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UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA**

**CRAVING RESTORATION:
AN ECOFEMINIST THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON LILY
MINE**

BY

ISABELLA F. RAS

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Full names of student: **Isabella Fredrika Ras**

Student number: **10045644**

Topic of work: **Craving Restoration: an ecofeminist theological perspective on Lily Mine**

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ABSTRACT

In South Africa, the concept of land is caught up in various ideological, religious and political conceptions. Land is not only soil, but also home, identity, economic profit, livelihood and belonging. In this study, we will explore the complexity of land and our relationship to it by firstly exploring the history of colonialism and with it the presence of missionary activity in South Africa to investigate the theological formation and re-arrangement of people's connection to land. The conflicting views of coloniser and colonised will also be explored. Our connection to ourselves, to others, God, and nature have been broken by the colonialist project, Apartheid and the capitalist process of commodification, which in South Africa have deep historical roots. The dual process of commodification of people and land, is exemplified by the mining history. In this regard, the Lily Mine tragedy is used as a magnifying glass to explore the effect this process has on both people and creation. Lily Mine, the heaving earth, the workers trapped deep beneath the earth and those left behind, signify a haunting. Here, Derrida's notion of hauntology is employed as a kind of border thinking to recognise and see these ghosts that haunt. The spectre of broken and maimed bodies, and the broken earth haunts our present and poses an urgent ethical demand on those left behind. The ghost seeks wholeness, restoration, recognition and rest. To find some way of responding to the spectre's haunting cry, we look to ecofeminism and African women's theologies. Both, ecofeminism and African women's theologies recognise the interdependence and interconnectedness of life and offer a way of being and doing that challenges patriarchal, androcentric and Eurocentric ontologies and epistemologies. In exploring ecofeminism and African women's theologies we find ways, life giving praxis, that breathes life into dead and dry bones.

Keywords: *Colonialism, British Imperialism, Missionaries, African anthropology, Afrikaner Ideology, Apartheid, Laws of Dispossession, South African mining industry, Lily Mine, Hauntology, Ecofeminism, African women's theology, global warming*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: BACKGROUND, PROBLEM STATEMENT AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1. Background

In South Africa, the issue of land is a controversial one. Land does not only refer to agriculture, soil or geography. It also refers to home, place and belonging: a place that is whole, healthy and welcoming. Unfortunately, that is not always the case. Land, in its different configurations has been used as a political weapon and an economic resource, and now this weapon and resource is also under threat by various environmental issues.

Growing up in a small, agriculturally dependent town in Mpumalanga, when people spoke of land it was not only a geographical or agricultural designation, it was also an ideological and religious concept. In the minds of those who espouse ideological or religious concepts of land, their views have been constantly challenged and some believe, blatantly threatened with the prospect of land reforms and land claims introduced in South Africa post-1994.

Though this almost mythological concept of land lives in the imagination of some Afrikaners, it has been interesting to see that the environmental impact of the Mpumalanga mine industry does not threaten this ideal as land reforms or the idea of mine nationalisation does. It appears that land only belongs to a few, and those to whom it belongs to can do with it what they wish—even if it is detrimental to the environment and local communities. Land within this framework is only a commodity that can be (ab)used until it is of no use.

In this research, the tragedy of the 2016 Vantage Goldfields' Lily Mine operation in Barberton, Mpumalanga will be used as a kind of lens to augment and explore the different configurations of land and our relationship to it and ourselves. Lily Mine forces us to confront the absence of those three people who are *still* trapped in that container deep beneath the earth. Their absence forces us to confront our past which has been so cruel to black bodies and nature alike. Ecofeminism and African women's theologies will be used to view the brokenness of both people and nature.

In ecofeminism, the view is widely held that "humanity is not just reliant on its physical environment, but that the natural world, including humanity, should be seen as an interconnected and interdependent whole" (Mellor 1997:1).

The South American ecofeminist, Ivone Gebara, introduces the terms "interdependence" and "relatedness" in terms of "the basic fact that any life situation, behaviour, or even belief is always the fruit of all the interactions that make up our lives, our histories and our wider earthly and cosmic realities" (Gebara 1999:52).

It is with this notion of relatedness being our primary reality (Gebara 1999:83) that the research problem comes to the fore: our "relatedness" has been disrupted. A break between nature, self and community has occurred throughout the centuries of wars, land conquests, colonialism, modernisation, exploitation, forced removals, industrialisation and our age of profits. This break is not just theoretical or ideological, but as Lily Mine shows us, it is also a physically lived reality. Lily Mine shows us that the destruction of land and people are connected.

This physicality of the effects of environmental destruction on the lives of people is of great importance to ecofeminism. The effects are concrete, they are physical and bodily felt:

Human embeddedness in the environment is related directly to human embodiment. Ecological impacts and consequences are experienced through human bodies, in ill health, early death, congenital damage and impeded childhood development. Women disproportionately bear the consequences of those impacts within their own bodies (dioxin residues in breast milk, failed pregnancies) and in their work as nurturers and carers.

(Mellor 1997:2)

The concept of land is caught up in complex micro and macro networks and hierarchies of power and knowing. Under these configurations of land, besides the adverse effects to the environment, it is the researcher's argument that the people who have suffered most are poor communities, especially women. A similar view is held by proponents of ecofeminism. Mary Mellor, in her book *Feminism an Ecology*, writes "[e]cofeminism is a movement that sees a connection between the exploitation and degradation of the natural world and the subordination and oppression of women" (1997:1).

It is clear that there is an interconnection between the domination of nature and the domination of people, especially women, that lies squarely in a patriarchal worldview (Reuther 1996:1). Patriarchal worldviews have not only subdued, dominated and oppressed women and nature, but also engineered racist, homophobic and classist frameworks.

In Africa and South Africa in particular, the patriarchal systems engineered in modernity: colonialism, Apartheid and the subsequent institutions and systems that came into being that have dichotomised and commodified people and land, have alienated and dislocated ourselves from each other, the land we inhabit and God. In the introduction of *Listen to the Land*, the Oiko-tree Movement writes:

[T]he European genocidal colonial project carried with it the 'scientific revolution' and 'enlightenment' which altered Western ideas about human relationships with the land, changing her from Mother Earth to a female thing which had to be chained, cracked open and tortured to reveal her secrets. The expansion of that scientific and mechanistic path is smothering the globe, and has brought us to our present ecological and climatic crises, warping, poisoning, and destroying the Earth and all her beings. Peoples throughout the earth are being systematically forced from their lands by corporations, governments, militaries, and paramilitaries in support of capitalist greed, which exploits and destroys the land.

(Oiko-tree 2016:20)

In 1990 the Rustenburg conference describes in its Declaration this very same structural and systematic destruction in religious terms:

In both Old and New Testaments God's Peace or Shalom speaks of a comprehensive wholeness and rightness in all relationships, including those between God and his people, between human and human and between humans and creation. South Africa Peace and Shalom are shattered, not only by personal but also by social and structural sin.

(Rustenburg Declaration 1990: 4.3)

The question remains until this day: How can the relationship between people, land and God be restored?

1.1.2. Problem Statement

The South African economy is very dependent on the mining sector. For the past 120 years, the mining industry has been at the centre of our politics and economy. Our country's historic economic growth is squarely built on the destruction of people and the environment. Those three workers at Lily Mine are trapped in a container, buried underneath thousands of tons of earth for the advancement and prosperity of South Africa. The mining industry is indicative of a wider societal problem: the schism between nature, people and God.

In this study when the term 'land' is used, it not only refers to nature, mountains, plants, soil or geography. Land is a complex concept. Land is home, community, life, God and our future. But land is also profit, a tool and a political weapon. The main thesis of this research is that there is a schism between nature and human bodies. Exploring the cause of this broken relationship, with particular attention to the abandoned bodies, buried underneath the earth at Lily Mine, we will explore how our current situation came to be. From an ecofeminist theological perspective, the aim of this study will be the question: how can we find restoration and healing? Both for communities, the environment and our relationship to God.

This dissertation among others will focus on the following themes to examine and engage the problem statement above:

- The exploration of religious myths, ideologies and contestations especially with regard to land ownership.
- The disruptions, destruction and schism between human bodies and land through the case of Lily Mine.
- The cry of creation and the ecofeminist and African perspectives on wholeness.

1.2. METHODOLOGY

1.2.1. Genealogical Method, Ecofeminism and Hauntology

For this research the French philosopher, Michel Foucault's genealogical method (*Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* 1975) will be employed as it can be considered as an analysis of the present which tries to uncover the anti-history— our untold, buried and hidden history. Foucault's use of genealogy is drawn from the Nietzschean form of history found in *Genealogy of Morals* (Kelly n.d.)

Foucault in his genealogical approach aims to uncover those underlying assumptions and meanings that reside in our social and political spheres (Phipps 2014:5). This will be useful methodological tool in this research. The genealogical method is very suspicious of things that are presented as ontological Truth. Foucault investigates the truth/power relationships and how it constitutes what is considered to be true and historical. In this sense the genealogist, identifies, or diagnoses relations of power, knowledge and the body in in modern society (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982:105). This approach seeks to explore the interwoven historical and cultural practices, which constitute our human experience (Tamboukou 2003:6). Our human experiences do not exist in vacuum and are caught up in various visible and invisible networks and systems.

Michel Foucault is situated within French post-structuralism and post-foundationalism. Foucault avoids the charges of negativity, relativism and the emphasis on culture that

is usually laid at postmodernism feet. Alternatively, Foucault advances an internal critique of modern European domination with his focus on the disciplines of the body, sexual identities, and “the slippery decenteredness of power for the ways in which modern Europeanized subjects are yoked to the wheel of political and cultural normativity by new, less easily visible, but no less tyrannical, ropes and tethers” (Alcoff 2000:251). This focus has influenced various developments in feminism, cultural theory and social science that envisioned new kind of future (Alcoff 2000:251).

Foucault’s method of deconstructing traditional conceptions of power provokes us into asking questions about our history, society and ourselves. Foucault investigates the dynamics of “micro-power” (Sheridan 1980:219). Foucault, in an interview with J.L. Brochier, states:

When I think of the mechanics of power, I think of its capillary form of existence, of the extent to which power seeps into the very grain of individuals, reaches right into their bodies, permeates their gestures, their posture, what they say, how they learn to live and work with other people.

(Sheridan 1980: 217)

Power, in Foucault’s conceptualisation, comes from below. It is not some negative force from the outside but rather “it is induced in the body and produced in every social interaction” (Bidy 1982:6). In the modern world, power is the relation between pleasures, knowledge as they are produced and disciplined (Bidy 1980:6).

While Foucault investigates the different configurations of micro-power, ecofeminist scholars offer a critique of macro-power, power from above.

We live in a system where power is power-over, that is, domination and control; it is a system in which a person or group of people has the right to tell other people what to do, to make their decisions, to set standards they have to live up to. The system may be overtly coercive, like a prison, or it may be benign on the surface, but it is still a system of power. And we internalize the system of domination. It lives inside us, like an entity, as if we were possessed by it. Ecofeminism challenges all relations of domination.

(Starhawk 1990:76)

The ecofeminist scholar Ivone Gebara poses a critique of productions of knowledge and shares Foucault's suspicion of traditional western productions of knowledge. Gebara argues that knowledge produced within the western tradition "have always had an anthropocentric, or human centred, and androcentric, or male-centred bias" (1999: 25).

This meant that when we spoke of scientific knowledge, of philosophical knowledge, of theological knowledge, or even of "true" knowledge, we were always referring to knowledge gained and disseminated by men. What was left to women and to the poor was so-called experiential knowledge, knowledge based on everyday experience; but this was not automatically recognized as real knowing.

(Gebara 1999: 25)

Gebara poses that the hierarchizing of knowledge and different kinds of knowing (male scientific knowledge at the top and female experiential knowledge at the bottom) also leads to the hierarchizing of society, which is characteristic of patriarchy. In this hierarchized society knowledge and power are monopolized by a male elite at the expense of the majority (1999: 25).

The act of knowing, then, is contextual: It is influenced by sex, place, time, and date, and is also marked by ideological assumptions and sexist leanings. Androcentric knowing also leads to anthropocentric knowing, in which only human actions and reactions are taken seriously.

(Gebara 1999: 27)

The researcher's methodological choice for Foucault's genealogical method can be met with some criticism. France, of which Foucault was a citizen, was one of the greatest colonial powers in the world and had an extensively negative impact on the lives and lands of Africans. This leads to perhaps, the most serious critique on Foucault: he neglected to situate and explore modernity's regimes of power/knowledge in colonialism. Foucault's own Eurocentricity, according to Alcoff (2000:253-256) leads him to exclude all knowledges and experiences outside of Europe (Alcoff 2000:253-256). This is especially striking when one considers the argument by Enrique Dussel:

While modernity is undoubtedly a European occurrence, it also originates in a dialectical relation with non-Europe. Modernity appears when Europe organizes the initial world-system and places itself at the center of history over against a periphery equally constitutive of modernity.

(1995:11)

Non-Europe, as Dussel calls it, is in direct relation to Europe and in a sense, it is this binary that constitutes what Europe is.

These charges against Foucault are by no means empty, but his thought has encouraged others to write about colonialism, for example Edward Said's 1979 book *Orientalism*. Though, Foucault's work is also met by criticism by some feminist scholars, his work has been widely used however by feminists, and queer theorists alike in sexual and body politics.

Using both the lenses of Foucault and ecofeminism will methodologically enable this study to both investigate the micro and macro configurations of power and knowledge and their bearing upon our understanding and interaction with land and people and how they create conditions that do not allow life in abundance, but rather distorts and destroys. This distortion and destruction will be conceptualised by using Jacques Derrida's notion of *hauntology*. With this conceptualisation, we see that the systems and institutions that came into being with distorts, disrupts and destroys people and nature alike, creates ghosts that haunt our presence. In tracing the macro and micro configurations of power, ghosts appear, they haunt. Rather than trying to dispel these ghosts, hauntology recognises that the ghosts of our past makes an ethical demand on us, the living, for recognition, remembrance and even, restoration. This notion of restoration and wholeness brings us back to the ecofeminist idea of interconnectedness and interdependence.

1.2.2. Research Design

This research will be qualitative and thus exploratory, as it will aim to gain understanding of the different configurations of land in South Africa. Thus, exploring the political, theological, environmental frameworks of “land” in South Africa will be important. This is not an attempt at definitive research, as this topic is too broad for Masters research. Particular focus will be given to people’s experience and broken relationship surrounding land as it has been impacted by colonialism, Apartheid and industrialization.

1.2.3. Data Sources

This will be a literature study that includes documentary sources, secondary sources, life histories and narratives, case studies and personal observation. Data collection will involve primary research of literary sources.

1.2.4. Issues of Reliability and Validity

Limits in this study would include issues of language, the researcher’s subjective experience, access to data, generalizations and the speculative nature of this study. This is not a quantitative study that involves measurable data; rather it involves the subjective experience of people’s embodied existence. Within a Western world view the embodied experience with its preference for spirit over body, this would be a limiting factor for this research. However, in the methodology of this research we look to alternative epistemologies such as is found in African anthropology with its notion of wholeness—which includes the mind as well as the body, and ecofeminism which situates the embodied experience of women at the forefront of its quest for understanding and relating to the world.

1.2.5. Scope of the Research

The scope of research is to explore the concept of land by looking at various lenses as is relevant in South Africa: these lenses include colonial and missional history and

theology, African concepts of wholeness, Afrikaner ideology, the South African mining industry, Derrida's concept of hauntology, African women's theology and ecofeminism.

1.2.6. Conclusion

In the following chapter entitled *Whose Land is it anyway?* we will explore the complex history of colonialism, British Imperialism and missionary theology in relation to the concept of land. This exploration situates the conversation of land in a historical and theological context that is today still a large part of the social, political and theological discussion on land. Secondly, we will explore the contesting views of black South Africans and white Afrikaners on the issue of land. This discussion will look at African anthropology and its belief of wholeness and the violence and disruption the colonialist encounter enacted on the life world of the African. The last part of this discussion will explore the retroactive mythologizing process of the Afrikaner in regards to its conception of Promised Land. The views of Africans vs. Afrikaner on land have deep roots in the violence of colonialism and the encounter between colonist and the colonised.

CHAPTER 2

WHO'S LAND IS IT ANYWAY? CONTESTING VIEWS

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Max du Preez once wrote “No national issue elicits as much anger, fear and fiery confrontation as the ownership of land” (2013:159). This remains true today. There are various claims to land in South Africa from different groups that are, it seems most of the time at odds with each other. Entitlement to geographical space springs from various aspects of religion, mythology, tradition, history, politics and the economy. It is, as Brueggemann calls it “freighted”:

Land continually moves back and forth between literal and symbolic intentions... A symbolic sense of the term affirms that land is never simply physical dirt but is always physical dirt freighted with social meanings derived from historical experience.

(Brueggemann 2002: 2)

The question of “who the land belongs to” and different arguments and viewpoints thereof will in this chapter be framed within two themes. First, this question will be explored within South Africa’s history of colonial and imperial conquest and the role missionaries played in the theological formation of the concept of land. This first account of the colonial and missionary activity is important to better contextualise and frame our second discussion; which will explore the competing and conflicting theological views on land and ownership of the Afrikaner and the African.

2.2. COLONIALISM AND THE MISSIONARY PROJECT

There is a story that is variously attributed to President Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and even Archbishop Desmond Tutu that goes as follows:

When the white man first came to our country he had the Bible and we had the land. He said 'let us pray to God'. We closed our eyes and joined him in prayer. When we opened our eyes at the end of the prayer, we saw that we now had the Bible and he had the land. ¹

Behind this simple story lies a complex history of domination, dispossession and reordering of the geographical, spiritual, economic and political landscape of people in colonial contexts.

In the following section, we will first look to the start of the colonial era with the advent of exploration and discovery and then we will look at the "high imperialism" of the British presence in the Cape Colony and the ensuing missionary activity of the 19th century and the effect it had on the cultural, religious and geographical landscape of southern Africa.

