

**Abyssal Ideology and the Amerindians of Guyana: an eco-crimes  
analysis of power, discourse and cognitive injustice**

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Program in Environmental Studies  
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May 2017

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## **Abstract**

Cognitive injustice- that is, the failure to recognize the plurality of epistemologies and the manner in which people across the globe provide meaning to their existence- should be the subject of critical criminological inquiry because it is directly linked to both environmental and social injustice. This dissertation presents a comparative and critical analysis of the discourses surrounding the indigenous peoples of Guyana, the Amerindians. Massaging the parameters of green criminology and the eco-crimes framework, I synthesize Norman Fairclough's (1995) methodology known as critical discourse analysis (hereafter CDA) and Boaventura de Sousa Santos' (2006) theoretical framework of abyssal thinking in order to capture the "Amerindian experience" from the dawn of colonialism to recent conservation efforts, such as the country's very first community-owned conservation area (C.O.C.A.). In my attempt to unmask cognitive injustice via discourse, I also demonstrate how the experiences and speech of the Amerindians can challenge this injustice by exercising what Santos refers to as post-abyssal thinking.

## **Acknowledgements**

I am at a complete loss for words when I think of the indefatigable efforts of my incredible supervisory committee: Dr. Ravi de Costa, Dr. Anna Zalik and Dr. Livy Visano. Ravi, I can still remember the very first time we met in the Second Cup on campus. You sipped on your Americano and nodded as I explained the scope of the project. From the earliest draft, to the final one, you provided generous counsel. Your patience truly knows no limits and I am incredibly grateful to have you as a friend and supervisor. I wish everyone could know how much energy and intellectual complexity you contributed to this project – perhaps they will, one day.

Anna, your brilliance is unrivalled and you challenged me to think in ways I never thought I was capable of. Your advice on the mechanics of research was of inestimable worth and I thank you for it. Livy, what could I say about you and your contributions? You were my professor at York University when I was an undergraduate student and now you are a committee member overseeing this project. You are the reason I entertained graduate school; there were many times I felt as if I didn't belong in academia. Thank you, dear friend, for making me feel welcome.

A special thanks to Dr. Camille Hernandez-Ramdwar, Dr. Honor Ford-Smith and Dr. Claudio Colaguori. My fellow luminaries, your participation in this process truly humbles me. Claudio, working alongside you as your teaching assistant all those years prepared me for this intellectual and spiritual journey. Thank you for taking me under your wing and supporting me every step of the way. I look forward to working with you on those ideas we conjured up during the past four years.

*Dedication*

*This work is dedicated to my mother, Angela Omrow*

*I have always been aware of the tremendous sacrifices you made in order  
to help me get to this point in my life*

*Your unwavering faith in me pushed me through this dissertation, even  
when I thought I had nothing left inside*

## **List of Maps and Diagrams**

Map 1: “The Land of Many Waters”	23
Map 2: Distribution of the Amerindians	27
Map 3: Distribution of the Amerindians in the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century	35
Map 4: British Guiana	41
Map 5: Konashen Community-Owned Conservation Area	335
Diagram 1: Dimensions of Discourse	146

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Abstract</b>	ii
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	iii
<b>Dedication</b>	iv
<b>List of Maps and Diagram</b>	v
<b>Table of Contents</b>	vi
<b>Introduction</b>	1
<b>1. The Land of Many Waters: A Clarion Call to Green Criminologists</b>	15
Guyana’s Geography: “The Land of Many Waters”	16
Guyana’s Demographics: “The Land of Six Peoples”	24
Guyana’s History: Dutch Occupation	28
Guyana’s History: The Birth of British Guiana	36
Guyana’s History: The Co-operative Republic	42
Post-colonial Independence and the Regime of “Co-operative Socialism” (1966-1985)	46
Post-Socialist Liberalization and ‘Reformed Democracy’ (1986-2004)	58
Eco-Crimes: Why Guyana?	63
<b>State Actions</b>	
Mining	67
Logging	71
Unsettled Land Claims	72
<b>Private Actions</b>	
Development Projects	75
<b>Geopolitical Action</b>	
Conservation in Guyana	76
<b>2. Re-Configuration of Eco-Crimes</b>	78
Paradigmatic Antecedents of a Green Criminology	78
The Green Light	80
Ontological Specifications of Eco-Crimes	87
Corporatist Perspective and Eco-Crime	89
Environmental Justice Perspective and Eco-Crime	92
Primary and Secondary ‘Green Crimes’	95
Conservation Criminology and Eco-Crime	98
Discourses of Harm and Eco-Crime	100
Biological/Ecological Integrity and Eco-Crime	101
Eco-Global Criminology and Eco-Crime	106
Genetically Modified Food and Eco-Crime	108
It’s Not Easy Being Green	110

