

Thank you foreign [Music]

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Dr. McSparren (Host): Greetings everyone, thank you very much for joining us today on the Green Room, a production of the Green Institute; that's www.greeninstitute.ng. Today we've got a really interesting conversation, the topic of our conversation today is 'Decolonizing Global Development Theory: What's in a Buzzword' And we've got two really interesting professionals here and experts to talk about this topic we'll be talking today with Maïka Sondarjee and Nathan Andrews

Maïka Sond-ar-jee is an Assistant Professor at the School of International Development and Global Studies, University of Ottawa. She obtained her Ph.D. from the University of Toronto and has been a Banting Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Montreal. Her first book, *Perdre le Sud. Décoloniser la solidarité internationale* (2020), addresses systemic sexism, colonialism and inequalities in North-South relations. Her current projects look at white saviorism, epistemic inequalities in communities of practices, as well as feminist approaches of international relations. She is a regular contributor for the newspaper *Le Devoir*, a member of the collective *The Great Transition*, a Board member of the NGO *Alternatives*, and a member of the Canadian Task Force on Anti-racism in the international cooperation sector.

Nathan Andrews is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at McMaster University. One aspect of Dr. Andrews' research focuses on the global political economy/ecology of natural resource extraction and development. His peer-reviewed publications on this topic have appeared in journals such as *International Affairs*, *Resources Policy*, *World Development*, *Energy Research & Social Science*, *Africa Today*, *Business & Society Review*, and *Journal of International Relations & Development*, among others. Dr. Andrews' latest books include a monograph, *Gold Mining and the Discourses of Corporate Social Responsibility in Ghana* (Palgrave, 2019), co-edited volumes such as *Corporate Social Responsibility and Canada's Role in Africa's Extractive Sectors* (University of Toronto Press, 2020), and a co-authored monograph, *Oil and Development in Ghana: Beyond the Resource Curse* (Routledge, 2021). The second aspect of his research revolves around the scholarship of teaching and learning, in particular critical international relations, epistemic hegemony, racism and whiteness in knowledge production and dissemination. Some recent articles on this theme include "What/Who Is Still Missing in International Relations (IR) Scholarship? Situating Africa as an Agent in IR Theorizing" *International Relation Theorizing* and "Trends of Epistemic Oppression and Academic Dependency in Africa's Development: The Need for a New Intellectual Path".

Thank the both of you for being here on the Green Room today, where sustainability is our central theme of our program. Those of you in the audience please welcome Maïka and Nathan. How are you today?

Dr. Sond-ar-jee : Very good, thank you Jason.

Dr. Andrews: Thank you Jason for those kind words.

Dr. McSparren: Right, yes it's great to see you here. I'm really pleased to have you two on the program. So I think the first question - we might as well just jump right into the topic at hand. The title of our conversation today and I know that this is also a working title for a paper that the

two of you were working on. We talk about what is decolonization or decolonialism in international relations and development studies. Could you please give us an idea of what decolonization means and what are some of the threats that this term could become a buzzword?

Dr. Sond-ar-jee: Good intro. I think so the word decolonize or to decolonized or decoloniality and stuff like that, it's a massive new set of buzzwords that no one really understands what it means. So I think the first distinction we need to make is between formal colonization and colonialism. So, formal colonization is the control of another state or another nation through economic and political means, but colonialism is the system of thought or the underlying principles that undergrid or were underlying to formal colonization but continued thereafter. It's the imposition of a hierarchical system which places Western countries and epistemologies and people at the top and the rest at the bottom. It's really about this racial hierarchy that has been created and we see that in day-to-day life, in institutions, in our minds and especially in universities. How, who we hire who, we promote as epistemic agents or who we assign in our in our syllabus. But also in general, like how we think about the world and this ladder of development with you know developed countries at the top and underdeveloped countries at the bottom and everything in between and this idea of modernization that one can reach the top of the ladder is pretty cool it's a colonial idea, so we need to de-center our minds and start thinking about the world we live in and deconstruct these ideas that are a legacy of colonialism

