledge is produced, valued, and transmitted, and, as such, is a political project that requires the recognition of epistemic plurality and the affirmation of indigenous and non-Western ways of knowing and being.

However, despite the compelling critique that decolonial theory offers (for few of us would ever argue against political and social progress combined with increased heterogeneity, especially in the context of education), it is not a simple process. In examining what Moncrieffe et al. (2024: 13) term as 'arresting epistemic violence' embedded within global systems of education, current decolonial approaches risk overlooking enduring structural complexities, particularly those tied to governance and the capacities of postcolonial states. This concluding chapter, therefore, engages with such contradictions, exploring the ways in which coloniality and decoloniality manifest themselves within contemporary educational systems, and the ways people seek to address them. It argues that decolonisation, if it is to be meaningful, cannot be simply an epistemic reconfiguration, including things that were omitted before, but must involve a deeper reckoning with power, sovereignty, and the political capacities of the postcolonial State. We begin by considering the curriculum.

Coloniality in the Curriculum

We have argued throughout this book and our other writings that curriculum, in its most foundational form, represents a site of power and knowledge production, where the boundaries of what constitutes legitimate knowledge are drawn. In terms of coloniality, the curriculum can be usefully understood through Foucault's (1980a) notion of *discursive formations*, where knowledge is not just transmitted (in this case directly in a spoken or written form) but actively produced through social structures that determine what is included and what is excluded, and thereby framed as discourse. This approach positions the curriculum as a battleground for epistemic contestation that either reinforces or challenges systems of domination.

Moncrieffe (2020) provides a valuable framework for interrogating the dynamics of curriculum design, particularly in his analysis of decolonising the curriculum. He contends that the enduring legacy of colonialism manifests itself in educational practices that marginalise non-Western epistemologies while presenting Eurocentric narratives as objective and universal. His study on the representation of Black histories in British schools demonstrates how curricula often trivialise or exclude these narratives entirely, thereby sustaining what Williams (1961) termed a 'selective tradition' that prioritises dominant cultural perspectives. This selective tradition determines what is remembered and what is omitted, contributing to what Moncrieffe describes as the silencing of alternative histories. Through this process, the curriculum operates as an instrument of power, reinforcing epistemic hierarchies that privilege particular worldviews while marginalising others. Moncrieffe argues that such dominance is not incidental but systemic, deeply embedded in policy frameworks, pedagogical practices, and institutional structures.

This is very similar to the position of Emejulu and McGregor (2016), who critique the structural exclusion of minority epistemologies in digital education, particularly through framings of digital citizenship that often overlook the reality of social relations between digital technologies and marginalised groups. Again, we can see in this example how curriculum design serves to reproduce inequitable power relations. A possible solution lies in Bhambra's (2014) 'connected sociologies', in terms of looking backwards, towards historical accounts of modernity, as well as forwards, towards the construction of a new sociology for a global age.

The entrenchment of dominant paradigms as described by Moncrieffe, Emejulu and Bhambra can be understood as an example of the 'regimes of truth' that sustain hegemonic power (Foucault, 1980b: 133). These regimes, operationalised in education through mechanisms like standardised testing, accreditation systems, and the textbook publishing industry (particularly in the growing context of English as a universal *lingua franca*) determine which

forms of knowledge are recognised as valuable while systematically excluding, or delegitimising, alternative epistemologies. In this context, Moncrieffe's analysis reveals curricula as sites of exclusion where the knowledge systems of colonised and marginalised peoples are either co-opted or erased. Emejulu and Bhambra identify the broader cultural and institutional dynamics that perpetuate these exclusions in a global context. Decolonising the curriculum therefore necessitates more than the mere inclusion of additional perspectives; it requires a profound rethinking of the epistemic assumptions underpinning contemporary educational systems.