Paradigmatic Shift and the Re-configuration of Eco-Crime	117
<b>3. Methodological Statement</b>	121
Theoretical Framework	
Discourse Analysis	125
Critical Discourse Analysis	134
Frame Analysis	149
Critical Discourse Analysis in Practice	151
Green Criminology	
Data Selection and Analysis	152
Scope of the Project	154
Methodological Procedures	155
Potential Bias	157
List of Potential Frames	157
Colony/Nation Ascendency Frame	158
Assimilation Frame	159
Paternalism Frame	160
Deficit-Oriented Frame	161
Collaboration Frame	161
<b>4. The Inception of Abyssal Ideology and Dutch Occupation of Guiana</b>	163
The Origins of Abyssal Ideology	165
The Negotiation and Contestation of Discursive Power: Amerindian Resistance	184
<b>5. The Creation of British Guiana and the Perpetuation of Abyssal Ideology</b>	189
The Consolidation of British Power	190
The Forestry and Mining Sectors: Amerindian Rights and Crown Land	213
Abyssal Practice and the Production of Nonexistence	218
Abyssal Ideology and Discourse	221
The Negotiation and Contestation of Discursive Power: Amerindian Resistance	240
The Antecedents of Contemporary Conservation in Guyana	250
<b>6. The Independence of Guyana and the Perpetuation of Abyssal Ideology</b>	252
Amerindians at the Dawn of a New Nation	253
The Amerindian Act of 1976	262
The Mining Act of 1989	272
Abyssal Practice and the Production of Nonexistence	280
Abyssal Ideology and Discourse	283
The Negotiation and Contestation of Discursive Power: Amerindian Resistance	296
Abyssal Machinery and the Antecedents of Neoliberal Conservation	310
<b>7. The Abyssal Dimensions of Conservation</b>	312
Conservation for Whom?	313

Conservation in the Land of Many Waters	318
Guyana's Community-Owned Conservation Area	328
Abyssal Practice and the Production of Nonexistence	336
Abyssal Ideology and Discourse	339
The Negotiation and Contestation of Discursive Power: Amerindian Resistance	351
<b>8. Conclusion</b>	<b>359</b>
<b>A Shift Towards Post-Abyssal Thinking</b>	
Future Research Endeavors	363
<b>References Cited</b>	<b>365</b>



## **Introduction**

Cognitive injustice- that is, the failure to recognize the plurality of epistemologies and the manner in which people across the globe provide meaning to their existence- should be the subject of critical criminological inquiry because it is directly linked to both environmental and social injustice. This dissertation presents a comparative and critical analysis of the discourses surrounding the indigenous peoples of Guyana- The Amerindians. Massaging the parameters of green criminology and the eco-crimes framework, I synthesize Norman Fairclough's (1995) methodology known as critical discourse analysis (hereafter CDA) and Boaventura de Sousa Santos' (2006) theoretical framework of abyssal thinking in order to capture the "Amerindian experience" from the dawn of colonialism to recent conservation efforts, such as the country's very first community-owned conservation area (C.O.C.A.).