2.2.1. Early European Colonisation

In 1492 when the Italian Christopher Columbus crossed the Atlantic and discovered the Americas, European society was confronted with the question: where do these new lands and people fit into God's creation and even more importantly, what is the Old World's relation to the New? The discovery of the "New World" posed a crisis for Christianity in Europe. It called into question the European's own place in God's creation and it left many wondering where these new lands and people fit in within God's great plan. Of great concern was the question: what was the Old World's relation to the New?

The answer came readily: there were millions of people who have not ever heard of Christ and were destined to eternal damnation. "Fortunately," as David Bosch in his magnum opus *Transforming Mission* (1991:227) wrote, "the first two colonial powers and their rulers [Portugal and Spain] were stalwart champions of the Catholic faith and could be trusted to do their best to bring the message of eternal redemption to all".

¹ cf. Tinyiko Maluleke, 2007, "Postcolonial Mission: Oxymoron or New Paradigm?", *Swedish Missiological Themes*, 95 (4) p. 512

Willie James Jennings, in his seminal book *The Christian Imagination* writes that theologians part of the Spanish conquest of Peru argued that God purposefully enriched the land with precious minerals “as a preparation for the gospel” knowing that the Christians would come to South America. In effect, as Jennings states, this argument makes God responsible for colonial desire (Jennings 2010b: Kindle Locations 2085-2086). The subjugation of the non-Western world began quite simply out the sincere doctrinal *Truth*: God created the world (Jennings 2010a:87) and it was the “Good” Christian’s job to reassert this logic in the New World. This process replicated itself all over the world.

As the Europeans carried out their often-violent conquest of the New World, Africa, and Asia, their notions of the natural world were being recast to account for the exotic new landscapes and peoples their encountered. They came to view themselves as the apex of world, culture. Nature, defined as unimproved, wild land, or uncultured, wild men and women, was perceived as a separate domain in need of cultivation. No less than God demanded it. The wilds of the New World, Africa, and Asia were to be systematically explored, classified and brought under control.

(Mrozowski 1999:153)

This period in history saw the beginning European colonization of the lands and people of Africa, Asia and the Americas (Bosch 1991:226) that would last deep into the 20th century and of which we are experiencing the traumatizing impact of up until today.

Non-European bodies and lands were caught in a theological and economic arrangement out of which it could not escape. Modernity, contrary to popular belief did not initiate a new age of human freedom, self-determination and the human mastery over nature, but rather led to widespread domination and extermination of native peoples, land and resources. Enrique Dussel makes an interesting observation when he says *ego conquiro* (I conquer), as a practical self, predates the 16th century *ego cogito* (I think) ontology of Descartes (1996:133).

Early cartographers indicated undocumented and unmapped regions with the Latin designation “*Terra Incognita*”, meaning “unknown land”. With the advent of sea expedition and exploration these blank, empty and, one could say, dark spaces were

to be filled in and illuminated—by sea captains, explorers and churchmen alike. But these lands were not empty or without people, history, knowledge and culture.

Religion, in this case— Christianity, became the vehicle of control of these new “empty” territories. Pope Alexander VI’s Papal Bull *Inter Caetera Divinae* bears testament to the religious sanctioning of European expansion. In this decree, the Papal seat assumes supreme political as well as ecclesiastical authority of these new lands and divides the world beyond Europe between the kings of Portugal and Spain and grants them full authority over including those yet to be discovered (Bosch 1991:227):

Among other works well pleasing to the Divine Majesty and cherished of our heart, this assuredly ranks highest, that in our times especially the Catholic faith and the Christian religion be exalted and be everywhere increased and spread, that the health of souls be cared for and that barbarous nations be overthrown and brought to the faith itself.

(*Inter Caetera Divinae* 1493)

European expansion and conquest was fostered by the simple, and sincere doctrinal truth: God created the world (Jennings 2010a:87) and it was the “Good” Christian’s job to propound this logic in the lands beyond Europe.

During the fifteenth to the seventeenth century both Roman Catholic and Protestants were, admittedly in very different ways, still dedicated to the theocratic ideal of the unity of the church and state. No Catholic or Protestant ruler of the period could imagine that, in acquiring overseas possessions, he was advancing only his political hegemony; it was taken for granted that the conquered nations would also have to submit to the Western ruler’s religion (...) The settlers who, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, arrived in the Americas, the Cape of Good Hope, and elsewhere, were charged not only to subdue the indigenous population, but also to evangelize them.

(Blanke 1966:105 cited in Bosch 1991:303)

Towards the end of the 16th century Spain and Portugal ceased to be the maritime superpowers and the Dutch, British and Scandinavia took their stead. During 17th century the theocratic ideal of the unity of the church and state wavered in European expansion. In its place, European expansion was propelled by economic interests.

The church, no longer incited European expansion, however, the church whether it be Catholic or Reformed, accompanied expansion. Wherever ships sailed after minerals, products and slaves, the church went along. Or even, in the case of the Dutch Reformed Church in Ghana, was built on the dungeons that enslaved the bodies of black women (Kobo 2018:2). One cannot deny the complicity of the church, and specifically of the Reformed tradition to that of slavery, or as Vellem terms it (2013:2): “the close affinity of the Reformed faith with slavery”. Kobo (2018:2) goes on to describe this “affinity” in the case of the Elmina Castle in Ghana as follows:

The location of a Dutch Reformed chapel above the female dungeon at Elmina Castle, where human beings were commodified, where human beings were starved to death when they resisted inhuman actions, where black African women were raped and humiliated, is a clear demonstration of how the church can allow itself to become the cultural and religious guardian of the symbols of domination and subjugation.

In 1652, the Dutch East India Company (DEIC) established a refreshment station in the Cape colony and from the 17th century onwards Europe and the church became a permanent fixture of the southern African landscape. The motivation for the establishment for European rule of the Cape was largely based on economic gain: profitable trade between the Netherlands and its East Indies commercial empire (Hofmeyr & Pillay 1994:3).

The DEIC exerted complete control over political, geographical, economical and ecclesiastical workings of the Cape colony. With Van Riebeeck came Dutch Calvinism, which became the dominant religious culture among the white settlers (Ackerman 1991:48). With regards to missionary activity the Company sought to completely suppress missionary initiatives since profitmaking was to be the sole priority of the European presence at the Cape. The missionary activity that did take place among the indigenous populations were private endeavours and where broadly disorganised attempts (Hofmeyr & Pillay 1994:22) and missionary activities were met with considerable resistance from the colonists.

In the Cape, there arose sharp distinction between free man/slave, rich/poor, black/white, heathen/Christian. In the 18th century, deep social divide in the Cape

spilled over into the churches, especially the Dutch Reformed Church of the Cape with its concept of “*geen gelykstelling*” (a precursor for the term “Apartheid”) which meant that a coloured or black person did not have the same rights in church and state as a white person. This term became common in discussions, church publications and synods and eventually the term was even taken up in the ZAR constitution (Dreyer 2013:2).

During this era of early Dutch settlement in Southern Africa the purpose of this geographical space and the people that inhabited it were largely understood from an economic viewpoint. The good of the land and the indigenous people in this context was to serve the economic enterprise of the Dutch East India Company. The value of the land and its people was in its resources. It was not only the rich Cape soil that was intensively developed and cultivated, but one should not forget the booming slave trade that was to be found there and the DEIC’s complicity in importing slaves to the Cape Colony.

[B]y the middle of the eighteenth century they [the slaves] were more numerous than the 5100 free burghers. By 1806 there were 26 720 whites, 29 256 slaves, and 17 757 Khoikhoi.

(Hofmeyr & Pillay: 1994:4)

Patrick Wolfe in his article *Settler Colonialism and the elimination of the Native* (2006) makes an interesting point in regards to settler-colonial society. He argues that “invasion is a structure not an event” and that “territoriality is settler colonialism’s specific irreducible element” (Wolfe 2006:388). The European immigrants that came to the most southern part of Africa did not, with the diminishing of DEIC rule, go back to Europe. By then the Cape Colony had outgrown its initial humble beginnings as a refreshment station. Cape Town was a fast-growing urban area with a strong agricultural foothold and a growing settler society. A settler society which, Wolfe argues, “builds its society on the expropriated land base” which purely means “settler colonisers come to stay” (2006:388).

Because of their attempts at permanent establishment, settlers left some of the most lasting legacies of colonialism legacies that we often fail to recognize as colonial

because they are the product of an internal colonialism in which discussion of the colonized has given way to discussion of minority ethnic groups.

(Pels 1997:173)

Settler colonialism poses a problem for indigenous people, because as Deborah Bird Rose writes “to get in the way of settler colonization, all the native has to do is stay at home” (1991:46 in Wolfe 2006:388). The effects of colonialism and settler-colonialism were utterly devastating to the indigenous peoples of South Africa:

By the beginning of the nineteenth century the San people had almost disappeared from the Cape Colony though some had fled to places of refuge further inland. The Khoikhoi had been virtually reduced to the position of landless serfs by the middle of the eighteenth century. Most of them were labourers on Dutch farms and only a few small clans remained independent.

(Hofmeyr & Pillay 1994:36)

When the DEIC left Southern Africa after the Napoleonic wars, control of the Colony changed hands. The late 17th century saw brief military occupation of the Cape and finally in 1815 the Cape Colony was permanently ceded to Britain. Two British colonies, the Cape and Natal were formed by the mid-19th century and the Orange River Sovereignty saw perfunctory British occupation. This period also saw the formation of the Trekker republics; the Transvaal in 1852 and the Orange Free State in 1854 (Hofmeyr & Pillay 1994:36). The DEIC company policy on missionary activity, as has been noted before, was discouraged. This however changed with the advent of the British control of the Colony. Willie James Jennings in his exposition of missionary activity in Natal, specifically the work and life of the Anglican bishop John Colenso notes (2010b: Kindle Locations 2722-2726) that between 1835-1880 “there were at least seventy-five mission stations covering the Natal, Zululand and Mpondaland”. These missions represent a vast array of denominations that included “Methodist, Scottish Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Church of England, Congregational, and American Presbyterian.” The church had come to stay.

2.2.2. British Imperialism and Mission Societies

Colonialism of the 19th century developed a religious tone that was deeply tied to the missionary project (Bosch 1991: 303). The missionary project during this period of colonialism was driven by the idea of conversion of the uncivilised “primitive” from “savagery and Satan’s darkness to the light of civilization and God’s kingdom” (Mudimbe 1988:52).

Jean and John Comaroff in their book entitled *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa* (1991:14-15), argue that “the colonial encounter was not a contingent set of events” but rather, it was “an integral part of the cultural and social revolution that accompanied the rise of industrial capitalism, an expression of the expansive universalism that marked the dawn of modernity”.

Though sincere intentions of the missionary project and those that volunteered to spread God’s Good News cannot be denied, it is however difficult not to see the role that missionaries played in the destructive process of expanding the Empire. As William Saayman (1994:12) argues it can even be said “that the missionaries bear greater responsibility for the consequences than the colonialists. The colonialists generally had more limited end in view, aimed mostly at external ordering and domination” whereas the missionaries overtly aimed to also colonize the mind.

In John and Jean Comaroff’s investigation of colonialism among the Southern Tswana, they argue that the process of colonisation “began with the entry of mission Christianity onto the historical landscape of South Africa.” Not only did the missionary represent the British presence in South Africa, but were they also “the most active cultural agents of empire”. This process included the reconstruction of the “native” world in the name of God and Queen (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991: 5-6). The Britons sought to:

methodically, “make history” for people whom, they thought, lacked it; to induct those people into an order of activities and values; to impart form to an Africa that was seen as formless; to reduce the chaos of save life to the rational structures and techniques that, for Europeans, were both the vehicle and the proof of their own civilization.

(Comaroff & Comaroff 1991:14)

It is interesting to see that the missionaries who came to the colonies did not perceive their particular brand of colonialism to be a bad thing. John Comaroff in his article *Contests of Conscience: Models of Colonial Domination in South Africa* (1989) draws three models of colonialism found in mission literature: i. state colonialism exemplified by the Colonial government, ii. settler colonialism the Boer model and iii. civilising colonialism of which the missionaries were the standard. Missionaries regarded both state colonialism and settler colonialism to be less effective, and in the case of Boer settler colonialism, to be an especially savage form of colonialism (1989:672-3).

In contrast to these forms of colonialism, the civilizing colonialism of the British missionary “distilled to its essence, the civilizing colonialism of the nonconformists sought to "cultivate" the African "desert" and its inhabitants by planting the seeds of bourgeois individualism and the nuclear family, of private property and commerce, of rational minds and healthily clad bodies, of the practical arts of refined living and devotion to God” (Comaroff 1989:673).

Civilizing colonialism despite its abstract formulation found very concrete applications in the form of mission stations. Land ownership became central in the *modus operandi* of missions in southern Africa:

Indeed, owning land became an important foundation stone on which the system of missionary values was erected. Once the missionaries "owned" the land, it became a foreign enclave within the African environment — and on this land an African very often became a foreigner in her or his own country (...) In this estranged enclave, missionaries — like other settlers — could now rebuild "a home away from home," which enabled them to live according to their own cultural norms and standards and where they could induce their converts to do the same.

(Saayman 1994:14)

Achille Mudimbe characterises colonialism and colonisation to mean organisation or arrangement. He makes the argument that “colonists (those settling a region), as well as the colonialists (those exploiting a territory by dominating a local majority) have all tended to organize and transform non-European areas into fundamentally European constructs” (1988:15). I would argue, the mission station is exemplary of this process

of organisation that Mudimbe describes. Others such as (Vellem (2013), Jennings, (2010), Khabela (1996) and Maluleke (1993)² to name a few, make for a similar argument concerning the role of the mission station regarding local peoples. John Comaroff gives a more detailed account of this process of transformation by using the very “civilising colonialism” model found in missionary literature. The six “steps” evangelists used can be characterised as follows (1989:673-674):

1. Create a theatre of the everyday, demonstrating by their own exemplary actions the benefits of methodical routine, of good personal habits, and of enlightened European ways;
2. banish “superstition” in favour of rational technique and Christian belief;
3. reduce the landscape from chaotic mass of crude dirty huts to an ordered array of square, neatly bounded residences (with rooms and doors, windows and furniture, fields and fences), enclosure being both a condition of private property and civilized individualism, and an aesthetic expression of the sheer beauty of refinement;
4. recast the division of labour by making men into hardworking farmers and bringing women “indoors” to the domestic domain, much along the lines of the English middle-class family;
5. encourage these families to produce for the market by teaching them advanced methods, the worth of time and money, and the ethos of private enterprise- the explicit model being the late British yeomanry³; all of which
6. demand that Africans be taught to read and reason, to become self-reflective and self-disciplined.

The presence of the missionary and the method civilising colonialism, is characteristic of the three C’s of colonialism: Christianity, commerce, and civilization (Bosch

² See Vellem, Vuyani S.. (2013). The "Native Experiment": the formation of the Bantu Presbyterian Church and the defects of faith transplanted on African soil. *Missionalia*, 41(2), 146-163. Retrieved October 28, 2018, from http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0256-95072013000800005&lng=en&tlng=es, Khabela, M.G., 1996, *The struggle of the gods: Tiyo Soga, a study in Christianity and the Africa culture*, Lovedale Press, Lovedale, Maluleke, T.S., 1993. Mission ethnicity and homeland: the case of the EPCSA. *Missionalia: Southern African Journal of Mission Studies*, 21(3), pp.236-252. and Jennings, W.J., 2010. *The Christian imagination: Theology and the origins of race*. Yale University Press.

³In British society, the yeomanry was independent peasants who "[produced] for the market, themselves employing wage-labour, and shared the outlook and interests of gentlemen and merchants rather than of landless labourers and subsistence husbandmen" (Hill 1969:70)

1991:305). Similarly, Mudimbe identifies three main processes in colonial organisation:

[T]he procedures of acquiring, distributing, and exploiting lands in colonies; the policies of domesticating natives; and the manner of managing ancient organizations and implementing new modes of production. Thus, three complementary hypotheses and actions emerge: the domination of physical space, the reformation of natives' minds, and the integration of local economic histories into the Western perspective. These complementary projects constitute what might be called the colonizing structure, which completely embraces the physical, human, and spiritual aspects of the colonizing experience.

(Mudimbe 1988: 15)

The control of land, translation, religious teaching, involvement in colonial education and “relative autonomy from the practice of colonial control gave missionaries a special position at the juncture of colonial technologies of domination and self-control” (Pels 1997:171-172).

“Civilizing colonisation” as we have explored thus far may seem to be less violent and dramatic than war and coercive violence such as found on the frontier, but I would contend that the methodology followed by missionaries during the colonial era completely reconstructed⁴ the traditional culture and lives of the African people that came into contact with it by using a subtle and destructive network of power/knowledge dynamics. Using Mudimbe’s definition of colonialism as organisation and arrangement the missionary project, and by extension colonialism itself, transformed the indigene “by the very act of conceptualizing, inscribing, and interacting with on terms not of their choosing; making them into the pliant objects and silenced subjects of our scripts and scenarios; in assuming the capacity to “represent” them (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991:15).

⁴ It must be noted that black resistance to missionary practices and views were present, for example Tiyo Soga the first black person to be ordained, resisted ideas of black extermination. Another example is that of Lovedale, initially founded by missionaries, later it became an important locus for the struggle against Apartheid.

Aníbal Quijano goes on to describe the intricate power/knowledge relationship of the Colonial encounter as follows:

In the beginning colonialism was a product of a systematic repression, not only of the specific beliefs, ideas, images, symbols or knowledge that were not useful to global colonial domination, while at the same time the colonisers were expropriating from the colonised their knowledge, specially in mining, agriculture, engineering, as well as their products and work. The repression fell, above all, over the modes of knowing, of producing knowledge, of producing perspectives, images and systems of images, symbols, modes of signification, over the resources, patterns, and instruments of formalized and objectivised expression, intellectual or visual. It was followed by the imposition of the use of the rulers' own patterns of expression, and of their beliefs and images with reference to the supernatural.