However, radically reforming Eurocentric curricula without the implementation of carefully conceptualised and evidence-based alternatives risks generating significant disruptions to overall educational coherence and learning attainment. Such challenges have been well-documented in various postcolonial contexts. For example, in South Africa, the post-apartheid initiatives to decolonise education, while driven by a justifiable imperative to dismantle the epistemic legacies of colonialism, frequently resulted in a misalignment between curricular content and broader educational objectives. Jansen (1998) critiques these reforms as being overly preoccupied with symbolic acts of epistemic rupture, often neglecting the practical demands of modern education systems, such as ensuring access to high-level scientific and technological knowledge. This lack of strategic coherence not only compromised the country's global competitiveness, but also reinforced inequalities, as students from privileged backgrounds continued to access alternative and/or better funded systems that were better aligned with international standards.

The Tanzanian experience of the 1960s and 1970s also shows us the risks associated with ideologically driven curriculum reform. Under President Julius Nyerere's policy of *Education for Self-Reliance* (Nyerere, 1967), the colonial curriculum was replaced wholesale with one prioritising localised, agrarian-focused education intended to serve the socialist ideals of the era. While this approach reflected a genuine effort to align education with the decolonisation agenda, it has been critiqued for its failure to adequately consider the socio-economic diversity and aspirations of the population (Samoff, 2024). Critics argue that the curriculum's emphasis on subsistence agriculture disregarded the growing demand for technical, professional, and entrepreneurial skills necessary for modern economic participation. In this way, the ideological rigidity of the reforms arguably stifled intellectual pluralism and curtailed opportunities for critical engagement with global knowledge systems. The result was an educational framework that, while ideologically coherent, struggled to equip the population with the skills and knowledge necessary for social mobility and economic advancement.

These examples highlight the dangers of abrupt curricular shifts (not that Moncrieffe, Emejulu and Bhambra are arguing for this, of course) without a

clear pedagogical exit strategy. Otherwise disrupted education systems risk diminishing access to global knowledge networks, and undermining students' preparedness for a scientifically and digitally interconnected world. The challenge, therefore, lies in navigating reform without erasing the foundational structures that support intellectual and societal development. The following section examines this challenge further, paying particular attention to the role of technology in education.

The Digital Age: Coloniality, Technological Imperialism, and Educational Futures

If we are considering the digital age, it is useful to think about universality, particularity in relation to global knowledge structures, especially when they are digital. *Universality*, as understood in philosophical traditions, relates to the aspiration of creating frameworks and systems applicable across cultures and contexts, fostering a shared human experience. Digital technologies, with their capacity to connect disparate communities, embody this universalist ideal. They offer mechanisms for standardising knowledge dissemination, enabling individuals in diverse contexts to access global educational resources, participate in transnational discourses, and cultivate the skills necessary for contemporary economic and intellectual participation. They represent a powerful tool for social connection.

However, the *particularity* of these technologies must also be acknowledged. Platforms are often imbued with cultural, economic, and epistemic assumptions rooted in their Western origins, which can marginalise local knowledge systems and practices. For example, the implicit biases embedded in algorithms or the hegemony of English as a *lingua franca* in digital spaces reflect a particularistic dominance masquerading as neutrality. These dynamics certainly seem to align with what decolonial scholars identify as a persistence of coloniality in the supposedly postcolonial age, where the imposition of Eurocentric (or latterly US-centric) paradigms undermines local autonomy and epistemic diversity.

The universality–particularity problem complicates the use of technology in education. While Western-designed platforms may universalise access and opportunity, they simultaneously risk perpetuating epistemic erasure if their design disregards the particularities of non-Western cultures. This complexity demonstrates the importance of developing technological infrastructures that balance universal connectivity with sensitivity to the plurality of knowledge systems and local curriculum needs (see Kucirkova and Leaton Gray, 2023). Without such an approach, the digital divide risks becoming not just a technological chasm but an epistemic one, further entrenching global inequalities.