One of green criminology's objectives is to link 'green crimes' to social inequalities, but I aim to expand the field by analyzing how such crimes are also linked to cognitive injustice. Informed by the inspiring work of discourse-power theorist Michel Foucault and the growing literature in the field of discourse analysis, this dissertation attempts to unmask hidden mechanisms of cognitive injustice via discourse, whilst demonstrating how the experiences and speech of marginalized and excluded populations can challenge this injustice. The over-arching argument put forth in this work is (1) green criminological inquiry can be expanded by focusing on cognitive injustice and its links to both environmental and social injustice; (2) a more nuanced understanding of eco-crimes can be achieved by adopting methodologies such as CDA, advancing the social legalist perspective and (3) that CDA enables green criminologists to document how certain

discourses can be subverted and challenged, bringing about what Foucault and Santos refer to as resistance and post-abyssal thinking, respectively.

In his beautifully penned *Manifesto for Good Living*, Santos (2014) presents a clarion call to the global South- those denizens of geographies who have faced the inexorable voracity of neoliberal capitalism and its tentacles: colonialism, capitalism between humans and nature, monocultures of knowledge; the ‘linearity’ of progression and the productivism of economic growth- to mention only a few. The global North’s transnationalization of injustice bears many masks and this dissertation aims to critically analyze the discursive representation of indigenous peoples – specifically, the Amerindians of Guyana. According to Santos, modern Western thinking constitutes abyssal thinking through an intricate system of visible and invisible distinctions, with the latter serving as a foundation for the former. Invisible distinctions are composed of radical lines which divide social reality into two distinct realms: the realm of “this side of the line” and the realm of “the other side of the line” (Santos 2007). It bears emphasizing that through this division of social reality, “the other side of the line” runs the risk of vanishing because it is produced as nonexistent by those on “this side of the line”. Santos (2007) reminds us that an important feature of abyssal thinking is the impossibility of co-presence between the two sides of the line.

It is this impossibility of co-presence which captures my attention – especially the constellation of invisible distinctions which have drawn upon (and continue to draw upon) colonial and post-colonial discourses regarding the “backwardness” and cultural inferiority of the Amerindians. The indigenous peoples of Guyana have been discursively consigned to “the other side of the line”, yet they enact resistance to this division of

social reality by challenging certain political and cultural discourses. There exists in green criminology a caesura, as it were, with respect to cognitive injustice. While much ink has been spilled over environmental and social injustice, not much has been written about cognitive injustice. Drawing upon the works of Foucault (1971), Fairclough (1989; 1992; 1995; 2000; 2001) and Santos (2006), I explore the power of discourse- its capacity to create myriad social realities, creating and sustaining unequal social orders. Human beings interpret the world based upon the social and cultural categories available to them. Thus, this project endeavors a thoughtful examination of the colonial, and post-colonial, discourses surrounding Guyana's indigenous peoples.

My work, then, dovetails with a cadre of criminologists working in the sub-field of critical criminology referred to as constitutive criminology. I am, of course, referring here to Stuart Henry and Dragan Milovanovic and their work *Constitutive criminology: beyond postmodernism* (1996). The violence of language, according to Henry and Milovanovic (1996), provides insight into how the disempowered and marginalized are denied expressive forms for making a difference in their social worlds. Constitutive criminologists examine how language produces harm- especially how this medium is deployed by the powerful as a means of identifying and exaggerating perceived *differences* among human beings. It is through the construction of categories that 'order' is brought to a seemingly chaotic world, forcing the powerful to adopt these social constructions as reality. But in Foucauldian fashion, power is in constant flux and negotiation, facilitating space for resistance. As such, constitutive criminologists analyze the complex interrelationships between social structures, human agents and socio-cultural contexts, leading to processes of *replacement discourse*. *Replacement discourse* is the act

of dismantling hegemonic structures of meaning, whilst replacing these with new conceptions, words and phrases, subverting the prevailing status quo.

While this project adopts an eco-crimes framework in order to better understand how discourses perpetuate cognitive injustice, inevitably leading to both environmental and social injustice, it also engages in a much needed dialogue with other fields – namely, Postcolonial Studies and Subaltern Studies. Interdisciplinary approaches welcome a more nuanced understanding of the powerful forces at work vis-à-vis discourse. Even Santos acknowledges the overlap between post-abysal thinking and other strands of intellectual thought and activist energy. When he speaks of the “decentering effort” to challenge abyssal thinking, he identifies the potential of the subaltern counter-movements, claiming that it is the poor and indigenous whose “conceptions and practices represent the most convincing emergence of post-abysal thinking” (Santos 2006: 64).