(Quijano 2007: 169)

In the case of missionaries Christianity provided a useful theological framework that extended the colonialist's "identity onto a spiritual plane and enabled them to articulate their forms of life in their encounters with other peoples" (Jennings 2010a:37). The African object (the indigenous person could only ever be an object in its relation to Europe) was forcibly stripped and alienated of their land, language, family, culture and religion and was subjected to the European gaze which weighed, judged, appraised, punished and saved. The colonial encounter of the missionary with the indigene is similar of the type of practices and techniques Foucault describes in his seminal work *Madness and Civilization: The history of madness in the age of reason*. Modern society was permeated with practices and techniques that sought to normalise deviant/different modes of existence by using methods of observation, examination and normalizing judgement (Dreyfus & Rabinow: 1983:173). This holds true for the 20th century asylum and the 19th century colonial context of missionary and convert.

Foucault objects to this disciplinary use of power because it reduces the possibilities for a person's lifestyle, and it undermines a person's ability to create their own way of existence by excluding alternative discourses that force individuals to conform to a limited mode of existence and experiences (Atkins 2005:207).

The relationship and power dynamics between coloniser and colonised would always be unequal because, as modernist thought embodied in the European missionary showed us:

[O]nly European culture is rational, it can contain 'subjects' the rest are not rational, they cannot be or harbour 'subjects'. As a consequence, the other cultures are different in the sense that they are unequal, in fact inferior, by nature. They only can be 'objects' of knowledge or/and of domination practices. From that perspective, the relation between European culture and the other cultures was established and has been maintained, as a relation between 'subject' and 'object'. It blocked, therefore, every relation of communication, of interchange of knowledge and of modes of producing knowledge between the cultures, since the paradigm implies that between 'subject' and 'object' there can be but a relation of externality. Such a mental perspective, enduring as practice for five hundred years, could only have been the product of a relation of coloniality between Europe and the rest of the world.

(Quijano 2007:174)

The type of oppression and domination exemplified by the Colonialist era in southern Africa and elsewhere in the world, is an oppression and domination of people and nature. There is an interconnectedness in life, that since the 15th century, has been undermined and disrupted by patriarchal, euro- and androcentric notions of conquest and possession. It is however important to note that wherever these notions of conquest and possession have reared its ugly head, dissent and resistance have accompanied it. It is for instance the Dutch Reformed Mission Church that have produced the like of Tiyo Soga, Albert Luthuli, Beyers Naude, Allan Boesak and the Belhar Confession (Ackerman 1991:48).

In this discussion of the process of colonisation, first in the form of early Dutch settler's, military occupation and second of the later British missionary activity in the Cape Colony served to illustrate the complex formation and history behind the notion of land. Land did not play some secondary role in the history of South Africa, but was a central component of the political, social, economic and religious dynamic of the colonial encounter—whereby neither the coloniser or the colonised would ever be the same again. This is the background to the next section which we will explore: the theological

conceptualization of land in both the interior and exterior life world of the African and Afrikaner.

2.3. COMPETING FRAMEWORKS: AFRICAN VS. AFRIKANER

In the beginning of this research I quoted Max du Preez “No national issue elicits as much anger, fear and fiery confrontation as the ownership of land” (2013:159). This confrontation is triggered by various issues: from discussions about name changes of streets to towns and cities (such as the controversy of changing Pretoria to Tshwane) to the discussion of the Nationalisation of mines, the controversial issue of farm attacks and most recently in the issue of land expropriation without compensation. Land, who it belongs to, what we call it and what we do to it matters to people—black and white alike.

Various civil rights groups and political parties regularly use narratives that involve land in their rhetoric and policies. Statements from political parties such as the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) bears testament to this, “We want it [land] back even if it’s to look at it every morning and cry out loud, Izwe Lethu!” (EFF 2014:86). “Izwe Lethu” means “our land”. The EFF considers land and land ownership central to trying to make right the wrongs of the past:

Land return is essentially for the reparation of the haunted African soul and to create new social relations away from the current ones which are essentially racist and anti-black. Without land, there is no redressing the 350 years of dispossession and disfigurement of black life. What we would do with the land is none of the business of the land thieves.

(EFF 1st National Assembly Discussion Documents 2014:71)

Similarly, in Afrikaner conservative groups such as the Freedom Front Plus, civil groups and unions such as Afriforum⁵ and Solidarity there exists narratives and discourses on land ownership that is deeply tied to identity, belonging and survival.

The problem is however even when people cry “*Izwe Lethu!*” somewhere else somebody is simultaneously crying “*Ons grond!*”. Both the African and Afrikaner claim this land—albeit from what seems a fundamentally different point of departure. In this section, we will explore these different points of departures by looking at both the African and Afrikaner’s view and relationship to land.

2.3.1. Land and African spirituality

Due to the devastating process of colonialism and the erasure of African culture which was replaced by European culture and Christianity, it is difficult to fully talk about African anthropology (Maimela 1991:4), though there are some elements and notions that we can recount. Firstly, to talk about African anthropology is also to talk about African religion or spirituality. As Gabriel Setiloane writes, “For Africa, religion or religious considerations enter into and influence all spheres of life. Therefore, can we speak about “The Wholeness of Human Life” (1978:31).

Talking about land, also means talking about religion and in turn also anthropology. Nature, personhood, the body and communities are all viewed holistically. Within the African worldview there exists an intricate network of relationships to family (living and dead), community, God and nature wherein the individual is embedded (Maimela 1991:5). Within this worldview, all people share simultaneously a horizontal connection with each other and a vertical connection with ancestors and future generations (Krüger, Lubbe & Steyn 2009:58).

⁵ In the debates on land expropriation without compensation, Afriforum recently in a presentation to the Constitutional Review Committee, even went to so far as to deny that white settlers stole land, calling it “the single biggest historical fallacy of our time” and went further by saying that white land acquisition by conquest, though the most controversial was the least significant in that time (Afriforum 6 September 2018, <https://www.afriforum.co.za/expropriation-without-compensation-ndr-failed/>)

For Africans, the phenomenon of nature is part of God's revelation and presence. Within African cosmology African communities closely associate natural and environmental experiences with "the manifestation of God's presence" and the natural environment is thus "theocentrically perceived" (Ongong'a 2003:62-63), it is sacred.

Within this holistic worldview, the alienation and dispossession of land during the colonial period and the later Apartheid era was thus utterly devastating on the lives of Black Africans. S.T. Mofokeng writes in his piece entitled *Land is Our other: A Black Theology of Land* (1997:49):

In Africa, the land is generally sacred, for it belongs to the earth spirit, and to the ancestors as well as to the living community. Attempts at selling land are uncelebrated and in days was impossible...For Africans, land is the basis of their God-given self respect and creativity. Thus land is not just a piece of dirt, property or physical entity, it has a sacred character attached to it.

Or as Setiloane describes it "[l]and was not only the property of the living, but of the total community of the living and living dead" (1978:38).

When one understands what religious undertones are associated with land, how, therefore, the place of man's birth and upbringing is "a holy place", because there he meets his ancestors, only then will one be able to comprehend the depth of insult and the feeling of being raped and dismembered of the victims of wholesale removals of villagers and townspeople in Southern Africa... For when the Bantu say of themselves or one to another that they are "Mwana we mvu" - son of the soil - it is so. They are tied to the soil, body, mind and soul. A child's umbilical cord is buried into the soil, the same soil into which his ancestors are buried, thus linking him to them where they are. If he is removed permanently from that place the cord which ties him to them is broken.
(Setiloane 1978:38)

Land is so much more than a source of life, soil to till for crops to grow, but is also part of religion and culture. Mofokeng (1997:49) makes the point that for agrarian people identity is "tied to land and expressed in the songs they sing, the art they create, their celebration, their rituals and rites of passage." Land and its moral and spiritual

significance, according to Mofokeng, constitutes the very centre for the African way of life (ibid).

Of utmost concern for the African is maintaining the delicate balance to be found in the “dynamic relationship with his or her extended family, clan or tribe, ancestors, God and nature” (Maimela 1991:5). This serves for an existence-in-relation with self, the community (living and dead), God and nature. Thus, experience within the African worldview is not disembodied and removed. It all takes place in this interdependent and connected ecosystem of relationships.

This worldview goes against the grain of Western rationality and conceptual understanding. This clash of cultures becomes starkly apparent with regards to land ownership. The western concept of land ownership is deeply embedded in the root metaphor of the marketplace, whereas “the African concept has the community/communality as its root metaphor” (Saayman 1994:15).

The method of civilising colonialism the missionaries espoused sought to re-order the life-world of the African into civilised European terms. But, learning new agricultural methods, for example as was taught by the missionaries at Lovedale, meant so much more than just learning a new technique to work the soil. In the enclave, the African now an alien on their own land, learned new methods that “came to signify important capitalistic approaches to the apprehension of self and society, principally individual land tenure and cultivation and habits of industry within the Protestant ethics of individualistic toil and reward” (Saayman 1994:14).

This is the true violence of African dispossession and alienation of land. It is a violence because having lost the land, and becoming foreigners on it, it meant the disruption of wholeness. Like a limb cut-off, the dispossession of land was a mutilation of self—self which is also community, God and nature. The dispossession of land in both the colonialist era and during Apartheid has been a major determining factor of African landlessness and impoverishment that we face today in South Africa. Africans lost the land, while colonists, Voortrekkers, moved into the land of milk and honey.

2.3.2. *Vryheid, Volk & Vaderland: Promised Land and the Afrikaner*

I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. (Genesis 17:6-8)

Afrikaner⁶ perspectives on land and land ownership is deeply imbued with religious symbols, texts (such as the above quoted verse from Genesis) and ideological sentiment. The Afrikaner concept of land is caught up in the holy grail of Afrikaner Nationalist thought: *vryheid, volk and vaderland*⁷. As Du Toit (2008: 563) argues, “the emergence of ‘Afrikaners’ as a distinct, self-aware group in colonial society, was on the one hand, a historical process in its own right which, on the other hand was retrospectively mythologised and politicised in various ways”.

Bearing similar views, the renowned South African church historian John de Gruchy makes a similar argument in his book *The Church Struggle in South Africa* (2005:29):

A defeated people need an interpretation of their history, a mythos, which can enable them to discover significance in what has happened to them. The continuity of the Afrikaner demanded such a world-view which would provide coherence to their shattered hopes. Such a mythos was not difficult to construct, especially for a people with such a strong belief in providence and an existential awareness of the plight of Ancient Israel as it sought liberation from the Egyptian yoke. So it is not surprising that Afrikaner history, like that of other nations, took on a sacred character. This was especially true of history since the Great Trek. While such ‘holy history’, with its vivid use of Old Testament motifs, was not official Dutch Reformed theology, it was certainly fundamental to Afrikaner self-understanding.

⁶According to historians such as F.A. van Jaarsveld Afrikaner nationalism can only be traced back as far as 1870 (Du Toit 2008:568). The term “Afrikaner” will then be used to refer to the group of West-European descendants post 1800’s. In later times people use the term “Boer” and “Afrikaner” interchangeably.

⁷ Translated into English: freedom, folk/nation, fatherland

Within this retroactive and supersessionist process (after the Second War of Independence) of the re-interpretation of history, the *Great Trek* and the events around the *Battle of Blood River* and *The Day of the Covenant* took a central place within Afrikaner thought and history:

They [Afrikaners] detected a sacred thread running through all the events of their past, beginning with the Great Trek into the unknown (the exodus) and including the encounter with and victory over the black nations (Philistines), especially at the Battle of Blood River, where they entered into a sacred covenant with God, the entry into the promised land of the Transvaal and Orange Free State, and the encounter with the pursuing British.

(De Gruchy 2005: 30)

The Day of the Covenant (*Geloftedag*) commemorates the vow of a group of about two-hundred Afrikaner trekkers into the interior of southern Africa in the year 1838 where they made a promise to God, to keep that day as a Sabbath and build a church if He led them to victory over the ten thousand amaZulu warriors. With the help of superior fire-power and believing God to be on their side the Voortrekkers won the day with minimal casualties. The Ncombe River flowed red with the spilled blood of amaZulu warriors, and was thereafter renamed Blood River. The Day of the Covenant is regarded by Afrikaner loyalists as both a religious and political symbol of resistance, and is regarded as evidence of God's special favour of the Afrikaner people (Villa-Vicencio 1985:13). This same symbol of resistance and evidence of God's special favour is simultaneously the site of trauma and loss of lives and land for the amaZulu. We know in the African worldview of wholeness, land is so much more than just soil. We know it also means life, history, self, God and community.

The Day of the Covenant is important, because it is this day that legitimises the notion of the Afrikaner's ownership of the land. "Identity, in this account, is God-given and therefore unchanging, and all members of the community are described as having equal access to this group identity, and through it to the land" (Coetzee 1993:130).

Within this mythologizing process of Afrikaner history, land has become deeply connected to Afrikaner identity, self-determination, and religion. This is largely still the

case today among the “Boere”-community. In our current context “Boere” in this sense does not only refer to the Afrikaner designation, but also to actual (white) farmers. The agricultural sector in South Africa is mostly still controlled by a white majority. This fosters this notion of Godly ordained ownership. White ownership of land is also supported by other racial justifications such as that ““we” [white people] can use the land better than “they” [black people] could” (Wolfe 2006:389). Currently in South Africa, this racial justification is a big part of the Afrikaner response to land restitution.

Earlier in our discussion of the Dutch and early British era of colonial expansion in southern Africa there was a brief discussion of settler colonialism. Patrick Wolfe argues “that settler colonialism is different from other forms of colonialism, insofar as the colonising community remains behind after the end of empire, to capitalise on an unequal social relationship with the colonised population, governing itself and others independently from the imperial metropole” (2006:388).

What is more, Wolfe goes on to say that settler colonialism is always in need of more land (2006:395). This is also true for forestry, fishing, pastoralism and mining. Agriculture, however is different from these other sectors. Agriculture, according to Wolfe, is inherently sedentary and thus permanent (ibid):

In contrast to extractive industries, which rely on what just happens to be there, agriculture is a rational means/end calculus that is geared to vouchsafing its own reproduction, generating capital that projects into a future where it repeats itself [...]Through its ceaseless expansion, agriculture (including, for this purpose, commercial pastoralism) progressively eats into Indigenous territory, a primitive accumulation that turns native flora and fauna into a dwindling resource and curtails the reproduction of Indigenous modes of production. In the event, Indigenous people are either rendered dependent on the introduced economy or reduced to the stock-raids that provide the classic pretext for colonial death-squads[...] In addition to its objective economic centrality to the project, agriculture, with its life-sustaining connectedness to land, is a potent symbol of settler-colonial identity.

(Wolfe 2006:395-396) *own italics*

Within the colonial settler identity of the Afrikaner, their connection to land became a central identity marker. This identity however, is as Wolfe says (2006:396), “impervious to inconsistencies” such as the occurrence “sedentary natives” and “the fact that settlers themselves have come from somewhere else”. That is why when against all historical evidence of dispossession and alienation of indigenous people, Afrikaners, can with sincerity and wholehearted conviction proclaim that this is their land.

Afrikaans mainline churches have celebrated the Day of the Covenant for years since its inception. To this day, my church, the *Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika* (NHKA), includes liturgies for celebrating this day in its service books for ministers, and in some churches this day is still celebrated—this even includes church services at the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria. This is significant. As an institution, the NHKA has for the most part failed to critically engage with this piece of our shared history of dispossession and trauma, just as a lot of Afrikaner-people have failed in this regard. As a church, we have largely failed to take a prophetic stance wherein naming and confession of wrongdoing have occurred.

Afrikaner sentiment towards land is thus deeply tied to religious and ideological notions of Godly ordained land while within the African worldview land is already connected to self, community and God—it is sacred. The process of dispossession such as employed in colonialism, colonist settlers and Apartheid, is a violation of this sacred connection. The African and Afrikaner conceptualisation on land we explored in this section is important because it informs the discussion on land today in South Africa.

2.4. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we looked to the era of colonialism and missionary activity in southern Africa to better understand the deep historical complexities and problematic behind the issue of land. We then looked to both the African and the Afrikaners views on land by tracing some of their histories, myths and spiritual and theological conceptualisations of land. For the process of colonisation to appear noble, it had to be justified by using notions of civilisation and Christian redemption. This facilitated

the re-arrangement, re-organisation and reshaping of the geographical, spiritual, social and political landscape of Africa and Africans.

This issue is by no means an easy or a simple matter. In the next chapter, we will look further into the history of labour and land in South Africa.

CHAPTER 3

COLONISATION AND THE COMMODIFICATION OF BODIES, LAND AND LIFE

3.1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, we saw how different notions of belonging has shaped people's view of their relationship to land in South Africa. History, theology and ideology have played a big part in this.

In this chapter, we will particularly look at how the connection between bodies, land and life has been systematically disrupted with the use of commodification. The core focus of this chapter is to explore the ways in which land and bodies are monetised and monopolised at the cost of the environment and people that inhabit it.

This exploration will first look at the discourses of colonialism—especially with regards to its economic interests and practices and how they played out in southern Africa. Secondly, we will look at the discovery of gold and diamonds in South Africa and the resulting dual commodification of bodies and land. This discussion will explore where the monetisation and monopolisation of land and people intersect with the South African Mining Industry. In this last regard, this discussion will not be a simple historical overview of the history of mining, but rather vignettes exploring this brokenness. This will be done by looking at the Marikana Massacre, the Mpumalanga mining industry and the Lily Mine tragedy to bring into view how human bodies and land are linked, exploited and in too many cases, destroyed in the process of commodification and alienation.