A more balanced approach to the integration of digital technologies in education would involve critically engaging with the epistemic structures

embedded within these technologies while also leveraging their potential benefits. Walter Mignolo (2009) argues for this kind of decolonial approach to technology and society, in a way that does not simply reject Western paradigms (a process which he terms 'dewesternisation')[4] but seeks to incorporate alternative knowledge systems that complement rather than oppose them. In practice, this could mean adapting global digital tools to integrate local knowledge systems rather better, creating a hybrid curriculum that respects both global standards and indigenous traditions (and, as Mignolo puts it fairly brutally, helps us avoid driving ourselves to a 'collective death dressed under the triumphal growth of a global economy' [Mignolo, 2009: 117]).

Clearly, therefore, the digital age introduces unique challenges and opportunities for postcolonial education. These digital technologies, far from being neutral tools, have shaped and constrained knowledge production by embedding Western logic into their algorithms and infrastructures. The commodification of knowledge by corporations like Alphabet, Meta, and Amazon (and, to a lesser but still significant extent, international EdTech companies such as Pearson or McGraw-Hill) are based on business models which extract data, which ultimately ends up reinforcing global social and economic disparities in different ways. Such practices represent a good example of how digital technologies can become instruments of neocolonial power, mediated through education systems as convergent online platforms are adopted and then eventually seen as a norm.

This means that if we are to adopt a coherent position with regard to decoloniality, we must recognise (even uncomfortably) the impact of such technological dominance, whilst at the same time also accounting for the positive potential of postcolonial states and educators in navigating and repurposing these technologies. Being aware of this means we are heeding Nkrumah's (1965) early warnings in relation to neocolonialism to education,[5] by reminding us of the importance of avoiding recolonisation, in this case by ensuring that technological platforms also offer opportunities for local innovation and autonomy. This allows for the creation of new models of educational and intellectual exchange. Such hybridity represents a potential 'event' in education – a rupture enabling new epistemic arrangements that resist both coloniality and homogenisation.

Governance and Education: Coloniality's Enduring Legacy

Despite the potential of technology to serve international populations in new ways, postcolonial governance remains a significant barrier to the decolonisation of education. As Mahmood Mamdani (1996) and Kwame Nkrumah (1965) have argued, many postcolonial states, rather than dismantling colonial governance structures, have merely adapted them to serve the

interests of other elites or groups (or 'tribes', as Mamdani calls them). Education, situated at the nexus of governance and social reproduction, becomes a tool not of liberation but of statecraft, serving to reinforce the power of these elites and groups. Nkrumah's concept of neocolonialism remains especially relevant here, as he critiques the way postcolonial states remain economically and culturally tethered to global powers despite formal political independence. This tethering manifests vividly in education systems that perpetuate the values and epistemologies of the colonial past, even if the outward appearance looks different in the technological age.

These critiques bring to light the ways in which governance and education are co-constituted. As we have argued throughout this book, Foucault's work on power and governance provides a crucial lens through which to understand this dynamic, particularly his concept of *biopolitics* – the governance of populations' lives and bodies via governmental means. Education, viewed through this framework, is not merely the transmission of knowledge but a powerful mechanism for regulating subjectivity. It shapes citizens who conform to the political, economic, and social needs of the state. For postcolonial societies, this translates into a continuation of colonial legacies not through explicit colonial structures, but via more insidious mechanisms of social control. The curriculum, in this sense, becomes a biopolitical tool, reproducing power relations that align with the interests of global economic systems and local elites.

The persistence of coloniality in educational governance is also evident in the hierarchies of knowledge embedded in the curriculum. As we have argued, the privileging of Western epistemologies often sidelines local knowledge systems, perpetuating a hierarchy that reflects and sustains the broader structures of global inequality. Foucault (2010) critiques how these knowledge structures work to serve power, not merely to represent objective truths, highlighting how education often produces docile bodies that conform to global economic imperatives. If we look once again to foundational thinking here, Mamdani (1996) sees this as a form of 'decentralised despotism', where postcolonial elites manipulate education to maintain their control, while Nkrumah (1965) frames it as a betrayal of true decolonisation, which should involve an epistemological break rather than mere adaptation.