Subaltern Studies, for instance, is a mode of critical scholarship in history, literature and anthropology (Prakash 1994). Originating from Antonio Gramsci’s writings on subordination in terms of class, caste, gender, race language and culture, and the dominant/dominated relationships throughout history, the term “subaltern” evolved into an analytical tool for restoring history to the subordinated, accusing colonialist, nationalist and Marxist narratives of denying the subjectivity and agency of the subaltern in history (Guha 1963; 1983). In the words of Gerald Berreman (1971: 72):

“The people who comprise the system are depicted as unfeeling, regimented automatons ruled by inexorable social forces, conforming unquestioningly and unerringly to universal values”.

This, however, is simply not the case. Berreman (1971: 72) continues “they are defiant, selfish, magnanimous, independent, innovative, tradition bound, fearful courageous, optimistic, pessimistic”. While his analysis was confined to the subaltern ferment unfolding in India, his comments are apt when evaluating celebrations of struggle across the globe. Parallels, then, can be drawn between this dissertation and the work of subalternist scholars such as Ranajit Guha. His compelling work entitled *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (1983) revisited nineteenth-century peasant insurrections in colonial India, documenting the consciousness, mythic visions, religiosity and bonds of community among the peasant insurgents, emphasizing the social agency and consciousness of the dominated in formulating a theory of resistance (Prakash 1994; Spivak 1988; O’Hanlon 1988; Rodriguez 2005). This theme of endowing the poor, subordinated and marginalized with subjectivity and agency is an important one, and it is revealed in later chapters of this dissertation, where I attempt to demonstrate myriad examples of Amerindian resistance against discursive power.

Concepts, then, such as *resistance* (Foucault 1979); *post-abysal thinking* (Santos 2007); *replacement discourse*, (Henry and Milovanovic 1996); and *subalternism* (Guha 1983; Spivak 1988; Prakash 1994) feature a broad political orientation of struggle, and it is this very struggle I wish to analyze through an eco-crimes framework. After all, one of the objectives of green criminology as a discipline is to identify what role, if any, social movements play bringing about social change. The aim of this project, therefore, is to understand how discourse institutionalizes cognitive injustice and the manner in which the Amerindians challenge and contest this injustice. The prevailing strict legalist perspective, and its rigidification concerning the ontological specifications of crime,

facilitates unidimensional legalistic thought which, in my opinion, suppresses the imagination. It is my aim, ultimately, to situate both the methodology of CDA and the concept of cognitive injustice within the eco-crimes framework, advancing the social legalist perspective. As such, I posit the following research questions in an attempt to understand the abyssal and socio-cognitive dimensions of eco-crimes:

- CDA attempts to demonstrate that power, knowledge and language intersect, producing forms of domination via the production, distribution and interpretation of texts. How does an investigation of discourses enrich our understanding of abyssal ideology and how can such an understanding be integrated into an eco-crimes framework?
- How do discursive representations of Guyana's Amerindians reproduce Santosian abyssal thinking, and what are the implications for global social, and cognitive, justice?
- What does a legacy of eco-crimes imply for indigenous resistance? What does green criminology stand to gain from analyses of such forms of resistance?

In what follows, I will specify the conceptual framework of abyssal thinking, outlining its utility in an eco-crimes framework. This will be followed by a description of each chapter to be included in the dissertation.