Dr. McSparren: okay so great

Dr. Andrews: I can add to it. So, when we think about decolonization within the intellectual setting or academic setting, you're thinking about, you know, moving away from the western or Eurocentric historiography that informs the field. So the field of developments that is for instance right or the field of international relations you know we have all of these understandings of the world and the way we have to see the world which have been perpetuated by theories that live in certain contexts, [by people]who probably are not exposed to other contexts, but still theorizing for the whole. So that sort of theorizing for the whole has informed what we think of the world as it is, without necessarily thinking about how other people elsewhere could be thinking about the world from their own perspective. So, to decolonize would be to flip the coin so to speak and look at how other people from other parts of the world could be looking at the same world that you're looking about from a totally different perspective because of their experiences, their up-bringing and just the context that they live in. So that's sort of what academic or maybe the intellectual aspect of the colonization could include.

The second part of your question was how that can become a buzzword? It can become a buzzword when we think about everything as everything that has to do with the decentral Eurocentrism as decolonial or as a decolonization right. So that the goal of really disrupting structures of racial hegemony is very important but we cannot equate all of those things necessarily to the process or to the act of decolonization. I think that's the point we're making here that we need to think about it critically, we need to use different words to sort of explain what we're doing and not put decolonization in this sort of lump sum when we're describing everything that we're doing.

Dr. McSparren: Okay, yeah you know that's really interesting. That last point, how you don't want to use the same term to indicate a lot of different actions or processes or things that exist. What I'd like to know is, if we can get a little bit more specific about what does decolonization mean in the context of these disciplines IR (International Relation) and Developmental studies

Dr. Sond-ar-jee: Well, that starts with what Nathan has just said is about decentering the Western gaze. Like how we see, how we view the world, how we present the world to our students has been influenced by this racial hierarchy, has been influenced by Western epistemologies. How we see, when we see the world, we see individuals that come from a very Cartesian way of seeing the world as made of individuals who think and act as individuals which other epistemology, other ontologies, other perspectives about the world have been much more collective. We think about Ubuntu in Africa, we think about *Buen Vivir* or a lot of other types of seeing the world. And so, to decolonize our disciplines and I think Nathan said it well in terms of we're not sure about how we should use the word in terms of if we just talk about intellectual decolonization that could be decentering the Western gaze. It could be being more anti-racist or less racist in the way we teach. But to decolonize would mean more than just thinking about intellectual endeavors or the field. It would be about thinking about the political economy of it, the new liberalization of universities; it would be to think about how we, and our capitalist structures or intertwined with racial and Colonial structures. It would be to think about how we can deconstruct or challenge these precepts the fact that research is based on profits now; the fact that we often dispossess people from their knowledge and then integrate those knowledge in our programs. And so it's to decolonize IR or development is so broad that what we're trying to do in our research is to warn people against using the word too freely, so that we don't de-politicize it or we don't widen it. And we don't integrate the world too freely in Western Academia.

Dr. Andrews: Yeah, I mean, I think not to repeat what Maika has already said really brilliantly, but I just think that decolonization as a notion itself is relevant to these fields because again if you think about the intellectual aspect of decolonization being trying to displace and disrupt your Eurocentric, colonial and opinions of the world that we know of or of the history of the world. 'International' is important so we call it international relations and we call this Global development. The underpinning, the understanding here is that these things are Global, understandings of development are Global and understanding of the relations among states are international but they are really not. Well the argument that has been made by Scholars is that, in fact, what you think as International is pretty much American political science or American social science not so much an international relations subfield of political science as we'll call it. Same for Global development, think about it as Global, if it's Global but then, we don't know, we don't have perspectives from around the world that are widely accepted in our disciplines, right? So a way to stop this and I don't like, I don't want to call it decolonization itself, but a way to reverse this will be to bring in perspectives and to gradually get people to understand the word from different world views, different epistemologies and opinions, right? And I think it will help us disrupt this sort of fetish that we have with the notion of science and then in fact if you're doing something scientific, we need to follow certain specific steps and these steps have been predefined by certain western understandings of the world and of what science really is. So, that's sort of how I would see it. I don't want to think about this as decolonization but I would say that I've organized a few panels talking about decolonizing IR and I'm always like, "oh." So, it was before we wrote this paper, I was like okay now what we're

saying people shouldn't do probably done it before and that's why we can actually provide this insight in terms of what we should probably not do. Because I've had a few panels on that as like decolonizing the syllabus but then is it really decolonizing the syllabus or maybe making it less racist or anti-racist as Maïka has said.