There are other philosophical avenues available to us in seeking to understand the colonial/decolonial dyad. Again, Badiou (2008) offers a more radical view of knowledge and education that could be useful to us here in making sense of the problem, through his idea of the event.[6] This transformation entails confronting the covert mechanisms of social control embedded in education, aligning with Nkrumah's call for an epistemological break rather than adaptation. Similarly Badiou's emphasis on truth procedures, and the idea that knowledge is shaped by ideological systems and the process

of coming to that truth (rather than with empiricism), challenges the conventional ways education has been organised to maintain power structures. In postcolonial contexts, education can potentially be seen as a site for such a rupture, where alternative epistemologies and curricula are not merely integrated, but emerge as part of a new truth procedure, one that confronts the legacies of colonialism directly and creatively.[7]

However, this tension still raises profound questions about the nature of freedom and autonomy in postcolonial education systems generally. For education to act as a force of genuine liberation, we argue it must navigate the difficult terrain between dismantling colonial legacies and maintaining the coherence and functionality of educational systems in a globalised world. This requires not only a revision of the curriculum but also a rethinking of governance structures, challenging both the overt and covert mechanisms through which coloniality persists (including the creation of new elites). Only then can education contribute to a truly transformative project, one that aligns with the aspirations of postcolonial societies while recognising the complexities of their histories and contemporary realities.

Decolonial Values and Valorisations

Throughout this book we have argued (provided sufficient reasons for making a claim of knowledge) for values, valorisations and norms (personal, epistemic, social, political, dispositional, spatial, temporal and ethical) as being centrally implicated in both our descriptions of the world, in the curriculum that we are attempting to design, and in our life-choices. If we accept that value-free knowledge is an impossibility, that we inevitably make prejudgements about the world in our investigations, then being in the world is understood as a practice, primed for investigation, but resistant to algorithmic and value-free methods for describing it. Learning as a concept and as a practice has ethical, political, social, discriminatory, decolonising and human consequences and implications.

We are puzzled about what the world is like and as to how we can know what it is – a very Wittgensteinian attitude to doing philosophy (see Wittgenstein, 1953). A possible solution to our puzzlement is to accept that values are central to understanding how we live and how we should live, and this valuing goes all the way down, into our descriptions of the world, into those attempts we make at creating better futures and into our relations with other people. We therefore need to work at how we do and can understand the world as it is and as we would want it to be. There are two dimensions to this claim. The first is ontological and this amounts to an assertion that objects in the world and human beings are valued in relation to each other and to other object-types. Objects are arranged in the world and there could be other arrangements of these objects in other possible worlds. Indeed,

objects (material and discursive), object-relations, object-formations and human beings could be differently formed. Difference, therefore, is understood as both dissimilarity and as the construction of boundaries between objects in the world.

A second dimension to the claim that we are making that values go all the way down is epistemological and this invariably elicits a complaint from those who assert that we can develop value-free knowledge of the world. (This is, in effect, a rhetorical device for claiming that one version of knowledge, their own, is superior to another – it is semantically empty.) If we accept that values are ontologically and epistemologically present in the world and in our endeavours to understand the world in its many iterations and in its many possible iterations, then we have to consider what these values might be and what their provenance is.[8] Again, in conformity to the approach we have adopted throughout this book, we need to explore what these values are and what they are not, or at least what other people have construed them as being, and, in addition, what decolonial values and valorisations might and could be.