### *Abyssal Thinking and Ideology*

This project is inspired by Boaventura De Sousa Santos' writings- specifically, his work with the World Social Forum. Invoking an eco-crimes framework, I reflect on Santos' lament that there is "no global social justice without global cognitive justice"

(Santos 2014: 237). Along with scholars such as Shiv Visvanathan (1997), John Gaventa (1980; 2001), Felix Bivens (2014), Paulo Wangoola (2012), Lorna Williams (1975) and many more, Santos sketches a manifesto for a future in which we broaden our understanding of epistemic systems and multiple epistemologies, benefiting all of humanity. While cognitive justice refers to the recognition of epistemic diversity, it also addresses how various peoples bring meaning to their very existence. In this dissertation, I explore what I believe to be a lacuna in the field of green criminology: the link between cognitive injustice and social and environmental injustice. But what precisely constitutes cognitive injustice? To answer this question, we must first investigate how abyssal thinking works. As mentioned above, Santos (2006:1) explores systems of visible and invisible distinctions. The concomitant division of social reality means “the other side of the line” vanishes because it is produced as nonexistent by those on “this side of the line”. Nonexistence, according to Santos (2007:1), means “not existing in any relevant way or comprehensive way of being. Whatever is produced as nonexistent is radically excluded because it lies beyond the realm of what the accepted conception of inclusion considers to be its other”.

Santos provides three instructive examples of how abyssal thinking works: the visible distinction between social regulation and social emancipation in Western modernity; the distinction between science, philosophy and theology; and, lastly, the distinction between legal and the illegal (Santos 2007). With respect to the former, the tension between social regulation and social emancipation, Santos contends, serves as a visible distinction that founds all modern conflicts. This dichotomy, however, is buttressed by an invisible distinction between metropolitan societies/colonial territories.

Santos proceeds to explain that while the regulation/emancipation dichotomy exclusively applies to metropolitan societies, the dichotomy of appropriation/violence applies to colonial territories.

Modern knowledge features a similar mode of abyssal thought: modern science is granted the monopoly of the universal distinction between “true” and false”, while philosophy and theology are consigned to the periphery. This visible distinction, science/philosophy/theology, is premised on the invisibility of alternative forms of knowledge which are excluded from conventional “ways of knowing”. The epistemologies Santos is referring to, of course, include popular, lay, plebian and indigenous knowledge- all of which reside on “the other side of the line”.

Finally, modern law also features abyssal thinking; the universal and visible distinction between legal/illegal ignores an entire legal terrain- that of the lawless, the alegal, the nonlegal, etc. The legal/illegal distinction, which is situated on “this side of the line”, then, is premised upon invisible distinctions of modern law. Writes Santos (2006: 1): “modern abyssal thinking excels in making distinctions and in radicalizing them... The intensely visible distinctions structuring social reality on this side of the line are grounded on the invisibility of the distinction between this side of the line and the other side”. Furthermore, the realities on “the other side of the line” are eliminated through a radical denial of co-presence between the lines.

Santos’ explanation of the production of nonexistence is crucial to understanding how power operates. Echoes of Foucault’s work can be heard; recall, Foucault was extremely critical of the foundational issues of culture- that is, basic categories and dichotomies such as good/evil, normal/pathological, reason/unreason, etc. (Pickett 1996).



For Foucault, distinctions and divisions between, say, reason/unreason create “limits” and *transgression* and *contestation* (which are synonymous with *struggle and resistance* in his later works) are examples of “excess” which cross these “limits”, brining the entire division into question (Pickett 1996). Foucault avers that the rules, limits, and norms history places upon us are not only viewed as natural, but are sources of exclusion and marginalization. *Resistance* should be conceived as an implicit affirmation of “difference”, undermining the aforementioned “limits” of our culture (Foucault 1977). Suffice to say, then, apposite parallels can be drawn between abyssal thinking and Foucault’s concern with the foundational issues and dichotomies in Western culture. What I am more interested in, however, is how abyssal thinking becomes ideological, institutionalizing cognitive injustice.

While the term ideology has a number of different applications, it is critical sociology’s use of the concept which is apt for this project. For example, sociologist Claudio Colaguori (2012: 1) defines ideology as “a set of ideas and beliefs that justifies, legitimates or supports a social system of power and domination”. Reviewing this definition, we begin to see how abyssal thinking constitutes ideology: it *justifies and legitimates* global abyssal lines and the creation, negation, and radical elimination of “the other side of the line”. Abyssal ideology, then, institutionalizes cognitive injustice, as those who are relegated to “the other side of the line” have their very humanity denied; they are excluded from dominant conceptions of “being” and portrayed as sub-human; they are the proverbial “Other” who comprise one part of the universal binaries of Western thought. Abyssal ideology, then, perpetuates various dimensions of injustice, be it social, political, cultural, ethnic, religious, or ecological. This is because the perpetrator

of cognitive injustice fails to acknowledge the victims' alternative "ways of knowing" and the manner in which they provide meaning to their existence.