Dr. Sondarjee: Yeah and I think that's very interesting and I think it's it shows that we can evolve; you know we can think about those issues. I use the word in my work and I think we can use the word decolonizer to decolonize if you really refer to a political project, of challenging ethnocentrism as Nathan has said, like the intellectual part, challenging the Western gaze and ethnocentricity in our work but also challenging racial capitalism and patriarchal capitalism, and also land retribution. So, if in Canada for example, the starting point of this article was we are, Nathan and I, are always asked to do decolonial stuff and I've been asked by Global Affairs Canada to give a workshop on how to decolonize Global Affairs Canada, which is the Foreign Affairs Ministry of a one of the few countries where [they are] still enacting formal colonization because of indigenous peoples. So how? and I told them, I was like, are you ready to give the land back to indigenous peoples and if not, and I'm not saying we could, I'm saying if you're talking about to decolonize anything it has to be so important and it's a political project and you have to acknowledge the legacy of indigenous struggles, of struggles by people in Global South but to acknowledge like activist struggles and so I love Nathan's phrase, "if you can challenge ethnocentrism, you can challenge the Western games," you can do so many things, be more anti-racist in universities without using the word. And what we fear is that, it's going to become a buzzword, as much as intersectionality as became and has become and we want a challenge we want to warn people against that.

Dr. McSparren: Sure, and just for our audience, could you just kind of define 'intersectionality' for us please?

Dr. Sond-ar-jee: Well intersectionality would be the intersection or how systems of power, structures of Power, are interlinked in producing outcomes and so how capitalism is not just about exploiting workers. It exploits workers of the global South and racialized women differently for example or if you are a black woman you are a lived experience of the world and a positionality that's different from a white woman. And so, it's really about how systems of oppression are intersecting, right?

Dr. McSparren: So it is how social, political, and economic systems interact differently for different people, depending on maybe, their race and gender. So, yes in my preparation for this, I really found it interesting to see that decolonization, the term and a lot of the literature that is associated with this, - it really looks at decolonization and this has been referenced already. That it has a lot of aspects to it. Capitalism being a system that is oppressive to some, we talk about patriarchy, we talk about uh, racism and we also talk about gender oppression, as well. All are kind of wrapped up in this idea of colonialism or actually decolonialism. So, it really is an interesting thing to think about that what you're doing is, you are looking at the current system and you're trying to figure out how can we make it more equitable, how can we make it more accessible to all people rather than just select few who may fit the profile? Am I right about that?

Dr. Andrews: Yeah, I mean that's correct. Right, I mean we're trying to make sure that we're talking about development; we're talking about international relations or pretty much any other

field of study, you're not just going with the same old stories, you're not going with the same old logics that have informed these disciplines but you're moving beyond that, right? And you're looking to be more deliberate in the choices that you make. In terms of who you include, who you cite, who you consider to be key theorists in the field, the sort of experiences that you share in the classroom and there's experiences that you draw upon and all of those. And the history of the world in itself right? So you're very much conscious of all of that because that context pretty much informs how the discipline has come to be what it is now, which is pretty much a picture of the West. A picture of Eurocentrism but now there's a need to move beyond that. So now you need to think about every step you're making, every point in time you're making a decision about the field you're in, you have to reflect, you have to be self-reflexive about the choices that you're making. I think that's pretty much it and that in a way makes things available and open to a wider audience and a wider group of people than we would typically have in the usual sense.

Dr. McSparren: Great! Great response, I appreciate that. At this point we're going to take a commercial break and we'll return back with Drs. Nathan Andrews and Maïka Sondarjee.