Among the values and valorisations in a decolonial world might be: caring (see back to Chapter 12), community, care-for-the-self (see back to Chapter 12), relatedness, compassion, degenocidal actions (see back to Chapter 8), deconstruction, decentring hetero/cis-normativity, degendering hierarchies and racial categories, justice, equality and liberation, particularity, agency, reason-giving (see back to Chapter 12), and many more. A decolonial world, then, turns its back on those values and valorisations which favour hierarchy, competitiveness, greed, despoilation, war, imperialism, domination and subjugation.

Decoloniality is, above all else, a set of virtue ethics.[9] Virtue ethics prioritise the virtues or moral character of the individual and can be contrasted with approaches that focus on duties or rules, as in deontological ethics, or on the consequences of actions, as in consequentialism. Virtue ethics are different from deontological and consequentialist ethical forms in a number of ways. They are related to dispositions, and what this means is that the ethical act comprises an inner state, which is already there (in some form or another), having been learnt, seeking to express itself in the world in relation to a problem in the world that requires some action. Dispositions, as inner states, precede, condition and have some influence over actions. A disposition is a character type, an habituation, a state of preparation or readiness and a tendency to act in a specified way. Dispositions, then, have this persistent quality, although they can in time be modified.[10] They have a strong affinity with a person's chosen identity.

The virtues also operate at the cultural or discursive level. In this form, they are dependent on membership of a practice, and this includes how they are instantiated in that practice. They are practice-based insofar as being

excellent in the practice requires a judgement to be made as to what is onsidered to have value in the practice. This, therefore, implies a relation (a type of progression) between a novice and an expert within the practice.[11] The crucial issue is that any designation of an ethical virtue is always, and can only be, understood in terms of some conception of how the society is organised or even perhaps about excellence within the practice. Ethical judgements always, with this word understood as a form of necessity, supervene on epistemological judgements.[12] The identification of the virtues is the hardest part of the argument to sustain in any theory of decoloniality and in a decolonial curriculum because it opens up a series of unresolved issues, expressed perhaps as a series of questions: What is their (i.e. the virtues) provenance? Why is one set of virtues to be preferred over another? What is the relationship between these virtues? Are there some foundational or hinged virtues?

We have also in this book suggested that a distinction can be made between Eurocentric forms of knowledge *and* precolonial and decolonial knowledge formations. In the first instance, Eurocentric or colonial knowledge (broadly, knowledge that is propositional in form) and decolonial knowledge (broadly, knowledge that allows us to go on in life) can be compared, and this involves identifying the constituents of each and the relations between them, and then showing how they are different or the same. This mirrors the dichotomous relation between the sacred and the profane developed by Émile Durkheim (1995), which can be expressed in many different ways: nomothetic–idiographic, abstractive–concrete, generalisable–particular, objective–subjective, factual–valued and universal–disciplinary. These are all specific renditions of a distinction that can be made between scientific knowledge and the type of knowledge that circulates in the lifeworld.

For example, it has been suggested that scientific knowledge is nomological – the knowledge claim can be couched in a language of rules and invariant happenings – whereas every day or practical knowledge is idiographic – the focus is on the meaning of contingent, unique and perhaps subjective phenomena.[13] There are four possible approaches that can be taken: inductive, deductive, retroductive[14] and abductive processes.[15] These four strategies are nomological in kind in that they seek to identify laws or make propositional rule-bound claims to knowledge, which persist over time and/or place; whereas practical or decolonial knowledge makes no such claims, or so the argument goes.

Another way of framing this argument is by contrasting abstract knowledge with concrete knowledge (i.e. knowledge of particulars); an abstraction being understood as a construct in the mind[16] in which new ideas are formed if a number of these ideas are analysed together and those features that are different are then omitted. If we consider a range of so-called sharp objects, we can abstract from them their different qualia and thereby come to a

notion of sharpness. The object itself is initially conceptualised in its concrete form. The claim is then made that practical or decolonial forms of knowledge do not engage with these processes of abstraction.