3.2. COLONIALISM: RACE, COMMODIFICATION OF LIFE AND HUMAN ALIENATION FROM LAND

Colonialism, the systematic process of exploration, classification and control (which could also be, as Mignolo refers to it, called the logic of coloniality) works across all spheres of life (Mignolo 2005:11):

1. the economic: appropriation of land, exploitation of labour, and control of finance
2. the political: control of authority
3. the civic: control of gender and sexuality
4. the epistemic and subjective/personal: control of knowledge and subjectivity

Keeping in mind the previous chapter, we can easily see how the work of Christian missionaries included these four domains and were integral to the colonialist project.

“Coloniality,” therefore, points toward and intends to unveil an embedded logic that enforces control, domination, and exploitation disguised in the language of salvation, progress, modernization, and being good for everyone.

(Mignolo 2005:6)

The West African philosopher V.Y. Mudimbe in his exploration of African discourses presents a similar view of the colonialist process of organisation. Mudimbe gives account of three different, as he terms it, methods and modulations:

[P]rocedures of acquiring, distributing, and exploiting lands and colonies; the policies of domesticating natives; and the manner of managing ancient organizations and implementing new modes of production. Thus, three complementary hypotheses and actions emerge: the *domination of physical space*, the *reformation of natives' minds*, and the *integration of local economic histories into the Western perspective*. These complementary projects constitute what might be called the colonizing structure, which completely embraces the physical, human and spiritual aspects of the colonizing experience.

(Mudimbe 1988:2) (own italics)

Walter Mignolo contends that there is no coloniality (as it originated in the 16th century and continued in different forms thereafter) without modernity: “Modernity is the name for the historical process in which Europe began its progress toward world hegemony. It carries a darker side, coloniality” (2005:xiii). Capitalism has its roots in this historical

process. The element by which modern capitalism is most widely characterized is, as the anthropologist Stephen Mrozowski states, commodification, that is “the process by which exchange values and use values are assigned to things” (1999:155).

In colonialism, classification and commodification were applied to all life: sheep, cattle, land, water rights, minerals, slaves and women (Mrozowski 1999:156). This process of classification and commodification was as Mrozowski argues, facilitated by Europe’s dualist framework. Dualism, as mentioned here, is the “fundamental belief that nature and society are separate realities” this in turn provides a “cultural rationale for seeing nature in the abstract”, and this in turns becomes an “essential step in its classification as a commodity” this in turn “provides the moral justification for their domination, commodification, and exchange” (Mrozowski 1999:156).

The indigene was caught up in this new system of relating to world and in this system their own skills, abilities and beliefs, their own notions of relating to the world around them were considered primitive and obsolete. Willie James Jennings describes this process in regards to Spanish conquerors in Peru.

The *encomienda* and the *reducción* began the Spanish disruption of Andean space and interruption of Andean identities. In this regard, the reconfiguration of living space is the first reflex of modernity in the New World, that is, the denial of the authority of sacred land.

(Jennings 2010b: Kindle Locations 1670-1672)

The same calculating gaze which viewed land as something to be measured, categorized, and exchanged, whose value could be determined and traded, viewed the body of the African slave the same way.

The appropriation of land went hand in hand with the exploitation of labor (Indians and African slaves) and the control of finance (the accumulation of capital as a consequence of the appropriation of land and the exploitation of labor).

(Mignolo 2005:12)

Between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries, Europeans brought over 8 million black men and women out of Africa to the New World. With this, “slavery transformed the Atlantic into a complex trading area uniting North and South America, Europe, and Africa through the movement of men, women, goods, and capital” (Solow 2002:1).

Land, and the people that inhabit it, has since the first European ships set foot in southern Africa, been considered a commodity—something that was seized and then made to serve. It is perhaps important to note, as Terreblanche writes, “[t]he Cape was not a Dutch colony, but the colony—and for that matter the *commercial property*—of a trading company”, the DEIC (2002:155) (own italics). The Dutch East India Trading Company was by the 17th and early 18th century one of the largest and most successful commercial trading companies in the world (Terreblanche 2002:153).

As has been noted earlier, the Cape colony did not with the advent of colonialist expansion escape the slave trade. The Cape was a big importer of slaves: “[f]rom 1652 until 1808 about 63 000 slaves were imported to the Cape from the Indonesian archipelago, the Indian subcontinent, Madagascar, and Mozambique” (Terreblanche 2002:157-8). This number excludes the systemic enslavement of the Khoi-khoi in the Cape.

During the almost 250 years of slavery and serfdom in at least some part of South Africa, the engine of the enslavement process was the superior military power of whites, the growing independence of patriarchal families, the abundance of land, and the chronic scarcity of suitable labour.

(Terreblanche 2002:163)

The abolition of slavery in the 1800’s led to the economic interests of Europe and the rest of the world to merely take on a different form. Imperialism as exemplified by the “scramble for Africa” started with the Berlin Conference which is considered the “symbol of the political commodification of Africa” (Fourie 2015:4). The Berlin Conference consists of meetings held separately between November 1884 and February 1885. The primary aim of the Berlin Conference was to settle disputes on different claims to the Congo, and to lay the foundation for settling European claims to African land and trade in the future (Fourie 2015:4).

The overt purpose of the Conference was to 'manage' the on-going process of colonisation in Africa...so as to avoid the outbreak of armed conflict between rival colonial powers.

(Craven 2015:31-32)

Antony Anghie argues that Berlin "transformed Africa in a conceptual *terra nullius*" (2004:91). European representatives bearing no consideration for the millions of lives and homes they would be disrupting, partitioned and claimed Africa as if there was nobody or anything already there and as if it was theirs to claim.

External actors came together to coordinate their intended activities on an entire continent in order to maximise political and economic value for themselves. The structure of the coordination, the ways in which it was to be executed and the type of value that was to be created made it impossible for any person or group in Africa to grasp or resist their commodification.

(Fourie 2015:4)

The process of colonialism, Walter Dignolo argues, "reveals that the advances of modernity outside of Europe rely on a colonial matrix of power that includes the renaming of the lands appropriated and of the people inhabiting them" (2005:6). In the 19th century this colonial matrix of power became formalised, as in the instance of the Berlin Conference.

This phenomenon of conferences, acts and laws used to facilitate dispossession and alienation of land is certainly not unknown to those familiar with South Africa's past. Colonialism and British imperialism created the framework wherein a system such as Apartheid could exist. The 20th century in South Africa saw the solidification and formalisation of various land alienation practices into state law. Various laws of segregation and Apartheid had their origins in decades old practices already underway in the colony and Boer republics, and have had far reaching consequences to the development of South Africa. For the last four centuries land and the people that inhabit it, have been caught up in an unequal power-dynamic it cannot escape. This problem persists to this day.

The rise and the institutionalisation of the labour system in South Africa is not only due to economic Imperialist agenda of the 19th century, but can also be ascribed to missionary activity and the notion of “the gospel of work.” Despite the differences between colonialists and colonisers, both British missionaries and settlers regarded Africans as lazy and “both agreed that the African should be taught the dignity of labour” (Villa-Viccencio 1988:43). James Stewart at the Lovedale Mission even believed the gospel served as basis for a “Christian civilisation” which was intricately tied to work and commerce. He argues: “The gospel of work does not save souls, but it saves people...Lazy races die or decay. Races that work prosper on earth. The British race, in all its greatest branches, is noted for its restless activity. Its life motto is Work! Work!” (Wells 1908:216).

In the context of Empire, land and the bodies that inhabit it were utilised and monetised for the good of the Empire. Whether it be for the Conquistador, Dutch trader or British missionary, the modes of operation and configurations of power are different in each mode of empire, but the end result is the same: dispossession and alienation of land and people.

3.3. LAWS OF DISPOSSESSION: THE 1913 LAND ACT

Dispossession over the centuries have occurred in various forms, “from colonial wars of conquest to the economic forces that pushed the African peasantry into the wage-labour system on white-owned farms and mines, and the laws that were backed by the might of the colonial and apartheid governments” (LARC 2016:16). Dispossession at the start of the 20th century took on the form of state law. In 1913, the Natives Land Act 27 was passed.

In the first chapter of Sol Plaatje’s famous work *Native life in South Africa before and since the European War and the Boer rebellion* (hereafter *Native life in South Africa*), Plaatje writes:

Awaking on Friday morning, June 20, 1913, the South African native found himself, not actually a slave, but a pariah in the land of his birth.

(Plaatje 1916: page unknown)

This quote is often used in discussions about the 1913 Natives Land Act. In a *Native Life in South Africa* Plaatje aims to make the British public aware of the plight of the Africans in the new union of South Africa. The Land Act prohibited Africans from buying or leasing land outside of designated reserves. Reserves, homelands or Bantustans, were areas that the government designated to each native group to live on separately so as to keep them away from white urban and rural areas.

(2) From and after the commencement of this Act, no person other than a native shall purchase, hire or in any other manner whatever acquire any land in a scheduled native area or enter into any agreement or transaction for the purchase, hire or other acquisition, direct or indirect, of any such land or of any right thereto or interest therein or servitude thereover, except with the approval of the Governor-General.

(Act No. 27 of 1913, Union of South Africa 1913).

In practice this translated into 7% of the country's land being designated to native reserves (Hall 2014:1), and the rest for the use of white interests in agriculture and industries. National mining and farming interests were the motivation behind the act. As Hall writes: "It was prompted in part by the resentment among Highveld farmers of syndicated African purchases of land, settlement of African tenants on land owned by mining companies, and share and labour tenancies by African farmers and farm workers" (Hall 2014: 2).

In *Native Life in South Africa* Plaatje writes with great fierceness of what this means for the life of the African. The 1913 Natives Land Act brought about the disintegration and fragmentation of entire communities. It held no respect to peoples tie to their land, their homes and families.

Beinart and Delius however argue (2014) that the immediate effects of the Land Act are contested. They argue that the Land Act did not immediately work in practice the way it was proposed in theory. In Beinart and Delius' view "the Act did not take land away from African people directly, and in the short term had a limited impact. Its most

immediate effect was to undermine black tenants on white-owned land, but even here the consequences were mixed and slow to materialise” (2014:668).

However, this act did serve to create the legal framework for following acts such as the 1936 Native Trust and Land Act and Group Areas Acts.

The Act laid the foundation for segregation and apartheid through most of the rest of the century: the homeland policies of Hendrik Verwoerd, the imposition of state-approved and appointed Bantu Authorities, the system of influx control and the hated ‘pass’ laws, and in the towns and cities, the Group Areas Act.

(Hall 2014:1)

Beinart and Delius also point out that the 1913 Land Act was not the first piece of land legislation, but for the newly formed Union, it “was an attempt to start the process of consolidating a national policy and national modes of operation” (2014:685). This also meant that government officials sought “gain a more total, panoptical view of landholdings, land occupation and social relations on the land” (ibid).

Land, especially when it comes to the Land Act, means, as Sampie Terreblanche writes in *History of Inequality*, talking about labour, especially “cheap black labour” (2002:385).

The Land Act was extraordinarily successful in proletarianising the great majority of Africans and creating large reservoirs of cheap and docile African labour for white farmers and the mining industry.

(Terreblanche 2002:260)

Although the process was slow to start with, land became increasingly more under white ownership. During the first half of the 20th century labour migration increased and the homelands became “entrenched as labour reservoirs for the mines, farms and cities” (Beinart & Delius 2014: 685-686). In respect to the farming industry of the 1900’s Beinart and Delius note:

In retrospect, we can see that the Land Act did signal the direction that South African

agrarian life and policy was gradually taking. Land held by an increasing proportion of white owners was becoming more capitalised. This was still a partial and halting process, and landowners were highly differentiated. However, the Land Act and its successors served the purpose of the better capitalised and improving farmers in two critical ways. They found it easier to control all of their land and apply more scientific techniques. And the scope for Africans to congregate on private land, and to defend a relatively independent existence as smallholders, was gradually diminished. African people on the farms increasingly became labour tenants, and breaches of contract were increasingly criminalized.

(Beinart & Delius 2014:686)

The 1913 Natives Land Act laid the foundation for further laws of dispossession. These laws, of which the 1913 Natives Land Act is just the start, totally reconfigured the African's relationship to land; *thereafter the relationship could only be imagined within a context of labour*. This was a profoundly unequal relationship—as it was not in the hands of the African to dictate the nature and terms of the relationship: that was left to the state (which was of course influenced by economic, ideological and political interests). The various property and labour acts illustrates this. Besides the 1913 Native Land's Act there was the: Native Trust and Land Act (1936, 1954), Group Areas Act (1950, 1952, 1956), Group Areas Development Act, Trading and Occupation of Land (Transvaal and Natal) Restriction Act ("Pegging Act") (1943), Western Areas Removal Act (1952) Industrial Conciliation Act, Native Labor (Settlement of Disputes) Act (1954), Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act (1945), Native Labor Regulation Act (1911, 1949, 1952) and Native Building Workers Act (1951). These acts sought to have complete control *how, when and where* the African may live on the land.

From the early 1900's the systematic impoverishment and displacement of Africans and other groups became codified into state legislature (Tong 2014:23). The African, be it any of the varied indigenous people found here, was denied freedom of movement and the ability to freely choose a home, and make a living out of their own choosing. Instead over decades' people were economically, socially, politically and geographically forcibly controlled.

The South African government conducted large-scale forced relocation of Africans, which combined with the Group Areas Act that focused on urban removal to

dispossess and move great populations of Africans literally out of sight. Under this legislation 3.5 million people were moved between 1960 and 1983.

(Meiring 2014:113)

Dispossession and alienation of land is not an abstract or theoretical experience, disconnected from bodies, meaning, culture, history, home, family, livelihood, nature or God. The effects of these laws of dispossession live on today in post-1994 South Africa. Poverty, landlessness and unfree cheap labour are still rampant in African communities.

3.4. CRY OF CREATION: THE SOUTH AFRICAN MINING INDUSTRY

There are various avenues to explore when it comes to the relationship between people and land in South Africa and how both parties—being inextricably connected—are being destroyed. For the purposes of this chapter we will look at the South African mining industry. The exploitation of both the land, the environment and the people that live on the land, is epitomised in the mining industry. Historically the mining industry capitalised on the various laws of dispossession enacted by colonial rule and Apartheid that deprived people of their land and livelihood and that “reduced indigenous people to different forms of unfree and exploitable labour” (Terreblanche 2002:6).

In South Africa, historically under colonial conquest and Apartheid, and through to the present under the neoliberal economic paradigm that is beholden to mining interests, this thirst for cheap migrant labour is slaked by destroying the livelihoods of distant rural communities, through acts of omission and commission.

(Cairncross & Kisting 2016:515)

The racial capitalist labour patterns of twentieth century South Africa consisted largely of a very structured “complex of exploitative measures” which included “masters and servant’s laws, pass laws, laws aimed at proletarianising Africans, anti-tradesmen laws, migrant and compound system, influx control, and several segregationist and

discriminatory laws” (Terreblanche 2002:241) that sought to negate black ownership competition in the labour market.

This alienation, exploitation and destruction of land becomes starkly apparent in the South African mining industry. The laws of dispossession discussed in the previous section finds their practical application in the various economic industries in South Africa.

“Unfree and exploitable labour” as Terreblanche calls it, did not come to an end with the abolishment of slavery and Khoisan enserfment. With the discovery of diamonds in 1867 and gold in 1886, methods of unfree and exploitable labour had been institutionalised for centuries. The newly booming South African mining industry experienced a great demand for “cheap and docile African labour” (Terreblanche 2002:9). This meant that existing methods for producing labour were refined, and that “additional methods of control and repression” were created (Terreblanche 2002:9). In Foucauldian terms the human body entered a machinery of power that explored it, broke it down and rearranged it (Foucault 1995:136).

Thus, discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, ‘docile’ bodies. Discipline increased the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience). In short, it dissociates power from the body; and the one hand, it turns it into an ‘aptitude’, a ‘capacity’, which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection. If economic exploitation separates the force and the product of labour, let us say that disciplinary coercion establishes in the body the constricting link between an increased aptitude and an increased domination.

(Foucault 1995: 136)

With this burgeoning industry came the establishment of the migrant labour system: cheap black labour was imported from the rural areas to work in the urban mining areas for short contracts.

The migrant labour system was a cornerstone of the landscape of colonial and apartheid South and southern Arica. This involved men being forced to leave their

families in rural parts of the sub-continent and travel to mining centers (sic) where they were housed in single-sex compounds while they worked in the mines. Their movements to and from the mines were tightly controlled by the pass system. As such, apartheid was probably one of the most extreme example of spatial engineering in human history.

(Bezuidenhout & Buhlungu: 2011:238)

The disciplines enacted on the black body became exposed in the compound system of the gold and diamond mines:

Workers living in a compound under the control of the employer for whom they work are not free. Their time and activities are strictly regulated to conform to a routine and organisation determined by the employer and based on considerations of economy and efficiency. The worker who lives in a compound is a machine

(Crush 1994:303 cited in Allen, 1992, page 454)

Life on the mines was, and is still to a large degree, brutal. The worker, separated from his family, was exploited and brutalised in the manufacturing industry, while trade unions and government give them next to no protection (Meiring 2014:107).

In the gold and platinum mining sector there are social and economic practices of exploitation and dispossession, enabled by corporations that avoid their employer obligations by using contract labourers, collusion with state authorities. For the worker, this has created oppressive conditions that include physical insecurity, threats of violence, and actual violence that results in physical and psychological health problems (Cairncross & Kisting 2016:53).

Throughout every phase of a mine's life cycle, from initial exploration to the closing down of a mine, every sphere of life surrounding the mine is impacted negatively. This includes the health of the community surrounding the mine, the socioeconomic of the area and the environment (Cairncross & Kisting 2016:514).

The life cycle of mining starts with exploration for exploitable deposits, often preceded by the forced removal (or forced sale) of those who own and/or occupy the land, followed by the construction of mining infrastructure, then the "productive phase" of the

mining of the ore and the extraction and beneficiation of the metal. The final closure of an exhausted mine theoretically includes the rehabilitation of the land, but this rarely occurs. Abandonment is more the norm, leaving a legacy of vast quantities of solid waste in the form of tailings (slimes) dumps and waste rock, lakes of polluted water, and a devastated environment, both above and below ground.