Commercial Break: Today ladies and gentlemen you are on the Green Room with Dr. Nathan Andrews and Dr. Maïka Sondarjee. And today we're talking about decolonizing global development theory: what's in a buzzword? There are a couple of events we want to bring to your attention. The Green Institute is sponsoring the World Sustainability Conference 3.0 which will be held November 12th 2022 and we have currently accepting conference papers. So if you have any interest in participating please visit our website at www.greeninstitute.ng/wsc2022. Please consider submitting a paper to the World Sustainability Conference 3.0. There's another conference coming up as well we want to bring to your attention La Grande Transition or The Great transition 2023 and there is a call for papers actions and workshops for the great transition conference which will be held from the 18th to the 21st of May 2023. And the deadline for these submissions are November 10th 2022. For more information, you can go info@lagrandtransition.net

Dr. McSparren: And we are back to our conversation. Thank you very much. There's something I want to kind of go back and talk about is something that Maïka had mentioned earlier. She's talking about when we're talking about decolonization or this idea of looking at things not always so Northern-centric. Trying to have perspectives from the south, when we're talking about how you have to think, Nathan mentioned, they have to think critically about the systems, about the interactions between states, between people in politics and economics. But one of the things that Maïka had mentioned, she's talking about we have to also decolonize our mind. So, I want to just mention that there's a scholar SH Atlas (1972, 21) decried “‘the captive mind’ of Asian intellectual which he understood as the feeble tendency of people from the GS to defer to the Northern ideas, evaluations and solutions / overcome dependance on northern paradigms instead, establish ‘a genuine and autonomous social science tradition in Asia (1972m 21). Promote - the ‘creative mind’ ” Can you give us a little bit of an idea about some strategies that we might be able to use or some processes that we might be able to use to decolonize our minds.

Dr. Sond-ar-jee: This is a very important topic and there's so many scholars that have talked about that, Ngugi WaThiong'o also from another space or Atlas. But a lot of people are talking about decolonizing our minds or the Western mindset that we have. In development, we see that

a lot, we see that for example in the application of projects, for let's say empowerment of women, where we take individual women and we give them a small grant. To people that really have never been included like that, like credit system and capitalist way of saving and so we give them a little grant. Then, they have to repay it individually but what already exists in many countries I know it exists in Burkina Faso or in Madagascar, the country where my family comes from, where there's a collective let's say collective not credit system but saving systems where women get together and they all put some money and every Monday decide what they want to do with it. So a western way to do a project to empower women would be this individualized version. Well if you go in a country and you use the systems the processes that are already there that are culturally sensitive, then you have greater chances of success. And so how do we deconstruct and decenter our minds that's a very difficult question. It starts with acknowledging that we live in a world that has been defined by Western epistemologies and Western epistemes and Western ontologies. It's everything that Nathan has said before is about realizing that uh, that exists in Academia will lead to not only including tokenistic Global South scholars in our syllabi but also like deconstructing how we talk about countries, how we think about other scholars or other epistemologies. And Nathan and I have been doing that in our research. I've been doing that in terms of feminist research, I've looked at 50 syllabi and international relations, intro to international relations to look at the place of feminist studies. And what I realized really quickly is that not only do we marginalize feminist approaches or critical approaches but we marginalize Global South Scholars and Global South approaches, postcolonial, decolonial race studies but we also have a way of talking about other countries that is Western. So, when we talk about the United States we're going to talk about foreign policy, we're going to take about power, we're going to talk about the wars that have happened, we're going to talk about individual leaders, but when we talk about sub-Saharan Africa, we talk about genocide and HIV and Corruption. And so, to repeat that to our students over and over and over again will lead to what Felwine Sarr called Afro-pessimism. We're going to think about African countries as these places of misery and we see that all the time and it doesn't mean to silence real socioeconomical problems that countries have to deal with. But it's to understand that we have this racial hierarchy what Felwine Sarr used to call 'the line of being and in the line of non-being.' We have these hierarchies in our minds and to answer your question I have no clear-cut tools it's just to learn and read and, be aware of that to deconstruct it.

Dr. McSparren: Yeah.