A third way of framing the argument is to invoke a notion of generalisation. Its defining property is that the knowledge claim being made can accommodate more than one instance of a concrete event. There are two problems here. How do we identify, and in the process come to understand, the boundaries of an object, a concrete event or happening in the world? And secondly, how do we reconcile this identification of the object with it being manifested in a number of ways? For example, in order for the object to be manifested quantitatively, i.e. that there are a number of instances of it, there has to be some measure of generality already present in the object itself; the words, concepts and ideas used can then embrace a large number of instances or manifestations. The intention, however, may not be to accommodate a number of the object's manifestations, but to give a detailed account of a process or mechanism[17] and how it might work in the world. In both cases, knowledge of the object is not isomorphic with the object itself.

Another attempt at distinguishing between the two forms of knowledge is that scientific knowledge is knowledge that is not tainted by values, interests, preconceptions and so forth, whereas practical or decolonial knowledge is ontologically valued knowledge.[18] Generally, knowledge is said to be objective when it is not influenced by personal values and emotions, whereas subjectivity refers to knowledge that is based on personal opinions, feelings and interpretations. The concept of objectivity (as it is used in the world) contains multiple rather than singular meanings. The distinction between value-free and valued knowledge cannot be directly read into the distinction being made here between scientific and practical forms of knowledge.

In a positivist/empiricist philosophy, a distinction between facts and values is usually made. This received its first explicit expression in David Hume's (2000) [1738] *A Treatise of Human Nature* and was subsequently taken up by Durkheim (1939) and Weber (1964). Common sense would suggest that description and evaluation are separate activities, although the idea of common sense is here being stripped of its ideological meaning. This distinction has been criticised on the grounds that any fact is inevitably a value-judgement in some way or another and involves a selection process, which, in turn, can only be made from an epistemological perspective or position. Facts are only facts, and thus truth-bearers, under some type of epistemic frame or framing. This distinction, therefore, cannot serve as a marker of difference between scientific *and* practical or decolonial forms of knowledge.

A further justification for scientific knowledge is that it is produced in specialised places or locations for the production of knowledge (i.e. in most cases the disciplines or domains[19]). A counter-argument that supports a

notion of interdisciplinarity or transdisciplinarity is predicated on the idea that a multiplicity of causes and theories is always involved in the explanation of any event or happening. However, in order to move from a set of disciplines or domains to interdisciplinarity, and then to transdisciplinarity, an acknowledgement has to be made that the knowledge required can no longer be generated by combining the knowledges of the various disciplines concerned but requires a real integration. The central question then becomes: do these differences allow us to determine that one of these types of knowledge, and specifically scientific or theoretical knowledge, can be shown to be of greater worth than the other, insofar as acquiring it is better in some specific way than not acquiring it? This is both a conceptual and a practical problem, and it has implications for how we form and reform teaching and learning practices in educational institutions.

Decoloniality is founded on the principle that European colonialism is at the root of how the modern world functions today. The decolonial movement includes diverse forms of critical theory, articulated by pluriversal forms of liberatory thinking that arise out of distinct situations. Decoloniality has been called a form of 'epistemic disobedience' (see Mignolo, 2009), 'epistemic de-linking' (see Stojnić, 2017), and 'epistemic reconstruction' (see Lentin, 2014). In this sense, decolonial thinking is a means of eliminating the tendency to pretend that Western knowledge or European Enlightenment knowledge or colonial knowledge or occidental cultural knowledge is the only correct way of understanding the world and that colonial representings are uniquely privileged.

Textual Endings

The book that you have just finished reading is a text, perhaps some would call it a colonial text, although this is not our intention. It is, of course, textually framed, as all writing is. Textuality, besides having other meanings that we can give it, is an ethical concept – or at least it has ethical consequences. Throughout this book we have used a variety of textual devices (referentiality, linearity, fragility, corrigibility, enframing, real-world explication and coherentism) and we want to draw attention to some of them here. The first of these is the insertion of a large number of references – an unusually large number – to other chapters in the book. This is designed to show that every concept being used here has a referential structure, in that every conceptual (and thus semantic) activity is framed and then reframed in relation to the possibilities that inhere in the concept and in a network of other concepts. The point of this is to suggest or show that one important part of the argument that we are making is that meaning, or the semantic dimension, is both dynamic and embedded within a network of other concepts, with their own semantic possibilities.