(ibid)

The legacy of mining industries “is that of huge number of unemployed workers and disrupted (mainly rural) societies, and a burden of disease and poverty suffered by both current and former mine workers and successive generations of their families. A much larger population is likely to be affected by the legacy of a devastated environment, for decades and centuries after mining has ceased” (Cairncross & Kisting 2016:516). In their suffering the communities that surround mining industries, rarely ever benefit from their actual mining of precious resources.

The wealth generated through the mine’s productive years accrues mainly to the owners and shareholders, invariably located far away from the site of mining. The meagre wages that accrue to workers are inadequate compensation for their output or for the brutal conditions of work. An ineffective, inadequate, and inequitable compensation system for work injuries and death at work or for mining-related diseases compounds the social injustice.

(Cairncross & Kisting 2016: 516)

While there have been reforms in the mining sector, the industry is still heavily problematic. Injustice both towards the people toiling on the land, and the environment are deeply entrenched. The Marikana Massacre, Lily Mine and the state of the Mpumalanga mining industry serve to highlight this argument.

On 16 August 2012, after a few days of escalating strike action, 34 platinum miners at the Lonmin mine, Marikana, near Rustenburg were shot dead by the South African Police. The focus of the strike was an increase in salary. At that stage, the workers were only getting about R4000 per month for an extremely high-risk job, where you work “in the deepest, hottest and dustiest part of the mine” (Sorenson 2012:872). Other grievances were also raised by the miners in interviews:

These included danger, with risks intensified by pressure to work in hazardous locations; the arduous character of work, which often, because of production targets, included shifts lasting 12 hours or more; doubled-up bodies endlessly shaken by heavy drills; artificial air full of dust and chemicals; high levels of sickness, including TB; and managers (often white) who were disrespectful and adversarial...Income was further stretched by the need to support old and unemployed dependants, and, since most workers were oscillating migrants with two families, costs were often doubled. Housing conditions were generally abysmal.

(Alexander 2013:607)

Not only are people caught up in the destructive and relentless hunger of economic interest, but is the environment being destroyed for the sake of money. In Mpumalanga, my home province, this is especially the case. Mining activity presents serious threats to the environment, health and livelihoods of communities that surround it. A report by the Centre for Environmental Rights, entitled “Poor Governance of Mining and the Violation of Environmental Rights in Mpumalanga” found that “Mpumalanga faces environmental threats that will have dire consequences for South Africa’s future prosperity” (Centre for Environmental Rights 2016: 7). Some of the reasons they site for this statement are the following:

- By 2014, 61.3% of the surface area of Mpumalanga fell under prospecting and mining right applications. Mining involves the removal of huge quantities of topsoil, essential for cultivation. A mere 1.5% of SA’s soils are considered high potential, and 46.6% of these are found in Mpumalanga. If mining continues at its current rate, around 12% of SA’s total high potential arable land will be ruined.
- On the Mpumalanga Highveld, air quality is among the worst in the world. Air pollution from mining can be caused by particle emissions from activities such as processing, blasting, wind erosion of overburden, and dust entrainment haul trucks. With 5000 coal trucks using Mpumalanga’s roads daily, dust from mine haul roads contributes an estimated 49% of the nitrogen dioxide in the Highveld Air Pollution Priority Area.
- Mpumalanga occupies 6% of the country’s land surface, but it holds 21% of its plant species. Nearly a quarter of its vegetation types are nationally gazetted as threatened. Nevertheless, 76% of Mpumalanga’s grasslands have been targeted by mining and prospecting applications.
- As at the first quarter of the 2014/2015 financial year, mining contributed only 4.8% to the province’s employment.

(Centre for Environmental Rights 2016: 7-8)

The report further stated:

Mining-affected communities are exposed to water, soil, noise and dust pollution – causing ill health – and almost always experience social disruption ranging from increased crime to forced resettlement. Often the most vulnerable communities suffer the worst of these consequences: settlements are frequently located in close proximity to mines; houses crack from blasting operations; and some settlements are perilously situated above or close to abandoned mines, and collapse when subsidence occurs. With environmental non-compliance left unchecked, mines can continuously leach toxic water into ground and surface water, on which many depend in the absence of piped water.

(Centre for Environmental Rights 2016: 7-8)

Mining as a form of violence affects all spheres of life. It affects our bodies—it makes it difficult to breathe, it hurts our lungs, and injures our limbs. It affects our communities that live near mines, where their houses rattle and drinking water is poisoned. Mining destroys our beautiful *vel'd*, mountains, beaches, forests and fertile soil that grows food to feed our families. Instead mining pillages and feeds local and global economic greed. Mining, among others is fuelling the destruction of the planet. The devastation this causes to our relationship to ourselves, our community and nature is profound. In South Africa, we have for centuries seen the structural breakdown of these relationships.

3.5. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we looked at how the relationship between land and people have been impacted by colonial and Apartheid laws of dispossession. For centuries people have toiled and worked on land that has been stolen from them, and now, this stolen land is systematically being destroyed by industries propelled by greed. At the junction of broken bodies, and broken lands at the hands of economic greed, lies the case of Lily Mine. The cry of creation, the cry of bodies ill, hurt, and torn apart by the mining industry finds culminates in the Lily Mine tragedy. This is but one tragedy of countless

others. Lily Mine is significant because it bears testament to the dual collective pain and trauma of creation and people.

In the next chapter, we will look specifically at the Lily Mine tragedy of February 2016 and how after centuries of commodification of land, life and bodies, this event signifies a haunting.

CHAPTER 4:

GHOSTS AND WASTELANDS

It's like you got yesterday, today and tomorrow, all in the same room. There's no telling what can happen.

Billy the Kid, *I'm not there*, 2007

You know as well as I do that people who die bad don't stay in the ground

Toni Morrison, *Beloved* 2007

"This haunts me every day, I can't even begin to explain the pain I'm feeling right now. If they come out alive I would be grateful, but at this point, we are ready to accept any news.

Even if they are dead we want their bodies, because we want closure,"

December Ndlovu husband of Pretty Nkambule,

CNBC Africa, February 26, 2016

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters, we explored the different ways both land and bodies in southern Africa have been broken. The painful experience of dislocation and reconfiguration caused by the destructive systems of Colonialism, Apartheid and the commodification process inherent to capitalism, has a physicality that cannot be underestimated: it is *present*. These systems have created conditions for the undead, so that life in all its human and non-human forms cannot flourish. The ghosts of our past rupture and break into our present.

Today, in our post-1994 society, we are a society haunted. We are haunted by a myriad of things: colonialism, Apartheid, the church and its problematic history, capitalism, townships, Eurocentric tertiary education, crime, Marikana, land expropriation and plastic. The concept of haunting, will in this chapter be a lens

through which we will look at the trauma, violence and injustice enacted on both people (living and dead) and the environment.

In this chapter, we will first look at the Lily Mine tragedy as it is the juncture of both human and ecological haunting. Secondly, we will discuss some of the theory behind hauntology, ghosts and spectres. Thirdly, we will, by using the concept of hauntology explore ecological haunting in the Anthropocene. We will conclude this chapter by asking what can we do about these ghosts that haunt us? Is there any hope for restoration for them and us?

4.2. HORROR AT LILY MINE

The Lily Mine tragedy is in this regard the epitome of this kind of haunting of both people and the earth. On 5 February 2016 at the Lily Mine operation in Barberton Mpumalanga a sinkhole suddenly formed under a container that served as an office. Three people, Ms. Pretty Nkambule, Mr. Solomon Nyerende and Ms. Yvonne Mnisi were buried alive. Suspended between life and death, emergency workers scrambled to assess the situation. Due to the instability of the location and how deep the container was buried, the rescue operation became a recovery operation, which so far, at the time of writing, has been unsuccessful. At the time of the tragedy the trade union COSATU claimed that the disaster was an example of the lack of accountability and transformation in the mining sector. Sizwe Pamla, the COSATU spokesperson stated “An investigation must be carried out and those who were reckless and those who failed to adhere to health and safety standards should be held accountable” (Pather 2016: online).

After the tragedy, the Lily Mine operation came to a grinding halt. The mine has not been operational since the surface collapse and maintenance, salaries and the expenses of the recovery operation has exhausted the mining company Vantage Goldfields financial resources. The company has been placed under business rescue, and it is estimated that it would need R300-million to become operational again. Liquidation has however been postponed, the minerals and investment company Siyakhula Sonke Empowerment Corporation (SSC) signed a R190-million loan

agreement that if successful will mean that the 600 employees can resume their work (Smit 2018: online).

However, while the great gears of corporations start up again, the bodies of the two women and one man are still trapped 800m beneath our crying, heaving earth. Their absence haunts us. Nkambule, Nyerende and Mnisi are absent, but still uncomfortably present. Their absence forces us to confront our past, our past that has been so cruel to black bodies and nature alike. It also makes us look ahead, toward our future. Will our future also disappear into a big, gaping hole?

What is truly upsetting about the Lily Mine tragedy is that Nkambule, Nyerende and Minisi are *still* trapped deep beneath the earth in that container. Who knows what is down there? In this sense, there is a blurring between the boundaries of life and death—which signify a haunting. Just because a person is dead, does not mean that they are gone—they influence the present. As every day workers and employees gather at the Lily Mine site, Nkambule, Nyerende and Mnisi are present in their absence.

Rather than attempt to exorcise that which haunts us, philosophers such as Jacques Derrida advise that we, the left behind, should learn to live our ghosts, “which is to say that we need to own up to the history of violence that produces these uncanny Others” (Derrida 1994: xvii cited in Papailias 2018:5-6).

In the following section, we will explore the notion of hauntology as described by Derrida and what it would mean to “live” with our ghosts.

4.3. HAUNTOLOGY

The concept of hauntology, first appeared in Jacques Derrida’s *Spectre of Marx* (1994) and is a “restatement of the deconstructive claim that “being” is not equivalent to presence. Since there is no point of pure origin, only the time of the “always-already”, then haunting is the state proper to being as such” (Fisher 2013:44). Derrida refers to the discourse on ghosts, spectres, spirits, phantoms, *revenants*, and all sorts of

apparitions as, *hauntology* (a play on the word “ontology”). Hauntology looks at that which haunts—what is absent, but yet uncomfortably and “unsettlingly present, to all being” (Taylor 2011:31).

The French philosopher Jacques Derrida questions and critiques the dominant Western metaphysics with its “hierarchical preference for the one over the many, identity over difference, spirit over matter, eternity over time, immediacy over deferment, the same over the other—and perhaps most significant for Derrida’s analytic purpose, speech over writing” (Kearney 1984:124).

When it comes to using a philosopher like Jacques Derrida in a study such as this, it can be met with some criticism. Hauntology is a critique of Western ontology, by a Westerner. Derrida himself was French, and French colonialism was one of the most violent forms of colonialism, in that it destroyed whole indigenous cultures by forcing them to appropriate France’s language, customs and culture. Even after assimilating, Francophone Africans are not even considered to be “real” Frenchmen and women.

Mark Lewis Taylor however, argues that this turn to spectral theory should not be seen as a purely Western turn. Spectrality is especially useful for African, Asian and any other colonised peoples “whose legacies of political and cultural repression, and often genocide, have spawned memories (...) of ancestors, ghosts, and haunting presences” (Taylor 2011:31). Our past is a “seething presence” and weighs heavy on our present (Taylor 2011:31).

Hauntology is not about believing or not believing in ghosts and the empirical (im)possibility of the supernatural, but rather indicates an attitude towards uncertainty, heterogeneity, multiplicity and indeterminacy that characterise language and Being because of their inevitable entanglement with alterity and difference (del Pilar Blanco & Peeren 2013:9).

The bodies of the dead never truly disappear, “given their spectrality, bodily remains linger in the present: they influence the “now” and simultaneously become “reconfigured” by it” (Cielemecka, 2015: 242). The body of the dead is radically spectral and elusive, but yet persistent in its materiality. In that sense, the dead body

exists in the borders of the “human-nonhuman, communicable-unspeakable, the sacred and the abject” (Cielemęcka, 2015: 236) and in doing so challenges our certainties and introduces questions of “negativity, disappearing, and non-being” (Cielemęcka, 2015: 236).

Taylor describes spectrality and haunting by stating that the ghostly and the spectral are what the poststructuralists trace as the “fault lines, fissures, infiltrations” that operate in the coloniser’s “cultural and political apparatus” (2011:33).

To trace them is to find the vestiges of the vanquished, often to highlight and strengthen long-colonized peoples, aiming to eviscerate the strength of colonizing and imperial projects.

(Taylor 2011:33)

Conceptually this in line with the idea of the ghost as something between life and death, present and absent, on the border between becoming and forgetting. Derrida calls it an “opening” from where “this other origin, this one that I cannot re-appropriate, from this infinitely other place, I am watched” (Derrida & Stiegler 2013:42). The spectre, or spectral thought takes on the form of “border thinking,” between the cracks (openings) between colonisers and colonised (Taylor 2011:33), between black and white, rich and poor, male and female. The spectre intrudes and disrupts our world and demands simultaneously our remembrance and action (Taylor 2011:24).

In this regard, Derrida’s hauntology is not only an alternative ontology, but also an alternative ethics (del Pilar Blanco & Peeren 2013b: 33). Derrida uses the figure of the ghost to pursue, without ever fully understanding, that which haunts like a ghost, and by way of this haunting, demands justice, or at least a response (del Pilar Blanco & Peeren 2013a:9).

“Spectrality is above all about relationality: the ghost appears before the living” (Papailias 2018:5). The potency of the spectre lies in the experience of the observers sighting—which in its very nature is itinerant, importunate, unpredictable (Papailias 2018:5). These bodies, never quite erased, haunt us. They come up in our stories, incomplete memories, our family photographs of people missing, unmarked graves

and great holes in the ground. A sighting of the spectre can take any form—a photograph, a memory, a smell or even a meme⁸. The dead maimed and broken disjoints, jars, shocks, disrupts and barges into our presence.

The spectre is haunting congealed into a portentous promise or threat, one that carries and suggests an accountability, a demand upon the present to remember, often to effect a liberation for the effaced ones.

(Taylor 2011: 35)

Taylor's poignant description of a "demand to remember" is in line with the similar idea of "remembering" as the German Catholic theologian Johan Baptist Metz conceptualised it after his experience in World War II. Metz describes this remembering of dangerous memory:

[T]here are dangerous memories, memories which make demands on us. There are memories in which earlier experiences break through to the centre-point of our lives and reveal new and dangerous insights for the present... They break through the canon of the prevailing structures of plausibility and have certain subversive features. Such memories are like dangerous and incalculable visitations from the past. They are memories that we have to take into account, memories, as it were, with a future content."

(Metz 1980:109-110)

These memories, like hauntings, force us to acknowledge the presence of that which we wish to hide and leave buried. This memory, or visitation, as Metz terms it, refuses to be ignored. In an interview with Bernard Stiegler, Derrida calls this ethical response to the appearance of the ghost (almost a Levinasian Other), a "spectral oath":

To link this statement up with that of spectrality, let's say that our relation to another origin of the world or to another gaze, to the gaze of the other, implies some kind of spectrality. Respect for the alterity of the other dictates respect for the ghost (*les*

⁸ See Penelope Papailias' article "(Un) seeing dead refugee bodies: mourning memes, spectropolitics, and the haunting of Europe. *Media, Culture & Society*, p. 1-21" for a fascinating exploration of spectrality and memefication of the photo of the dead 3-year-old Kurdish Syrian refugee Alan Kurdie on the beach.

revenant) and, therefore, for the non-living, for what is possible is not alive. Not dead, but not living (...) There is no respect and, therefore, no justice possible without this relation of fidelity or of promise, as it were, to what is no longer living or not living yet, to what is not simply present. There would be no urgent demand for justice, or for responsibility, without this spectral oath. And there would be no oath, period.”

(Derrida & Stiegler 2013:42-43)

As stated before, bodily remains, given their spectrality, linger in the present. They simultaneously influence the now and also become reconfigured by it (Cielemęcka, 2015: 242). Given that, they also have the potential to ‘remake’ the future (Cielemęcka, 2015: 251) in that the response the ghosts demand, goes beyond the dominant paradigm of identification and classification, rather, it seeks justice, visibility, recognition and redress (Pappailias 2018:17). The spectre is an accusation. It accuses and brings attention to life-taking societal structures and arrangements, whether it be colonialism, Apartheid, or racial capitalism, which disfigure, deform and reduce people to phantoms. The ghost is indicative of the absence of wholeness and life and it brings attention to death dealing forces.

The Polish researcher Olga Cielemęcka, describes it powerfully as follows:

This state of vulnerability inherent to the dead body provokes questions regarding ethical obligations and political possibilities to speak and act on behalf of the others; of how to express a harm which is not our own; it questions the limits of political representation, of resistance and of language. *For dead bodies, just like all other bodies, are never completely free from the power that subjugates, interprets, colonises and produces knowledge.*

(Cielemecka 2015:236 own italics)

Not even in death can people escape the powers that bound them in life.

Becoming aware of our ghosts, and learning to live with them and the violence, systems and structures that produced them (Papailias 2018:5) includes becoming aware of present ones and entails “an ethical stance towards bodies that are in course of dematerialising, but still matter” (Cielemęcka, 2015: 236).

Derrida demonstrates that an ethical response is formulated in the face of a 'spectre' – something that may arrive from the past, or from the future. Barad reformulates this idea in a neo-materialistic vein; by debunking the linear understanding of time she conceptualises it as time of perpetual materialisation, material practices and material bodies, in which past, present and future coexist and mutually influence each other. The ungrivable bodies of the past call for justice, response and recognition; and the future can still be 'remade'.