Dr. Andrews: So I mean, I tend to also want to be like these are some of the practical ways you can do it but it's hard to define those ways but I have a few suggestions. So, I think a few years ago, Oxfam moved their headquarters to Nairobi which was a major move in International Development. It's probably one of the first that has been done to relocate centers of I guess knowledge production and decision making from the global North to the global South. So, that was a big step, right? and I don't know how it's going but it looks like it's going well because they haven't moved back to London but that's an example of how things can be flipped. I mean it might just be a small aspect of the solution that we need in terms of flipping things around. Making sure that centers of knowledge production, knowledge determination are not necessarily always located in the global North, I think that's one of the ways we can think about this creative mind. The reason why there is this sort of academic dependency that you have referred to Jason is that, the creativity is there, it's not people don't have the creative mind, they do. But then it's

the systems that would uphold the creativity of these people, do not encourage such creativity in the first place. Because someone can write all they want, but then, they will never be published in a popular press in the global North. So, if you don't get published in certain journals in our field, you're not considered to be a major scholar and you probably will never show up on any course syllabi. So it has a sort of effect, a rippling effect on that person and that person's agency to contribute to the discipline or to contribute to knowledge production. So, I think for me shifting centers of knowledge production making sure there are centers around the global South, where people can actually produce knowledge, knowledge that is not considered as nonsense but actually considered scientific enough to be useful in the field that we're in. That would be a good way to start thinking about creative mind and reduce their dependence of global South Scholars or global South people on knowledge and wisdom that is sort of being handed down to them from the North, right? So that's really an interesting way of looking at it, but that's one suggestion that I have addressed in that problem.

Dr. Sond-ar-jee: It's a good one and what you're saying is so true. We have to value all kinds of knowledge because the creative mind exists and sadly we have trained, we have inculcated this idea that there's a certain type of knowledge that is valued more. A certain type of University so people who were from the global South, we have a lot of international students that think that coming to study here in Canada in the United States is better. So I think foreign structures on a day-to-day basis may be tricky would be I think three things; first, inclusion is still a huge issue. Inclusion in our syllabi, who are you gonna assign and also if you assign that one African scholar, are you gonna put it in that area study box or you're going to assign an African perspective of globalization or an indigenous perspective. Because often what we do with global South research or Global South researchers is that we put them in Area study books while Western Scholars are doing "International research". Then you have to de-center how we present history, what are the main historical landmarks for international relations and in the analysis of syllabi I've looked at, I think eighty percent of syllabi talk about the peace of Westphalia but none of them talk about how the peace of Westphalia was a state system that was imposed by Western countries, often violently, often through imperialism. But we present this as the likely foundation of the international system. So for most western scholars, international relations is about relations between states. But for a lot of global South people, states are very violent, they have been imposed through colonialism and for a lot of indigenous people, especially living in Western countries, boundaries and state boundaries are very violent. So, decentering history would be the second thing and then decentering our minds of everything that Nathan has talked about understanding and Euro-centrism and deconstructing it.

Dr. McSparren: Yeah, That's, very comprehensive. I appreciate the answer. I kind of want to open this up just a little bit more and ask, Is decolonization a fashionable way to promote social justice?

Dr. Sond-ar-jee: It is, it is and that's exactly what we want to make, what our point is about. It's become a buzzword, it's become the fashion of the week but social justice is important. So what we're saying is not, don't do decolonial work. Our point is, do it, but if you're doing parts of it try to call it what it is. And if you're not really talking about how capitalism and racism have intersected, if you're not talking about the dispossession of indigenous land and Indigenous knowledge and if you're not talking about the political economy of it all. Maybe you're doing

something important, maybe you're doing anti-racism, maybe you're doing inclusion, maybe you're doing all kinds of things, social justice work that is crucial but try to not de-politicize the word while still doing the work.

Dr. McSparren: Right. There you go, okay.

Dr. Andrews: Exactly and I also find that even with the EDI, we talk about Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Now there is a tendency to call it in-equity, diversity, inclusion and decolonization. I've seen a few organizations reference to 'EDID' and that the additional D is not really needed to do EDI work. Right? So you do need to do EDI work Equity, diversity, and inclusion. Which would be removing systemic oppression or racial hierarchies and any sort of inequitable structures that make people not contribute the way they should or make people feel marginalized from the various systems that are supposed to be protecting them. So, those are all very critical important work that can be done, but I think adding the extra D to it doesn't necessarily make it more social justice oriented than it would be if you did not add the extra D. I think that's basically a point here.