Abyssal ideology, I contend, can be revealed through discourse. Understanding language is the key to identifying currents of abyssal thought. As mentioned briefly above, constitutive criminology (Henry and Milovanovic 1996) features similar investigations. According to this school of thought, discourses constitute violent events: language is deployed by the powerful as a means of identifying and exaggerating perceived *differences* among humans, producing harmful relations and denying others from becoming fully social beings. In other words, "crime is defined as the power to deny others the ability to make a difference in their world" (Henry and Milovanovic 1996: 116). The constitutive nature of crime is directly linked to cognitive injustice.

While a more comprehensive explanation of Santos' work and contributions to the World Social Forum will be reserved for chapter two, I will briefly highlight how this work enhances an eco-crimes analysis of cognitive injustice. *The sociology of absences*, Santos explains, perpetuates cognitive injustice because what does not exist is the result of powerful agents producing a state of non-existence. Abyssal ideology sustains cognitive injustice, viewing populations as "inferior", "sub-human", "savage", "backwards", "unsustainable"- in other words, situated on the "other side of the line". A focus on the abyssal dimensions of eco-crimes enables green criminologists to understand how, and why, social inequality persists and, most importantly, how such abyssal thinking can be resisted and subverted.

Refashioning Santos' work on abyssal thinking, I interrogate the ideological implications of abyssal thinking vis-à-vis discursive representations of the Amerindians

of Guyana. Capturing the “Amerindian experience” from the dawn of colonialism to recent conservation efforts, I hope to reveal how certain actors have utilized the textual and linguistic resources available to them in order to discursively portray the Amerindians as both civilizationally and culturally inferior, facilitating gross social and environmental injustices among this indigenous population. Discursive representations of the Amerindians feature systems, and sub-systems, of distinctions which contribute to a history of political and economic subordination.

### *Outline of Chapters*

Chapter One presents readers with a succinct summary of the history, geography, demographics and socio-political climate of the country Guyana. I proceed by explaining why Guyana serves as the quintessential case study for green criminologists, revealing how the Amerindians have been affected by various mining, logging, development and conservation projects. Chapter Two serves as an informative literature review of tremendously influential works on eco-crime. Exploring these texts, I traverse an intellectual terrain, gaining insight into the ontological specifications of the concept of eco-crime. It is through this review of my colleagues’ research that I articulate what I perceive to be limitations in the literature, arguing that cognitive injustice evades empirical analysis. This, I contend, is because the social legalist perspective is subordinated by the strict legalist perspective.

Chapter Three presents my clarion call to green criminologists for a much needed paradigmatic shift in the field, cultivating new methodological and analytical approaches to understanding cognitive injustice and abyssal ideology. Serving as an informative literature review of discourse analysis and CDA, my methodological approaches for

identifying abyssal thinking through various discourses will be presented, in conjunction with a list of potential discursive frames- all of which can be detected in texts from the dawn of colonialism up until present-day conservation efforts. The common motif in these texts, I maintain, is the negative, epistemological and ontological assumptions about the Amerindians of Guyana.

Chapter Four is an exciting venture for green criminologists because it reveals how CDA can be utilized with respect to detecting the inception of abyssal ideology in the former European colony. Starting with Dutch occupation, the Amerindians were subject to what Edward Said (1994) refers to as “caricatural essentializations”. In other words, despite compelling evidence of tenable alliances between the Dutch and the original inhabitants of the country, CDA uncovers a plethora of invisible distinctions between the Colonizer/Colonized- many of which portrayed the Amerindians as unregenerately barbarian and savage in nature, exemplifying the radical division of social reality along abyssal lines.