(Cielemecka, 2015: 251)

The concept of hauntology is useful in that it helps us recognise those spectres and ghosts that haunt us and our ethical response to them. It poses a challenge to western ontology in that it seeks that which is absent and invisible, that which we'd rather vanquish or bury. The ghost, as Derrida conceptualises it, demands a response from those who witness it. This demand is ethical, what Derrida call's a spectral oath. Hauntology encourages thinking in the margins and borders and offers a rich material for thinking about those who are denied existence or being due to their skin colour, class, language, gender, sexuality or non-humanity.

4.4. THE SPECTRE OF LILY MINE

If Lily Mine tragedy signifies a haunting, what do these spectres want of us? From the myriad of different hauntings, at the outset of this chapter I chose Lily Mine because both bodies and the environment is caught up in the same destructive practices of commodification.

The concept of hauntology is interesting especially when one considers African notions of spirits. Repeatedly in this research the wholeness of African anthropology has been underscored in matters relating do land. The same view is extended towards the dead. Chirevo Kwenda states there is "immortality in community" in this "the key is connectedness" and "the symbol is family". In either life or death one is not allowed to be outside of community (Kwenda 1999:11-12). Thus, in African spirituality, according to Kwenda, managing death is as important as managing life:

The management of death, as the management of life, therefore becomes a critical function in African religion. The desired state is a manageable death—an unmanageable death is to be avoided by all means. But efforts to do this are not always successful, and people do live and often die in ways that render their death unmanageable or hard to manage. This simply means a death that makes it hard or impossible to reconnect the deceased with the living and incorporate him or her into the community of the Departed and the communion of nature, and, thus, perpetuate that life physically as well as spiritually through procreation.

(ibid)

In African anthropology, the life cycle strives towards ancestorhood, however there are those that are thwarted from achieving that stage in the process. According to Kwenda these are accidents, miscarriages and sabotage. Kwenda also extends this category “to those who die a bad death”, i.e. a death that is unnatural (Kwenda 1999:2). Those who suffer this kind of death and who are unable to reach ancestorhood, manifest as what Kwenda calls, “afflicting spirits”, “protestors” who do not “take their condition lying down, unfairly damned spirits demand at the hands of society and the whole cosmic order a chance to self-fulfill” (Kwenda 1999:4). In African spirituality, there are processes that serve to incorporate these afflicting spirits back into the community of the living and the dead.

The reason why an ancestor appears in afflictive mode is because a moral cosmic order demands it. Whatever it is that is wrong must be remedied. Secondly, far from being a happy powerful godlike spirit as some scholars hold, an ancestor who appears asking for food and drink wreaks of restlessness and anger, weakened by neglect or collective guilt in the lineage or, worse still, he may be a would-be ancestor who missed the boat the first round and is angling for a second chance...

(Kwenda 1999: 7)

Similarly Anna Floerke Scheid describes Benezet Bujo’s description of the ‘palaver’- which is an open space for communication wherein persons can be “integrated into the life and expectations of their communities” (Scheid 2011:18). In the palaver memory plays a very important role:

Anamnesis in the palaver encourages community members to recall and reflect upon the past as they construct their shared future. Through remembering, adapting, and

enacting the ethical prescriptions and prohibitions of the ancestors, those living in the present strengthen the vital force for the community's future. Thus, intentionally remembering the past is key to the community's well-being.

(Scheid 2011: 26)

Hauntology and African conceptions of spirits intersect at the demand they make on the living for recognition, remembering and restoration. Both spirits and ghosts, point to those untenable relationships and modes of power that ultimately relegate people to non-being, something between life and death, not entirely a human being. The history of Africa and southern Africa is mired in systems and operations of power and knowledge that can only produce ghosts.

The lives of Nkambule, Nyerende and Mnisi aren't the only lives that have been lost for economic profit and the sinkhole that suddenly appeared on that day is not the only instance of the destruction of the earth due to human influence, becoming violently apparent.

The Lily Mine tragedy is a site of haunting, because it brings to the surface things we'd rather bury and forget. We'd rather forget the number of mineworkers that have died on our mines since 1900. The provisional number of mineworker deaths in 2017 were 86, 73 in 2016, 77 in 2015 and 84 in 2014 (Van der Merwe 2018: online), that's 'just' 320 people in four years. In the early 2000's the annual death toll hovered around 300 and in 1995 it was a chilling 500 lives lost. These deaths are separate from chronic diseases such as silicosis, pulmonary tuberculosis and disabilities due to working in and around mining sites. In 2016, a South Gauteng High Court granted permission for a class action law suit for damages against thirty-two gold mining companies in respect of 82 gold mines under their control. The potential members of the class action law suit on behalf of whom action would be brought, is estimated could range from 17 000 to 500 000 thousand people (Kane-Berman 2017). Kane-Berman continues:

The court said that the mineworkers intended to bring evidence proving that the mining companies knew, or should have known, as far back as the early 1900s that silicosis and other dust-related occupational diseases were preventable, but that they had failed to introduce appropriate preventive measures.

(Kane-Berman 2017)

The environmental impact of mines is wide ranging from mine dumps, acid mine drainage, abandoned mines that continue to pollute the air, soil and water even after all mining has ceased, negative impact on agriculture, lack of mine rehabilitation, degradation of landscape, pollution in the form of oxides of nitrogen and sulphur, and increased soil instability (Kane-Berman 2017).

Despite the dangers this industry poses to both people and the environment South Africa's economy has been since the discovery of diamonds, and gold thereafter, centred around the mining sector, and to this day contributes billions to the South African GDP—according to the Minerals Council in 2017 it was as a matter of fact R312 billion:

Mining as a whole is still an important player in the South African economy. The industry contributes R8 for every R100 produced by the national economy and employs one in every 40 working individuals (or 2,5% of the entire workforce)

(StatsSA 2017)

Regardless of its massive yearly earnings, the mining sector is ultimately a dying industry. Stats SA's *Environmental Economic Accounts Compendium*, recently estimated in 2014 that South Africa had only 39 years of available gold recourses left, 335 years for PGM's (platinum group metals) and 265 years of coal reserves left (StatsSA 2017:13, 17 & 21).

Contrary to what one might think, the mining industry's expiration date has not dampened the economic interest in the mining sector:

Although the relative contribution of mining to GDP has shrunk, it is still the backbone of the economy. Mining is also the single largest component of the output of four of the nine provinces, while 16 of our largest towns are heavily dependent on mining. So are two ports. Mining accounts for about a third of South Africa's commodity exports. While coal, most of which Eskom buys, accounts for most mineral sales, platinum is the biggest export earner.

(Kane-Berman 2017)

Due to our overdependence on coal, coal also remains important in the energy sector:

a third of South Africa's liquid fuels are made from coal. Numerous plastics, some of which we export, are by-products of the coal-to-liquid process. Coal is also the feedstock for 91% of the electricity generated by Eskom. Some of the mines supplying Eskom are getting old, but there is not enough investment taking place in new mines to replace them.

(Kane-Berman 2017)

This all has spelt disaster for the environment and for people. We are witnessing how the earth, the land, and its people, are systemically being pillaged, and destroyed. We are by no account innocent bystanders—we are all contributing to it in a whole host of small, every day ways. If we keep going as we are, what will the environment look like in some 100 years? Ecology is not just haunted by its past, but also by its future. This leads me to another application of spectrality— our haunted earth.

4.5. ECOLOGICAL HAUNTING

Lily Mine can also be seen as an ecological haunting. This haunting points to something larger—the systemic destruction of the environment and people wrought by humanity. In 2004 already the World Alliance of Reformed Churches came together for its General Assembly in Accra, Ghana and professed:

We have heard that creation continues to groan, in bondage, waiting for its liberation. We are challenged by the cries of the people who suffer and by the woundedness of creation itself. We see a dramatic convergence between the suffering of the people and the damage done to the rest of creation.

(Accra Confession 2004:5)

They read the signs of the times and saw that the poor, vulnerable and the whole of creation were being kept from the fullness of life (Accra Confession 2004: 19). The Accra Confession has become even more relevant in the intervening years. On 6 October 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate (hereafter IPCC) released a

report detailing the impacts and costs of 1.5 degrees Celsius of global warming. Therein they found that the impact would be far greater than expected (Leahy 2018):

The past decade has seen an astonishing run of record-breaking storms, forest fires, droughts, coral bleaching, heat waves, and floods around the world with just 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit (1.0 degrees Celsius) of global warming. But much of this will get substantially worse with 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit of warming, and far worse at 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit (2 degrees Celsius).

(Leahy 2018)

The IPCC report expresses high confidence in the fact that “global warming is likely to reach 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052 if it continues to increase at the current rate” (IPCC 2018).

The cry of creation has turned into screams and it is because of humanity.

This is emblematic of the Anthropocene. In the “Anthropocene”, the Age of Man, we see that humanity has become a geological or planetary force.

The Anthropocene is the decisive intersection of human history and geological time, detected in layers of carbon deposited in the Earth’s crust, and then radioactive materials, along with huge changes in Earth systems.

(Morton 2014:489-490)

The Anthropocene can be dated to the patenting of the steam engine in the 1700’s and the start of the industrial revolution (Morton 2014:489-490).

The period I have mentioned, from 1750 to now, is also the time when human beings switched from wood and other renewable fuels to large-scale use of fossil fuel—first coal and then oil and gas. The mansion of modern freedoms stands on an ever-expanding base of fossil-fuel use. Most of our freedoms so far have been energy-intensive.

(Chakrabarty 2009:208)

Climate change is part of a wider array of enmeshed events that include “the great mass extinction event now in process, the acidification of the oceans, the accumulation of plastic waste, the loss of soils and fertility, the loss of rainforests, and of course the rampant consumption that fuels the work of tearing up and wrecking planet Earth” (Rose 2013:3).

With climate change, the material violence of the past emerges, reincarnate, refreshed, in our future.

(Mansfield 2008: III.14)

The Anthropocene gives rise to difficult and horror-filled questions: What havoc will 2°C rise in the earth’s temperature wreak? Who or what can come after us if the source of life, the earth, is being wrecked? Where will the next generations come from and how will they live, if there is no country to bring them forth and sustain them?

In a degrading and dying world, at this very moment “creation itself is coming unstuck, disintegrating right back to the beginning” (Rose 2013: 8).

The Anthropocene parallel is this: we are spectators in the unmaking of the world we have known; we are spectators in the mass deaths of other creatures and in the misery of numerous and diverse forms of life including humans; we may indeed become spectators of our own demise. We know we are doing this, and we are unable to take effective political or social action in areas that we know would be helpful.

(Rose 2013: 4)

Nick Mansfield, who uses Derrida’s notion of hauntology, argues that we are now haunted by a very material ghost, that is, the Absolute Other of climate change (Mansfield 2008: I.6). This Absolute Other, cannot be made friendly. It is more than a mere other that unsettles and pluralises, but rather, the Absolute Other abolishes and does not make new (Mansfield 2008: II.9). This haunting will have a violent physicality for which we are in our modernity or postmodernity not prepared for. We will not be merely be able to conquer Nature this time, or be able to humanise it (Mansfield 2008:V.22). The scale of this Absolute Other is one that evades us:

Climate change brings to us from the future a spectre of unpredictability, which we will

experience politically. It is the endurance of the irrepressible materiality of the material, the scarring of the body of the world that cannot be healed, or simply reduced to meaning [...] Now, this other is coming back, in the double form of the damage we have caused that can't be undone, and of the others who will bear disproportionately the cost of our past luxuries. Yet this bodily spectre of the body improperly dealt with is the spectre that haunts us with a violence the history of political philosophy cannot tend and cannot redeem.

(Mansfield 2008: V.28)

The “other” that is “coming back”, as Mansfield calls climate change, is an ecological haunting. The sins of our past, are coming up in our present and future, and there is no getting away from it.

In a sense, as Timothy Morton (2014:491) describes it “‘we are already dead’, it's already the end of the world”, but at the same “time global warming's amortization rate” a hundred thousand years, “spreads out before us, ten times longer than the history of “civilisation””.

Global warming is what Morton calls an “hyperobject”. These are “entities that are massively distributed in time and space” and are so large, “that humans can think or compute them, but not perceive them directly” (Morton 2014: 489). These hyperobjects according to Morton are diverse and they:

...stick to us, we find evidence of them in our water and in our blood, dreams, wallets and DNA, yet one is incapable of seeing them. They are real, but withdrawn from access. They are made of relations between all sorts of things—yet they have an autonomous life of their own that is downwardly causal on the components from which they emerge. These entities began to impress themselves on us humans in the Victorian period. We know them, for instance, as geological time, capital, industry, evolution, cities, the unconscious, electromagnetism, climate phenomena such as El Niño, and so on.

(Morton 2014:489)

Hyperobjects poses an interesting question to ethics. According to Morton Hyperobjects are so massively distributed in space and time that self-interest based

conceptions of ethics all break down at that scale. For instance, Morton uses the example of plutonium—it has an estimated half-life of twenty-four thousand years. That means, it will take 24 000 years for plutonium to *start* to decay. Morton makes the point that by that time, he will have no one meaningful connected to him (2011:167). At that scale, meaningful ethics that is connected to present break down.

Hyperobjects' most powerful feature is, according to Morton (2014:497) “their viscosity...their capacity to stick to us, to infiltrate our everydayness.” From uncommonly hot days, to plastic microbeads that end up in our fish dinners. Deborah Bird Rose points our attention to the fact that those who will experience the Anthropocene and all the devastating change it will bring, are vast and diverse:

The ‘we’ of the Anthropocene includes nonhuman animals as well as human beings; and includes plants, soils, atmosphere and oceans, and involves dynamic relationships and processes within an extremely dynamic biosphere.

(2013:206)

4.6. CONCLUSION

Is there any way to transcend this accusation? To overcome or restore wholeness to these ghosts which haunt us? Where can we find hope amid the cry of creation? Bearing in mind the theoretical framework of the Spectre of the broken body and ecological haunting, the next part of this chapter will look to ecofeminist thought and African Women’s theology for possible sources of wholeness, healing, restoration and hope.

CHAPTER 5: FINDING HEALING:

ECOFEMINISM AND AFRICAN WOMEN'S THEOLOGY

5.1. INTRODUCTION

Then God said, "Let us make man in our likeness. Let them rule over the fish in the waters and the birds of the air. Let them rule over the livestock and over the whole earth. Let them rule over all of the creatures that move along the ground."

Genesis: 1:26

In this above quoted text, ample theological justification for domination and exploitation for "all things under their feet" can be found. This religious anthropocentric and hierarchical understanding of the world, some argue (cf. Lynn White 1967), is what has lead us into the dire mess we are in today.

Is there some way however, that we can transcend this hierarchical view of the world that have led to so much oppression and destruction? In this research, the previous chapters have sought to show how broken our relationships are: as Denise Ackerman writes "we are a society critically in need of healing in every aspect of our relationships: with ourselves, with another, with God and, most urgently, with the earth" (1997:48).

The destruction of these relationships has been caused by various things. In this research, I have specifically looked at how myths, ideologies and theology, especially present in colonialism and Apartheid, have shaped this relationship. Further, we have looked at how the process of commodification, also a typical characteristic in colonialism and capitalism, with special attention to the mining sector, creates ghosts. Ghosts of people, trapped and buried for the sake of profit. Ghosts of our environment that haunt our future and can only mean death for all human and non-human life. In the previous chapter, it was argued that the spectre makes an ethical demand to those who encounter it.

What does an ethical response to a ghost entail? Can broken bodies and lands somehow be healed, restored or resurrected? Or do they remain ghosts? Where do we look to find hope amid the reality of South Africa—rampant poverty, violence (especially towards women and children), corruption, failing educational systems, the HIV and AIDS pandemic, and our over dependence on fossil-fuels? The most affected by these, will be the poor and especially women and their children:

The violence of poverty, of racism, sexism, and classism, of social dislocation, of militarism, of battering and rape are not unrelated to violence against the environment. They are all rooted in the abuse of power as domination over and exploitation of “the other”. Women have been particularly vulnerable in this context of violence.

(Ackerman 1997:54)

Climate change poses another threat to vulnerable people, which in Africa’s case is gendered:

A person’s vulnerability to climate change depends in part on gender roles and relations; rural women in developing countries are one of the most vulnerable groups (IPCC 2007). This is because they are often dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods, do most of the agricultural work, and are responsible for collecting water and fuel. Climate change is widely predicted to affect all these areas of women’s lives adversely. For instance, increased climate variability is making agriculture more unpredictable, and continuing desertification in some regions exacerbates the domestic fuel crisis. In urban areas, on the other hand, poor women are likely to bear the brunt of health problems caused by ‘urban heat island’ effects, increases in vector-borne diseases like malaria and, for cities situated in dry zones, water shortages.

(Terry 2009: 2-3)

Stated otherwise, myths, ideologies, the commodification of life as discussed in the previous chapters, produce haunting ghosts. The condition of women, however, can offer us an ethical response to the question of the collapse of ontology, being, of being turned into hauntology. This notion, that poor women (in South Africa that would mean, poor, black women) would be most affected by these various forms of oppression, is in line with what writers such as Vuyani Ntintili would, in notions of liberation in Black Theology, especially in the Strand he identifies as the Black Solidarity-Materialist

Strand, posit as bodies for our identification, a comprehensive vision of liberation. Within this strand of black liberation theology, black women are considered to be the most oppressed and therefore liberation would seek to address the issues of race, class and gender (Ntintili 1996: 4). For countless African women “gender oppression is multiplied by racist dehumanization multiplied by economic exploitation multiplied by cultural colonisation multiplied by religious demonization” (Schüssler Fiorenza 1996: xxi).