Dr. Sond-ar-jee: Especially in Western universities where are you want to ask yourself, are you ready to give the land back or changing the name of your University? If your founder was a slave owner like McGill for example; or what Ryerson has done through activism of students. They've changed the name of the University because these people have enslaved other human beings. They have perpetuated an amount of violence that is just incommensurable and so if you're not ready to give land back, if you're not ready to make that thinking, if you're not ready to challenge how scholarships are attributed and, challenge the neo-liberalization of your University. I mean maybe you're not and I'm not saying what you do is not important, it's just- it's not decolonization. So, it really should be linked to a social justice but political project that is often depolized.

Dr. McSparren: Okay. Yes, we're seeing a lot of that in Canada and the United States. In the U.S there's the ongoing discussion about giving reparations to descendants of slaves. Some universities are looking into that, in finding that they have histories that are colored in this sense and they're trying to figure out how to rectify that. And it is not an easy process and there is a lot of pushback.

Dr. Sond-ar-jee: It's very hard and what you're saying, I think is it's a good direction to go and now we're talking about reparations, we're not talking about, we're still talking about inclusion and EDI and - but reparation is already a step further. And these conversations are really difficult. They're difficult, they're complicated and what I like to say is, it comes from someone I don't remember who, but I think, if we're having these discussions and you're not uncomfortable, we're not having the right conversation. So we need to be uncomfortable especially as Western Scholars, to question ourselves is going to be very complicated and very difficult but we need to do that work.

Dr. MacSparren: Yes, most definitely. At this point I want to give the audience this moment to digest this really interesting topic. We're gonna go to the next commercial break.

Commercial Break: World Sustainability Conference 2022 Call for Abstracts

Dr. McSparren: Here we are back. Maïka, at this point I think I'd like to ask you if you could just elaborate a little bit on the conference that you are one of the hosts, 'The Great Transition conference coming up.

Dr. Sond-ar-jee: Yeah, I'm on the editorial board in the organizing committee for this conference. It's every two years normally but two years ago we couldn't do it in person so we're back. In 2018 we had 1600 people participating. So, it's organized with Historical Materialism in London which is a group that's obviously Marxist tendencies but now we try to make it really a post-capitalist conference.

So, how can we think about all these aspects that we're talking about and amongst academics and activists, because I think the bridges are not strong enough now, so we really need to talk to people from both sides. I think academics have a tendency to use and depoliticize activists' struggles and activists' concepts but we need to actually be in conversation. So we can keep doing transformative research and also a lot of activists I interact with are eager to learn about new theories or ways to understand the world. So the theme this year is 'Fighting in times of Global crisis'. Because let's talk about a climate crisis and the post-pandemic crisis, we need to understand how to fight together again collectively and so we're going to have keynote speakers like Sabelo Ndlovu Gatsheni, Houria Bouteldja, Elisa Loncon, and lot of indigenous activists too. So, I really encourage you to look it up and submit a panel or Workshop or an activity. It's going to be in Montreal

Dr. McSparren: Okay. Can you just give us the website one more time please

Dr. Sond-ar-jee: Very well yeah. www.lagrandetransition.net . Your French is really good.

Dr. McSparren I practiced French for a while. I did field research in Mali. So, I was pretty steeped in French for a few years.

Dr. Sond-ar-jee: Well the conference is bilingual, so you can come and present in English if you want, right

Dr. McSparren: okay, I appreciate that. Yeah, thanks. Okay, so where was I going to go from there. Yeah oh yes again, just what you were saying, just want to recap what you just mentioned. The idea of the climate change crisis and how we really have to look at our systems. Again, people are used to the current system. Generally speaking capitalism has been around for a very long time but we have to really look at this critically and identify the links between the climate change crisis, capitalism, racism, all of these sorts of structures that you're talking about, that really need to be looked at more critically and thought through. I think sometimes in society we become complacent and just figure that, oh democracy has always been here, right? Yet in the United States, you can see, and elsewhere as well, we're having difficulties with democracy and challenges to democracy. Similarly, you think about capitalism and you think about capitalism from the idea of supply and demand, right? And that we have to continue to do things that are detrimental to the Earth like mining, like using hydrocarbon fuels. Why? Because we have to

maintain an economy, these are really interesting things; people are starting to think about circular economies as opposed to linear economies. This way we have less waste, less refuse and we are degrading the Earth much less. So I'm really pleased about this conference, this conference, The Great Transition because people really need to think more deeply about these issues and try and figure out a new approach.