A second device that we have used here is more traditional. This refers to the linear structure of the text, in which a series of premises are introduced and justified, connections and relations are established between them, and conclusions are then drawn. In contrast, a hypertextual mode has a non-linear structure. Our textuality in this book, then, is a more conventional type. We have set out an argument, and the elements that make up this argument, and nothing more; that is, we have been making a case for a particular viewpoint about colonial and decolonial knowledge, learning and ethics and what they refer to.

A third device concerns the fragility of the writing, and what we mean by this is the sense in which we as the authors have had to struggle throughout with finding the right words, sets of words, sentence-constructions, paragraph-arrangements and so forth, that can approximately bridge the gap (an ever-present and always changing gap) between the text that we have produced and what it refers to outside of the confines of the text itself. If we abandon the idea of categorical and timeless definitions of words that represent in some magical way what is out there in the world, then the attempt at writing the world into existence is always a struggle and always insufficient. The point we are making is that this is not a confession of inadequacy but an acknowledgement that our words, word-sets, sentences and paragraphs are never adequate or sufficient and cannot be so given the task that is being attempted, although most writers addressing issues to do with learning, coloniality, decoloniality, and ethics are unaware of this.

A fourth device that we have used here is to discuss at all times and in as many ways as we can the issue of corrigibility. Are we correct in what we say? Are we producing truthful knowledge? Is this the best we can do? If we want to criticise a position taken by someone else, or if we want to make a claim that this other position is insufficiently evidenced or superficially formulated or conceptually inadequate or logically deficient then we can only do this by comparing it with a position which is evidenced or in depth or conceptually adequate or logically sufficient. In short, we need criteria about truthful knowledge in order to make a judgement about a position or approach. If we want to correct an idea, then we have to have some foundation from which to do it.

A fifth textual and methodological device is that in every word, word-complex, sentence, paragraph and chapter in this book, we have made a series of assumptions about the world and our knowledge of it – some of these assumptions are explicit, some are not. These preconceptions can be broadly summarised as a critical and decolonial theory of ontology and of epistemology, an ontic and epistemic theory of valuations, that we can know the world but only with the greatest of difficulty, and that these key ontological objects, knowledge and the world, are central to any understanding we may have. This textual device is used by us throughout the book and is of some significance.

Another textual device that we use in the book is real-world exemplifications,[20] such as Germany conducting a campaign of ethnic extermination against the Herero and Nama peoples in German South West Africa (now Namibia) between 1904 and 1908. Many pure and applied philosophers use devices such as scenarios, speculations, logical predictions, thought experiments, counter-histories, abstractions, and the like, with the consequence that their work seems to be detached from the way we actually live and from the ethical dilemmas most of us encounter in our lives. Authentic exemplars of difficult ethical constructions and reconstructions act to give a verisimilitude to the arguments that we are making here.

A final textual and methodological device that we have used extensively in the book, and in our representings, as Robert Brandom (2022) has put it, is to set a series of general arguments against other arguments developed by other people. The point is that this is what most philosophers actually do even if they don't always make it explicit. This leaves open the possibility that we could write a history, archaeology or genealogy of coloniality, decoloniality, ethics and learning without such referencing, and, indeed, there must have been a time in which every thought was new – or at least not related to what other people said. What you have just read is a text and a particular type of text. As a text, we have argued throughout, it is a signifying practice, and as a signifying practice it has to question its own textuality and, indeed, the discursive contents that it is committing to, a practice that is now barely adhered to by most writers in the fields of coloniality, decoloniality, learning and ethics.