The exploitation of both women and nature is connected—this is the main argument of ecofeminism. In this chapter, we will further explore ecofeminism in regards to this connection and what it could mean for restoration and healing of these relationships. Secondly, in this chapter, we will explore African women’s theologies in regards to the brokenness of both people and land. In this research, we look particularly at African Women’s Theologies rather than North American Womanist theology, so as to have an African response on this issue. There are however African women theologians who would call themselves womanists. Isabel Phiri has noted (1997:68) that even though studies of Third World feminist theology have combined African-American Womanist theology with African women’s theologies, there still remains some differences (ibid):

[W]hile African Women’s theology and African-American Women theologies may share the same skin colour, the contexts within which they do their theology are very different.

By using the term African women’s theology, we will thus prioritise the experience of African women and their notions of wholeness, healing, justice and life giving praxis in this chapter.

In the next section, we will first look at ecofeminism and ecofeminist theology for a response to brokenness.

5.2. ECOFEMINISM

According to Greta Gaard (1993:1), one of the main exponents of ecofeminism, ecofeminism as a theory evolved out of various fields of feminist inquiry and activism,

such as the peace and labour movements, women's health care, and the environmental, anti-nuclear and animal liberation movements. Ecofeminism also draws on the insights of ecology, feminism, and socialism, and its "basic premise is that the ideology which authorizes oppressions such as those based on race, class, gender, sexuality, physical abilities, and species is the same ideology which sanctions the oppression of nature" (Gaard 1993:1). Ecofeminism also asserts the fundamental interconnectedness of all life (Gaard 1993:2). Gaard (1993:10) says:

As the human species approaches the capacity to annihilate all life on this planet, it becomes imperative that we challenge both the ideological assumptions and the hierarchical structures of power and domination that together serve to hold the majority of earth's inhabitants in thrall to the privileged minority. Ecofeminists seek to articulate this challenge.

Following on Gaard, there is a relationship between the annihilation of life and the hierarchical structures of power, especially the pain of the majority against the enjoyment of life by the minority. This research has sought to highlight this relationship between hierarchical structures of power and the destruction and havoc it creates in the lives of people and creation. The groaning of creation is fundamentally linked to human greed. The plundering of resources both human and non-human is motivated by a logic of domination. This logic radically undermines abundant life and our abilities to relate to others, ourselves, God and to nature.

The notion of interconnectedness goes against the very logic of modernity, with its stark separation of body and mind, spirit and nature, man and female. These binaries have advanced the subordination and oppression of women and nature. The anthropocentric and patriarchal world view, which has been characteristic of Western thought and systems of knowledge and in which reality is determined by an understanding of a hierarchical ordering of God, spirit, man, woman and nature as in classical Platonic thought, has placed us all in great danger (Van Schalkwyk 2014: 8).

Ecofeminism holds the view that, "humanity is not just reliant on our physical environment, but that the natural world, including humanity, should be seen as an interconnected and interdependent whole" (Mellor 1997:1).

In ecofeminism, the view is widely held that “humanity is not just reliant on its physical environment, but that the natural world, including humanity, should be seen as an interconnected and interdependent whole” (Mellor 1997:1). Gebara also uses terms like “interdependence” and “relatedness” and argues that relatedness is our primary reality (Gebara 1999:83). Relatedness does not stop at humanity, but also includes nature “the powers of the earth and the cosmos itself” (Gebara 1999; Kindle Location 761)

What I am proposing is not a mechanical interdependence but a living one: a sacred interdependence that is vibrant and visceral. It is not like the relationship between a motor and its fuel; rather, it speaks of the relationship between life and its multiple interconnections—a relationship which, at this juncture, would certainly invite us to produce fewer cars and less polluting fuel. This sacred interdependence would, for example, require a radical modification of the transnational market economies, which fail to respect regional cultures and almost always abuse both the land and the populations that inhabit it. It would call for a new understanding of the makeup of nations, one that would recognize ethnic groups along with their customs and cultural expressions. It would also require the construction of a new network of relationships among peoples.

(Gebara 1999: Kindle Locations 786-791)

Our interconnectedness and relatedness has been disrupted by centuries of wars, land conquests, colonialism, industrialization, modernization, exploitation, forced shack life⁹, removals and our age of profits. This disruption is not just theoretical or ideological, but experienced bodily. It is in this, the pain of our shared existence that ecofeminism comes to the fore. Gebara poses that ecofeminism is contextual:

[E]cofeminism is born of daily life, of day-to-day sharing among people, of enduring together garbage in the streets, had smells, the absence of sewers and safe drinking water, poor nutrition, and inadequate health care. The ecofeminist issue is born of the

⁹ See S'bu Zikode, 2014, 'Twenty Years of Hell in Shacks', *Abahlali baseMjondolo*, <http://abahlali.org/node/14413/>.

lack of municipal garbage collection, of the multiplication of rats, cockroaches, and mosquitoes, and of the sores on children's skin. This is true because it is usually women who have to deal with daily survival issues: keeping the house clean and feeding and washing children.

(Gebara 1999: Kindle Locations 111-114)

What is ecofeminism in the context of Lily Mine? It shows us that the trapped bodies of three people in a little town in Mpumalanga, South Africa, has a direct link to global capitalism and commodification, history of oppressions, patriarchy and climate change. It shows us that breakdown of our relationships and connections are a physical lived reality. This breakdown is most acutely experienced by those that have been left behind. Yes, three bodies are trapped inside the belly of the earth, but children and widowed spouses have to try and pick up the pieces. Their connections with those once living, are now caught in uncertainty. Just listen to the anguish of December Ndlovu, Pretty Nkambule's husband (CNBC Africa 2016):

This haunts me every day, I can't even begin to explain the pain I'm feeling right now. If they come out alive I would be grateful, but at this point, we are ready to accept any news. *Even if they are dead we want their bodies, because we want closure.*

(own italics)

But there has been no closure—years have passed, and still there are no bodies. Still, that sacred connections and relationships remain broken.

Ecofeminism shows us that we are all connected, “we are all part of the web of life, in communion with and interdependent with all living things” (Grey 2000:486). This has a profound effect on ethics. The lives of the bereft, the trapped and the crying earth are all connected to mine. An interconnected conception of self makes moral decisions on the basis of an ethic of responsibility or care (Gaard 1993:2). Gebara makes a similar case, saying that in relatedness, “ethics is a network of relationships designed to respect the integrity of all beings, both individually and collectively (1999: Kindle Locations 1234-1235).

Ecofeminist theorists argue that these top-down power dynamics need to be turned around so that an ethics of care can be implemented by community members and

decision-makers who represent and answer to the most marginalised and the poorest of the poor, so as to take responsibility for caring and just human communities.

(Van Schalkwyk 2014:9)

There is no place any more for “top-down power dynamics” as Van Schalkwyk terms, it, but rather an ethics of interconnected care. In the next section, we will look to spiritual conceptions of ecofeminism, i.e. ecofeminist theology.

5.2.1. Ecofeminist Theology

Ecological and feminist writings have been and are very critical of Christian theology and classical religions due to how they shaped the world view of patriarchy, which as has led to the plundering of the earth and the oppression of people—especially women. There are however, helpful avenues to explore with regards to ecofeminist theology which intersect with the environmental movement, feminism and women’s spirituality. In ecofeminist theology, the underlying principle is the sacredness of the earth and living things (Grey 2000:484). As Grey posits (2000:487):

Ecofeminist Theology of Creation involves experiencing the world as sacred, as held by sacred being, by God. God is not extraneous to the world, but the power of life, energy, love, sustaining and energizing this web of life.

Sallie McFague (1993:137, 160-161) uses the concept of the cosmic Christ which has a sacramental presence within and around the earth and the cosmos. Creation, which includes all manner of spaces and places, is the scope in which creation and salvation takes place. God is present in all the spaces and places of creation and also in human civilisations—from the shack in Kayelitsha, to the manor house in Waterkloof and the arid landscape of the Karoo.

McFague further explores themes such as hope in relation to the Christian doctrine of the *eschaton*—wherein eschatology does not have anything to do with heaven or the afterlife, but rather, where it is a breaking through of new possibilities, of hope for creation and the future. In this “eschatological vision, salvation means, or the good life for all for all, means first and foremost that the basic physical needs of the earth’s

creatures and systems have to be met. We are all bodies who need the basics of food, clean air and water, shelter and space, community, care, and so forth, to live” (McFague 1993:198).

Life abundant means abundance for all living beings, and not only for a minority of rich and middle-class people. It implies limitations and sacrifice for human beings of conscience. It therefore involves a radically different view of abundance than in the consumer society. It involves re-imagining the good life in just and sustainable ways so that the greater community of life can live in abundance.

(McFague 2000:xii)

The idea of self-limitation and sacrifice runs directly opposed to our society’s tenet of ‘bigger faster stronger’. Western ideals such as is apparent in capitalism does not see self-limitation as a viable option for a good life. Thus, ecofeminist conceptions of *eschaton* are deeply counter-cultural and should remain deeply critical of Western Capitalist Empires. Ecofeminist theology envisions a world free from the destructive forces of the empire, so that the *basileia tou theo* (the Kingdom of God and the vision of restored humanity, bodies, and creation) can be realised here on earth and in each other.

Another avenue for ecofeminist theological exploration is the doctrine of incarnation:

Taking the doctrine of incarnation seriously would require, first of all, reconsidering intra-human relationships. Christians looking to Christ as the model of authentic humanity would be compelled to enter into life with and care for marginalized and powerless people who frequently are those most affected by disruption to and destruction of ecosystems.

(Eppinger 2011: 56)

The doctrine of incarnation claims that “the word of God became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1). The claim of classical Christianity is that God did not just appear in the form of Jesus (modalism), but rather, that God truly was *present on earth* (Eppinger 2011:54). Orthodox teaching further claims that Jesus was fully human (against Docetism) (ibid). Meaning that Jesus experienced pain, laughter, love, hugs,

anger, heat, sickness. All those things that make us human, God, Jesus, fully experienced.

Thus the Christian teaching of incarnation declares that God became truly human (contra docetists) and that this God-human is the essence, not merely the appearance, of God (contra modalists) [...] As symbolic of the fully human, Christ becomes the preeminent model for authentic humanity. As symbolic of the fully divine, Christ is the model for how God is.

(ibid)

In this model, according to Eppinger (ibid:55) we see that the foundational Christian belief of the incarnation is that God cares about the world:

The Christian story shapes for Christians a world that God not only cares for from afar but cares about enough to become part of. Incarnation, in the guise of God-with-us, creates for us a new reality of relationship within the natural order. The symbol of God painted in incarnation is not a relationship of separateness, superiority, and externality. By pointing to Jesus as the most clear (but not entire or sole) revelation of God's nature, incarnation constructs a God who is not dominating, but compassionate, not pitying but caring, not outside of but participating in.

(Eppinger 2011:55)

Within this view, humanity has to become reconciled with God, nature and each other (Thesnaar 2010:99).

The idea of God being present, participating in creation for an abundant future makes for a rich source for ecofeminist theologies and African women theologies alike. In this next section, we will explore African women's theologies in regards to its understanding of the interconnectedness of being and its relationship to bodies, nature and God for an African perspective.

5.3. AFRICAN WOMEN'S THEOLOGIES

African Women's theology strives to deal with the specific context of African women and their communities. Like Black Theology of South Africa and African theology, African Women's theology is a theology of liberation that deals with a diverse range of topics such as domestic violence, female circumcision and HIV/AIDS to name just a few.

African women's theologies take women's experiences as its starting point, focusing on the oppressive areas of life caused by injustices such as patriarchy, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, capitalism, globalisation and sexism.

(Phiri 2004: 156)

Early on in this research, in chapter two we explored African anthropology in regards to its relationship to land. There, we found that nature, personhood, the body and communities are all viewed holistically. Thus, within the African worldview there exists an intricate network of relationships- both living and dead- community, God, and nature wherein the individual is embedded (Maimela 1991:5).¹⁰ African anthropology is deeply communal and extends to the whole community—were all members of the community, whether living, dead, or unborn, seeks to positively affect the community (Scheid 2011:19).

In the African worldview, experience is not disembodied or removed, rather, it all takes place in this interdependent and connected ecosystem of relationships. Humanity, lies in the network of these relationships and it is to belong and participate positively in activities that make being human truly possible—it is a dynamic relationship of existence-in-relation (Pato 1997:56).

This idea of existence-in-relation is exemplary of the African concept of *Ubuntu*. In *Ubuntu*, it is believed that true humanity lies in a network of mutual interdependent relationships—i.e. between individuals, families and the community. Within this framework, *Ubuntu* offers us a positive conception of being as existence-in-relation, that opposes those life taking practices such as we have explored in this study. Within

¹⁰ It is interesting to note that the African notion of community extends to the visible and invisible community alike—it is equally important for the African to promote and affirm life, not just for one's deceased ancestors, but also the unborn and even God. "Promoting and affirming the life of the community therefore requires that relationships be nourished across time, space, and the cosmos. One's ancestors and descendants, as well as God and creation, are just as truly members of the community as anyone living, and thus must be respected as "persons" (Scheid 2011:20).

brokenness the *Ubuntu* aphorism of “I am a person through other persons”, would mean my humanity suffers when others are treated inhumanely. Our humanity is all tied up in each other and personhood is composed by your relation to the people around you. No individual exists by themselves, and we need one another to be fully human (Pato 1997:55). Thus, humanity is only fully realised in the full integration within a community (Sceid 2011:20)

It is in this delicate network of interdependence, of living together, affirming one another, cooperating with one another (ibid:57) that the ethics of *Ubuntu* come to the fore:

Ubuntu is a philosophy on how human beings are intertwined in a world of ethical relations from the moment they are born. Fundamentally, this inscription is part of our finitude. We are born into a language, a kinship group, a tribe, a nation, and a family. We come into a world obligated to others, and those others are obligated to us. We are mutually obligated to support each other on our respective paths to becoming unique and singular persons.

(Cornell & Van Marle 2015:2)

Cornell and Van Marle, pose that *Ubuntu* is an ontology that relates to how human beings are intertwined. It is “about the being of the human” in which this being “also constitutes how we see the world: for this intertwinement is inherently ethical” (Cornell & Van Marle 2015:3).

Within this view, *Ubuntu* also carries an ethical obligation towards the haunting presence of the spectre, to those who have been disfigured, broken, demolished or trapped, to those who cry and seek wholeness. In this respect, *Ubuntu* as thoughtful caring and loving existence-in-relation has a cosmic scope that touches a vast array of relationships, be it social, economic, political, spiritual and environmental.

In line with this thought, African women’s theology can also be called a “theology of relations” which seek to replace hierarchies, as is dominant in western thought, with mutuality. The relationality and the interdependence of women, men, humans, creatures and creation requires sensitivity to the needs of others, “the well-being of

the community as a whole” and seeks to eradicate injustice in all its forms (Oduyoye 2001:17). The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (The Circle) recognizes the interconnectedness of life, and also sees The Circle as a space for women from Africa to do communal theology (Gothogo 2010:7). The Ghanaian theologian Mercy Oduyoye, widely considered to be the founder of The Circle, reflects on this interconnectedness in her poetry (2001:97):

A Circle expands forever
It covers all who wish to hold hands
And its size depends on each other
It is a vision of solidarity
It turns outwards to interact with the outside
And inward for self critique
A circle expands forever
It is a vision of accountability
It grows as the other is moved to grow
A circle must have a centre
But a single dot does not make a Circle
One tree does not make a forest
A circle, a vision of cooperation, mutuality and care

In this poem by Oduyoye, we see how totalising patriarchal hierarchies are subverted and circumvented by this image of a circle. In Oduyoye’s conceptualisation of a circle, we see interconnectedness, how the individual is part of a larger whole, we see accountability, consent and awareness. These are the hallmark qualities of The Circle and African women’s theology, which is characterised by relationality, mutual dependence, a focus on the narratives of women and a deep commitment to justice and wholeness. In Oduyoye’s framework, wholeness refers to:

[A]ll that makes for fullness of life, and makes people celebrate life. Well-being—*alafia*— for most of Africa implies the possession of the powers, graces or attributes that call for the celebration of life, and demonstrates the integrity of the human body, good eye-sight, hearing and speech and the wholeness of mind and limbs... Fullness of life is defined as a state of prosperity, victory over evil and death-dealing forces.

(Oduyoye 2001:34)

Why are these women theologians concerned? Njoroge (1997:79) argues that by calling themselves ‘concerned’, these women are stating that they care deeply about

the erosion and destruction of human dignity, and life, all life, in Africa. They are concerned that much still needs to be done with religion and culture, to address the social ills that obstruct the experience of abundant life for people and the environment. Further, are they concerned that women have for too long been silenced, and that this has resulted in suffering and death.

Within African women's theology, African women experience hope as a lived reality. In spite of histories of oppression, poverty, disease, death and the loss of African culture and concepts such as hospitality and wholeness, African women's adherence and remembrance to these values are "anchored in the hope of Resurrection" (Oduyoye 2001:113). Christ's restored appearance gives hope of wholeness to those broken and scarred.

Not even Africa's mammoth poverty can breed despair in women even though from the outside what others see is a future of 'pain, death, the misery of watching one's children die and the death of hope itself'. The 'death of hope' is an impossible concept in African women's theology, because they believe Scripture that says, with God, they can scale walls (Ps. 30).

(Oduyoye 2001:113)

African women theologians approach the Biblical text with a hermeneutics of suspicion, and they engage in the Biblical narrative to find stories of hope and life for their communities.

African women theologians maintain that they are no mere victims, but rather take their context to heart to try and participate in the restoration of their wholeness as moral agents. In their approach, they imbibe principles of *Ubuntu*, liberation theology and hermeneutics of suspicion.

[Women] have discovered ways of resistance as strategies for personal and political survival and solidarity. The stories of women's resistance to the desecration of the earth, the subjective knowledge of women who practiced survival for decades, become the starting point for earth-healing praxis.

(Ackerman 1997:54)

In African women's theology, story-telling becomes a methodology, an approach to reconstructive theology. These stories of women, communities and nature in African context can then be used for healing and reconciliation (Gathogo 2010:7). Story telling can become an act of being made visible—of being seen or heard. This has meaningful implications for the ghosts that haunt. This also means reframing and repeating stories and rituals so that they may shape new ways of being and living on the land.