Dr. Sond-ar-jee: Definitely and as you're saying, I think it's important now that we understand those crisis and the fights against those systems and, sustainability as colonial and influenced by colonialism and racism and patriarchy and all that. Because you can't think about the climate crisis with a western mind otherwise we're not going to make it.

Dr. McSparren: Exactly. Yes and again that was actually something that I was thinking about as I was preparing for this and when you think about colonialism and the enslavement of people the imposition of capitalism, these sorts of things. And if you really go back and you think about it; very often the societies that were colonized - they had a stronger connection to the Natural World. They had more respect for the Earth in some ways than the European idea that came out of the Enlightenment [era], that humans can dominate the earth. And human kind can trace our current situation with the climate change back to that idea that from the Enlightenment that God gave the earth to humans, to men, and, that men can dominate nature. And now we're trying to reverse that and there's still, again, a lot of pushback.

Dr. Andrews: Yeah, I mean that's really an interesting way of looking at it. I think it's very critical and crucial to understand the ecological crisis that we're in now. Because this notion of exploring, conquering territories, taking over lands and domination, right? This notion of dominating, we're talking about white supremacy, white dominance that is the origin of that. And that has perpetuated itself over history and that is why lands have been taken, cultures have been, you know, dismantled. Social systems have been dismantled. All in favor of producing more and consuming more. And continuing to destroy the environment with the notion that things will trickle down and everyone that is part of the system will benefit from the same system.

I was teaching, I'm teaching a class on globalization, and one student was asking this, a similar question about how we can think of a different world beyond capitalism and even if that is possible. Within the current - like it's possible but are we willing to move to that system. It could be - but are we willing to move to a system where we're not reliant on these sorts of things that we are so used to. I mean we want these good things in our lives and they come at a cost. Are we willing to do it. Are we willing to sacrifice and move to a different system and consider an ecological challenge that we are all encountering. But I want to say that if you think about capitalism and how racism informs it, looking at the enslavement of people to farm, to work on these initial big plantations that was part of the evolution of capitalism itself. That's how you connect racism to capitalism right from its Genesis, right? So some people will be asking, do we have to talk about race when we talk about every single thing? It's like yes we have to, because if you look at the history, yeah, it tells you that racism was core to all the things the processes and the structures that were put in place right so that's it.

Dr. Sond-ar-jee: Exactly. And in a lot of research on capitalism, we seem to forget that and a lot of people are going to talk about the enclosures or how like there were conditions in Great

Britain that were specific to the emergence of capitalism. What was specific to Great Britain and France and other countries in Europe is colonization. They were able to implement capitalism in a way that was successful with Industries and export-led Industries because they were able to exploit other workers in other countries through slavery and also dispossessed people from their land and their work, and their natural resources, so this is why Europe is rich now. Before colonization, North-South inequalities were the other way around. The “Great Discovery,” in huge quotation marks, were made to find all the wealth and the resources that were in Asia. And then we found realms and what is now allowed in America with castles made in gold and urban organizations that were way more modern and developed than those in London. Even Adam Smith, who is not understood as a leftist scholar used to say that Agra and Laos for example, countries in South Asia, were much more modern and developed than London. Then through colonization and slavery, Western countries have become richer and richer in the backs of other people. So, we tend to forget that history and understand today countries that are rich as being better or better at the system than others but they were better at it because they exploited other countries.

Dr. McSparren: Absolutely right. And again it goes back to how was that done? What was the, the key tool? Its violence, right? Against individuals, violence against societies, violence against culture.

Dr. Sond-ar-jee: Epistemic violence, as we to come back to the topic of today, it went through the imposition of a system too.

Dr. McSparren: Yes okay. Yes, so we are coming to the end but I do have one final question before we wrap up this episode of The Green Room. I want to ask you, and again, a little bit of this was touched on, but I want to know if you can - the two of you can kind of summarize an answer to this question. What I'm thinking about is, what are some of the things that when talking about Academia, some scholars from the global north can do to decolonize and then what is it that Scholars from the global South need to do in order to decolonize? I think this would be a good thought for our audience to walk away with.