Notes

1 Leaton Gray, S. and Scott, D. (2023) *Women Curriculum Theorists: Power, Knowledge and Subjectivity*, London: Routledge.
2 Scott, D. and Leaton Gray, S. (2024) *Intelligence, Sapience and Learning: Concepts, Framings and Practices*, London: UCL Press.
3 It is also unavoidably reflected in most of the intellectual and philosophical tools and framings we have chosen to use here, to conform with the expectations of our readers, reviewers and publisher.
4 He defines westernisation as a 'project of conflictive coexistence between forces that share common economic principles that in the Left and Right vocabulary are called "capitalism"' (Mignolo, W. D. (2009) *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options*, Durham: Duke University Press: 47).
5 As he told us, 'Friendly co-operation is offered in the educational, cultural and social domains, aimed at subverting the desirable patterns of indigenous progress to the imperialist objectives of the financial monopolists' (Nkrumah, K. (1965) *Neocolonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, London: Thomas Nelson & Sons: 48).
6 Using his definition of an 'event', the Black Lives Matter movement might fall within this classification, as just one example.

7 Moncrieffe et al. (Moncrieffe, M., Fakunle, O., Kustatscher, M. and Rost, A. O. (Eds) (2024) *The BERA Guide to Decolonising the Curriculum*, London: Emerald Publishing) give copious examples of how such truth procedures might play out in terms of changes to teachers' professional practice.
8 Charles Taylor writes about the impossibility of operating in the world in a non-normative sense: '(D)oing without frameworks is utterly impossible for us;…the horizons within which we live our lives and which make sense of them have to include these strong qualitative discriminations. Moreover, this is not meant just as a contingently true psychological fact about human beings, which could perhaps turn out one day not to hold for some exceptional individual or new type, some superman of disengaged objectification. Rather the claim is that living within such strongly qualified horizons is constitutive of human agency, that stepping outside these limits would be tantamount to stepping outside what we would recognise as integral, that is, undamaged human personhood.' (Taylor, C. (1998) *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press: 27).
9 There are many ethical theories in existence, such as: axiological theories, collectivism, Confucianism, consequentialism, deontological ethics, egalitarianism, hedonism, humanism, individualism, moral realism, natural law, nihilism, normative ethics, objectivism, relativism, utilitarianism, and virtue ethics.
10 The argument that we are making in this book is that concepts are essentially acquired dispositions. In defence of this proposition, we have already suggested that even the most propositional of statements can be expressed as doing something in the world.
11 Alastair MacIntyre's (MacIntyre, A. (1981) *After Virtue*, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press) notion of a practice in which virtue resides in the pursuit of excellence within that practice would also embrace witchcraft, iniquity, autocracy and the like, and thus there needs to be some notion of deontology or consequentialism attached to the particular goods that are being sought in the practice and which the practice is about.
12 One of the consequences of arguing that ethics supervenes on knowledge is that one has to look in the first instance for the knowledge element in any ethical judgement one might want to make. And this epistemological and ontological object-relation is traditionally expressed as a relation between knowing the world and the world itself.
13 The word subjective is being used here to refer to an internal process and not to the antithesis of any notion of objectivity.
14 See Bhaskar, R. (2011) [1991] *Philosophy and the Idea of Freedom*, London: Blackwell.
15 See Harré, R. (2011) *Theories and Things*, London: Sheed and Ward.
16 We prefer to use the term *in the mind* rather than *mental* because of the latter's pejorative associations.
17 The term, *mechanism*, is frequently used by critical realists. However, they are not using the term to denote a mechanical and deterministic ontology.
18 We have already argued that all types of knowledge are valued, despite attempts by many people to make a claim for value-free objective knowledge.
19 The arguments for some form of transcendental knowledge are set out in Chapter 12.
20 What this means is that all the examples used in this book are from the past or the present-past, and this is unavoidable.

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