For instance, the African understanding of land as a sacred gift from God, which is not just a God-given resource for life, but also an intrinsic part of life itself is such a way that the sacred connection between person and land is reinforced. In Southern Africa, it is believed that:

land has moral and spiritual significance central to their view of life that values the integrity and harmony of creation. The sacredness of land derives from the fact that land itself is part of the earth spirit. The praxis of this belief is apparent in birth rituals that see umbilical cords buried in land, the songs sung to express rootedness to land, rites of passage and the art created by Black South Africans.

(Oikotree 2016:96)

Would the affirmation of this intrinsic value and wholeness in the form of stories and ritual not be a way to respond to the Spectre that disrupts our lives? Just think of the Green Belt Movement in Kenya that was founded by Professor Wangari Maathai in 1977 in response to the dire situation rural Kenyan women faced: streams that were drying up, insecure food supply, and the growing scarcity of firewood for fuel and fencing. The Green Belt Movement encouraged these women to plant trees to rehabilitate the soil so as to “bind the soil, store rainwater, provide food and firewood” for their families (Green Belt Movement 2018). In this whole process, Professor Maathai realised:

that behind the everyday hardships of the poor—environmental degradation, deforestation, and food insecurity—were deeper issues of disempowerment, disenfranchisement, and a loss of the traditional values that had previously enabled

communities to protect their environment, work together for mutual benefit, and to do both selflessly and honestly.

(Green Belt Movement 2018)

Maathai's work in Kenya is exemplary of an African woman that seeks hope and life amid the experience of brokenness of communities and creation.

Telling our stories, sharing our experiences, being in communion with each other and nature and conceiving of new life giving practices, would make these spectres visible and would be a way to move toward wholeness and restoration of people, relationships and nature.

5.4. CONTINUITIES AND DISCONTINUITIES: ECOFEMINISM AND AFRICAN WOMEN'S THEOLOGIES

Leonardo Boff in his exemplary book *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor* (1997) posits that "liberation theology and ecological discourse have something in common: they start from two bleeding wounds" and he goes on to say that "[b]oth lines of reflection and practice have as their starting point a cry: the cry of the poor for life, freedom, and beauty, and the cry of the Earth groaning under oppression" (Boff 1997:n.p). In the same way, I would posit that both ecofeminism and African women's theologies start from the same bleeding wound: the experience of oppression of women and the disruption of interrelatedness of being between her own body, the bodies of others and creation. Both ecofeminism and African women's theologies have conceptions of wholeness and interconnectedness at heart.

There are however differences, i.e. the experience of white and black women. Ecofeminism is broadly a western feminist undertaking, although there are some ecofeminist voices from the Third world, for instance such as Ivone Gebara and Vandana Shiva. The danger, however, exists in prioritising the privileged ecofeminist position above the experience of women from Africa, Asia and Latin America. The experience of climate change, for example is not only gendered but intersects with

race and class. The experience of climate change in a privileged urban space will be different than the experience of climate change in rural Africa.

While there are also many differences among women of these many non-white and non-affluent contexts, what seems to be basic is that women in Latin America, Asia, and Africa never forget that the base line of domination of women and of nature is impoverishment; the impoverishment of the majority of local people, particularly women and children, and the impoverishment of land.

(Reuther 1997:79)

In the experience of this impoverishment, as Reuther goes on to explain, is rooted in everyday realities (ibid):

Deforestation means that women walk twice and three times as long each day gathering wood; it means drought which means that women walk twice and three times farther each day to find and carry water back to their modest homes.¹¹

These realities lead African women to respond to the cry of creation in specific ways. Ways that critique economic powers and stakeholders influence in Africa. Ways that seek to incorporate “traditional patterns of care for the earth” and traditional notions of spirituality that help envision pragmatic ways of being (Reuther 1997:59) that would restore and reclaim bodies—both of nature and themselves. African ontology and epistemologies run counter to Western epistemologies which prioritises the scientific, rational above other ways of knowing. This could pose some difficulty for Western practitioners of ecofeminism, which although they also ground knowledge in the body and our interconnectedness (see Gebara 1999), there is a difference in how western women conceive of this epistemology and ontology contra African women. For African women it is intrinsic, for western ecofeminism it is grounded in response to patriarchal epistemologies.

African women’s theologies also integrate traditional perspectives on being with Christian narratives to meaningfully participate in their communities to counter death

¹¹ The 2017, WoMin (African Women Unite Against destructive resource extraction) report entitled ‘No Longer a life Worth Living Report’, offers an insightful view on the experience of this very issue of women impacted by mining in Northern Kwazulu Natal.

dealing forces that threaten their livelihoods. In this next section, we will engage in the Biblical text to expound on life giving practices and justice.

5.5. LIFE GIVING PRAXIS AND JUSTICE: A READING OF EZEKIEL 37:1-14

I will put my Spirit in you. And you will live again. I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I have spoken. I have done it," announces the Lord.' "

Ezekiel: 37:14

What does an ecofeminist and African women's theology of life giving praxis and justice look like? African women theology's approach to Biblical text includes a hermeneutic of suspicion, to counter patriarchal and views that damage and threaten life, and they try to find relief and liberation in reading the Biblical text by also taking their stories and contexts very seriously (Phiri 1997:75). This act of being heard and made visible is what drives African Women theologian's engagement with the Biblical text. In turn, this engagement with one's own stories and the Biblical narratives can bring us closer to restoration, healing and life. This engagement also fosters life giving praxis and justice.

Justice in regard to climate (climate justice) according to writers such as Patrick Bond (2011) should be characterised by a bottom-up grassroots approach. According to Bond (2011:1) climate justice is the new name for the movement that best combines a variety of progressive political-economic and political-ecological currents that seek to combat the threat that climate change poses for all life and the earth. The reason for climate justice's bottom-up approach lies in the failure of governments, major environmental NGO's and global stakeholders to address climate change (Bond 2011:1) in a meaningful and changing way. According to Bond (2011:16) women, especially African women play a crucial role in climate justice:

Neoliberal policies and corporate power have resulted in labour outsourcing, casualization and informalization. With life more precarious as a result, women are the safety net for household reproduction, in addition to being the most vulnerable and disposable of all labour sectors. But they also have been the driving force in resisting

this process here, overcoming micropatriarchy within communities and leading most of South Africa's grassroots campaigns on issues such water decommodification, access to AIDS medicines and other successful strategies to enlarge or defend the commons and sustain life.

African women theologians would contend that African women in their communities are committed to finding ways that speak life to death dealing relationships, practices and systems. Much like Ezekiel that prophesied to dead bones.

Ezekiel, like many African women's experiences, witnesses first hand times of great uncertainty, decay, destruction and death. In this chaotic place Ezekiel finds himself, he, like most post-exilic Jews, grapples with the question of where is God? Was God also destroyed like the temple? And *if* God has been destroyed, are they, God's people, also destroyed, spiritually dead people?

In the text of Ezekiel 37 we read that the prophet Ezekiel is taken to a valley that is filled with the bones of people. People that when they died, whatever the cause, weren't even buried. In this dry, desolated, broken place, God asks Ezekiel whether these bones can live again?

Ezekiel knows death and how final it is. He has felt it, he has seen it. In the face of total destruction and annihilation, what life could ever be possible? After Ezekiel is tasked with prophesying to the bones, he does what he is asked. Against all human expectation and knowledge of what is possible, the bones come alive. Not just as animated flesh and bones, but fully alive human beings with the breath of life in them.

The Biblical narrative of the valley of dead bones is about imagination, hope, and breathing life, God's living breath, into dead circumstances, relationships and structures.

This text also ends with a promise of restoration, homecoming and belonging. African women's theologians and their commitment to the well-being of communities, both human and non-human, is exemplary of this notion of life giving praxis—that is of breathing life into death.

5.5. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, in the hope of finding a way to respond to the spectres that haunt us, be it people or the environment, we explored ecofeminism and African women's theologies. Both notions have a strong sense of relatedness and inter-dependence between ourselves, other people, animals, nature, plants and God. Ecofeminism and particularly ecofeminist theology provides a rich source for thinking of our connection to each other and the creation within a Christian perspective. African Women's theologies are an African response to the African experience of brokenness that manifests in hauntings of different kinds. In both ecofeminism and African women's theologies interrelatedness necessitates a new ethic, an ethic of care that encompasses all human and non-human life. In this regard, in the context of Africa and particularly South Africa this would mean cultivating a life-giving praxis wherein, from the bottom-up, on grassroots level, life is breathed into death dealing structures and practices.

CHAPTER 6:

TOWARDS RESTORATION AND HEALING: AN ECOFEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Land is so much more than just soil. In South Africa, the issue of land is deeply complex as it is caught up concepts such as nature, livelihood, survival, identity, heritage, ancestors, God, creation, nature and profit. The main thesis of this research was that the relationship we have to land, is somehow distorted and broken. By using the lens of Foucault's genealogical method and ecofeminism which respectively seek to critique and dismantle micro and macro configurations of power, this research sought to explore this complexity and brokenness by looking at various, not all, issues that have shaped and influenced this relationship. As was stated at the outset of this research the main themes to be investigated were:

- The exploration of religious myths, ideologies and contestations especially with regard to land ownership.
- The disruptions, destruction and schism between human bodies and land through the case of Lily Mine.
- The cry of creation and the ecofeminist and African perspectives on wholeness.

6.2. FINDINGS

Chapter 2 started with the question of "who's land is it anyway?". This is by no means a flippant question, but rather a question that sought to explore the diverging claims to land by looking at the history of colonialism and missionary activity in South Africa and the consequences it had for shaping people's relationship with themselves, their community and to land. European expansion, which employed both micro and macro

configurations of power/knowledge, into unknown and new territories facilitated widespread domination, dispossession and reordering of the geographical, spiritual, economic and political landscape of people in colonial contexts. In southern Africa, this impact was devastating. In the early period of European expansion, expansion was encouraged by the church, but later gave way to economic interests. The new lands and people that were conquered proved to be rich in minerals, soil, cheap labour and space. This also true of southern Africa. The Dutch East India Companies' (DEIC) refreshment station became the basis for a lucrative business that stretched from Europe, to Africa and India to the Asia Pacific region.

European expansion went hand in hand with the expansion of the church. This was the case of south America, and so it was in southern Africa. With the DEIC presence in the Cape Colony came the reformed tradition. Later, when power changed hands in the Cape, missionary societies from all of Greater Britain, Europe and America flocked to southern Africa to convert the indigenous communities here.

Missionaries represented colonial presence and were, “the most active cultural agents of empire” (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991:5-6). Land as well as the minds of people were colonised at the hands of civilising missionary activity. Missionaries during the colonialist era helped reconstruct and reconfigure the traditional culture and lives of African people that came into contact with it. This also meant reshaping African's relationship to land. The dualist understanding of rationality over nature, in the western European worldview caused a schism in self, community and nature. This is the antithesis to the African worldview which views reality and all of life holistically. This holistic view extends to self, community (living and dead), nature, and God. The European intrusion and rearrangement of this holistic worldview was physical, emotional and spiritual violence enacted on African peoples.

At the same time the dispossession of African people was being enacted, the Afrikaner relationship to land was being formed by their collective settler experience while moving towards the interior of southern Africa. Afrikaner views on land, were heavily influenced by a retroactive supersessionist myth making process that viewed the Voortrekkers trek as a promised people's move to find the promised land. This notion of God granting the land to the Afrikaner was heavily influenced by the Battle of Blood

river. The Afrikaner “chosen people” narrative later became a tenet of Apartheid ideology and policy and hugely informs the debate on land restitution.

In chapter 3 we explored colonisation and the commodification of bodies, land and life in South Africa. In this chapter, we saw how the connection between bodies, land and life has been systematically disrupted with the use of commodification. Ecofeminism shows us that the domination of nature and women is connected, and is part of the same patriarchal, hierarchical and androcentric framework, which was espoused by the European colonialist project. Commodification was central to the colonialist project, both of land and people: from crops and minerals to people being exported for monetary gain. The commodification of life did not stop with the end of slavery, colonialism, or later British Imperialism. Rather the dual commodification of bodies and land became solidified in the burgeoning mining industry in South Africa. More than just a simple historical overview, this chapter zoomed in on specific moments, such as the Marikana Massacre and the Mpumalanga Mining industry, to illustrate how in the commodification process both human bodies and the body of the earth, land, is linked, exploited and in too many cases, destroyed. The dual commodification of bodies and land, as is exemplified by the mining industry, create conditions where life cannot flourish.

In chapter 4 the destruction of both people and nature caused by the destructive systems of Colonialism, Apartheid in the commodification process emblematic of capitalism, is seen as a haunting. By using Derrida’s concept of hauntology, this dual haunting is investigated by looking at the Lily Mine tragedy where one man, and two women were working in a container office at the Barberton Lily Mine site, disappeared one day into a great big gaping hole in the earth. This is a haunting cry of both humanity and of the earth. In this section, the conceptualisation of hauntology was also extended to nature with the notion environmental haunting. In this regard climate change is viewed as a spectre that haunts. The dire situation of the earth, due to human influence craves an immediate response—otherwise the bodies swallowed at Lily Mine, will not be the only casualties of our disrupted nature. The spectres of our past, the lost, the ones trapped in a container almost a kilometre under the earth, plastic and climate change, break into our present and demand a response to those

they haunt. Hauntings, and the accusation of our ghosts, whether it be human or ecological necessitate an ethical response.

Is there any way to go beyond the accusation of the ghost—the broken bodies of men and women and of the earth—a way to find healing, wholeness and restoration? This question was addressed in chapter 5 by looking at alternative ways of knowing and understanding our connection between ourselves, each other and nature. This poses a counterbalance to a Eurocentric bias, such is evident in Foucault's work.

This was done by looking at ecofeminism which sees life as interdependent and interconnected and African women's theologies and its notion of wholeness. Both ecofeminism and African women's theologies pose a challenge and critiques the dominant western, hierarchical, patriarchal and androcentric divide between nature, self and community. Ecofeminism in particular traces the macro-power constellations to see how humanity and the earth are being broken by global powers. Ecofeminism and African women's theologies see the domination of both women and nature as linked and seeks different ways of being and doing to counter dealing structures and practices prevalent in our society. In Africa, we see how women embrace live giving praxis and justice in their communities, by telling stories of loved ones, by remembering those that have been lost, by creating new rituals and ways of being that bring hope to communities, by speaking truth to power, by engaging in Biblical narratives in such a way that it is liberated from patriarchy and racism, advocacy and education, life is breathed into dead bones and wholeness and restoration become a reality.

In the beginning of this research, Foucault's genealogical method was chosen for this research because of the usefulness it poses in tracing coercive configurations of power/knowledge that seek to dominate and control. These configurations are prevalent in the European colonialist project, and is, as this research has shown, particularly apparent in the relationship between missionary and convert. Foucault sees that power "seeps into every grain of individuals, reaches right into their bodies, permeates their gestures, their posture, what they say, how they learn to live and work with other people" (Sheridan 1980:217). This is precisely the configuration of power/knowledge that was exhibited in the mission station and later in the mining

compound. Foucault in turn deconstructs dynamics of micro-power by asking questions about our history, society and ourselves and how things came to be. This was the same approach whereby the Afrikaner ties to land was explored.

The other side of our methodological approach, ecofeminism, was useful in tracing the macro configurations of power in the narratives of colonialism, and the interconnected domination and oppression of women and nature by placing them on a global scale. It helps us realise that the oppression of nature and women in South Africa, is a worldwide phenomenon and that a global response, particularly by women, to this oppression is necessary. The damages micro- and macro configurations of power have caused to bodies, and the body of earth, is profound and far reaching and touches on all spheres of life. Ultimately the damage this has caused, is the greatest challenge to the 21st century.

Further possible avenues for research include specifically developing a contextual African ecofeminism that combines notions of African women's theology and ecofeminist thought. Further avenues of research include advocacy, in particular for mining affected communities, and climate change in South Africa. Lastly, the notion of ecological haunting in the context of Africa could be expanded.

6.3. CONCLUSION

There is an urgency to this craving of restoration that this researcher feels in her own body, as she is sure there are others, who are not white and middleclass, who feel it even more acutely. The recent severe draught in the Western Cape bears testament to this. In the coming years this will become, I fear, the new normal. The earth is heating up, while men and women toil, cry, suffer and live under the hot African sun. What land and people can survive under these conditions? Now, more than ever while all life on earth is threatened, we need healing and restoration.

POSTSCRIPT

TWO GATES: BLOEDRIVIER/NCOME

When visiting the site of the Battle, which today is a monument, it is possible to enter the memorial site from two different entrances, one is called Blood River (*Bloedrivier*), this side serves to tell the Voortrekker side of the story. The other side, when you enter is called *Ncome*. The amaZulu warriors after suffering near total defeat, were pursued by the Voortrekkers, and trapped in the muddy banks of the *Ncome* River. There, trapped, they were slaughtered—it is believed that the water of the *Ncome* turned red, hence the name in Afrikaans *Bloedrivier*.

In 2013 a bridge, called the Reconciliation Bridge was erected over the *Ncome* river connecting the Bloodrivier Museum to the *Ncome* Museum by the ANC government. The information notice at the bridge reads:

In February 2013, the reconciliation bridge was constructed to symbolise the removal of racial and social barriers by connecting two institutions built on one battle field, narrating the same story (of the battle of Ncome / Blood River") from two different perspectives. The bridge moves beyond linking these two institutions to connect and unite citizens through shared history, heritage, and values towards unity in diversity and nation building.

One day this researcher, a white Afrikaans, Christian, woman, hopes to take a step on that bridge. Perhaps on that bridge, suspended between victory and defeat, hope and despair, life and death, black and white, man and woman, perhaps there we might find each other, and the restoration and wholeness that we all crave.

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