Dr. Sond-ar-jee: Of course and I think from my positionality, I can go for the global North Nathan if you don't mind. I think it's going to be a very difficult process. I think the key word is 'sharing privilege.' We cannot, I mean, I'm working in a western country, I was born here, I'm mixed race, I cannot shy away from those privileges. But I need to understand them and as much as possible share them with other people that includes inviting other types of people in my courses, other types of scholars and activists also. Because we have to deconstruct this idea that the only people with knowledge are Scholars with PhDs from Western universities. And for my last point, I think of Sabelo Ndlovu Gatsheni, who talks about decolonization, International Development and he's one of my mentors, now intellectual mentor and he says, he talks about challenging academic hierarchies. So it's not just about syllabi and scholars and all that. Yeah, if you want to challenge Colonial hierarchies, you have to challenge all kinds of hierarchy. And he's talking about academic democracy, so there's a lot of talk now about academic freedom, if professors can say whatever they want in class. What he's talking about is really about listening to everyone that is included in Academia. Let's listen to students, let's listen to lecturers. What I do in my classes, I keep always two classes at the end of sessions that we discuss with students.

What would they want to hear, because they have a type of knowledge that is very interesting and crucial that I need to listen to. We need to give more power to lecturers and so we need to shuffle and challenge those hierarchies everywhere in academia, gender, colonial and racist hierarchies.

Dr. McSparren: Excellent. Thanks for your comprehensive answer.

Dr. Andrews: I'll answer that a bit. I mean it really boils down to collaboration, right? So I like how Maïka puts it. I think collaboration makes a huge difference and for Global North Scholars who are privileged, sharing that privilege as Maïka said really has to do with collaborating and if you're working a topic that someone else in the global South has already worked on and if you're going to those places to do research, how about you collaborate with people that already have the knowledge, already doing that type of work, the same even in the global development sector now. I think Global Affairs Canada is requiring more local Grassroots organizations to be involved in projects. Which is really a good way that if you don't have, - if the project doesn't have that local involvement you won't get funding for it, right? So that's a practical way of ensuring that we claim agency. Local voices can be heard through these discourses and through decision making. So I think for people on the global South side they should claim this basically, just claim the agency that they have, because you already have it, you already have the knowledge and so if you have researchers coming to work with you, who want you to just collect the data for them or who want you to just do something and write a report for them, claim the agency by saying look I want to be the one to talk about this. I want to be the one to lead, I want to be part of this project or this publication that is going to come out of this. So you need to claim it, you need to be proactive in doing that because otherwise you would always be at the receiving end of wisdom or knowledge from above instead of contributing to knowledge which you already have but you just have to really claim it. So this is just a simple practical way of helping to shift the dynamics that we have currently.

Dr. Sond-ar-jee: Exactly. Shifting money, shifting authorship, shifting power.

Dr. McSparren: it's great and the positive thing - the positive note - there are a lot more think tanks and journals and research centers coming out of the global South, and they are gaining more traction in the global North because there is this sense that maybe not everyone, but there is a sense that people are realizing that we are missing out on the full picture by not giving value to local knowledge.

Dr. Sond-ar-jee: And international journals now like International Affairs is forcing people who are doing Special issues to have Scholars from the global South as authors of Articles and ISQ is asking for gender parity. What about International journals, you call them yourself International what about imposing those kinds of rules to change.

Dr. Andrews: Yeah and I think it's a great way to go if you have journals which are really strong in terms of being systems of knowledge production. They have been sustained over time. So if you have all of these big journals in our field having a diverse group of editorial board members who would then require publishers or writers to write with, to collaborate with people from all

over the world that would make it more meaningful and more plural in the way we can see our discipline than just doing it the same old way.

Dr. McSparren: Excellent and on that note I want to thank Dr. Maïka Sondarjee and Dr. Nathan Andrews for coming to the green room today and talking about ‘Decolonizing global development theory: what's in a buzzword?’ Thank you two very, very much.

Dr. Sond-ar-jee: Thank you, Jason.

Dr. Andrews: Thank you for having us. Yes it was fun.

Dr. McSparren: great thank you.

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