In a related vein, Chapter Five explores the capitulation of the Dutch colony into the hands of the British and the perpetuation of abyssal ideology through various ordinances, in conjunction with personal dispatches, and logs, from English officials. What is of tremendous importance in this chapter is, again, the Santosian division of social reality into two distinct social realms, and the centrality of what scholar Alastair Pennycook (2002) identifies as the “constructs of colonialism” – that is, discourses of the Self and the “Other” which engender a series of dichotomous pairs (cultured/natural, industrious/indolent, clean/dirty, etc.). Again, CDA aids our investigation of the assumptions concerning the colony’s indigenous population and how these assumptions

translated into abyssal practice- namely, the production of nonexistence and the impossibility of co-presence between both “sides of the line”. Finally, this chapter sets the groundwork for linking abyssal ideology to contemporary conservation projects.

Chapter Six explores British Guiana’s transition to independence in the 1960’s, with a particular emphasis on the former colony’s political and economic transformation into a Co-operative Republic, its evolution into post-Socialism, liberalization and ‘reformed’ democracy. Such phases are of inestimable worth because they reveal how abyssal ideology was perpetuated, and maintained, through the new state’s pathologies of power (Ahmad 1981). This section also provides an in-depth analysis of what I refer to as abyssal machinery- namely, the *Amerindian Act* of 1976 and *Mining Act* of 1989. Both pieces of legislation, in conjunction with other state mechanisms such as the Amerindians Lands Commissions, exemplify Santos’ system of visible and invisible distinctions; the radical division of social reality into two separate realms; the impossibility of the co-presence between both sides of the line; and the manner in which the Amerindians’ ethnic and tribal relations to land and resources were actively produced as nonexistent. The chapter proceeds by presenting a critical analysis of various speeches delivered by the country’s leader, Forbes Burnham, and government reports, linking abyssal machinery with ideology. Finally, some astute comments are made on the paternalist, and somewhat discriminatory, legacies of the aforementioned abyssal machinery and how they might serve as the antecedents of conservation projects in contemporary Guyana.

Chapter Seven presents a cursory analysis of Guyana’s very first community-owned conservation area (C.O.C.A.), which is managed exclusively by the Wai Wai people. It is important to assess the establishment of this conservation area alongside

historical material on the Amerindian population in order to reveal how power works through discursive divisions/categorizations and, most importantly, kinds of ‘orientalisms’ which perpetuate abyssal thinking. Emphasis on Guyana’s participation in conservation projects also speaks to the country’s involvement in globalization and geopolitics in the twenty-first century, gaining a nuanced understanding of the institutionalization of cognitive injustice. The comparison of the discourses surrounding the C.O.C.A. and historical materials about the Amerindians, then, is deliberate and strategic, revealing how abyssal ideology inheres in discourse. I am particularly interested in the issuance of a title, in 2004, to the Konashen District, a 1.54 million-area tract of land adjacent to the northern border of Brazil’s Pará state. The result was the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation, which featured the following conditions: a joint evaluation of the impact of Wai Wai land uses on ecosystems and the development of new strategies for managing resource use; the development of income-generating projects in the community; and efforts to establish the Wai Wai land as a conservation area to be incorporated into national protected area systems (The REDD Desk 2012). Like chapters Four, Five and Six, chapter Seven features examples of the Amerindians’ resistance to the imposition of abyssal ideology, inviting epistemological diversity throughout the world and, most importantly, bringing about social, environmental and cognitive justice through the principle of “radical co-presence”.

## **Chapter One**

### **The Land of Many Warnings: A Clarion Call to Green Criminologists**

#### *The Strict and Social Legalist Perspective*

Conforming to the tradition of postmodernist thought, I stalk an intellectual quarry, contributing to the extant research in the field of green criminology. Criminologists Mark Halsey (1997) and Yingyi Situ-Liu and David Emmons (2003) have commented on the manner in which scholars have accepted uncritically conceptualizations of eco-crime proffered by the state, positing a more meticulous and dynamic definition of crimes against the environment. I also depart from traditionally modernist frameworks, exploring the socio-cognitive dimensions of eco-crimes. Crucial to my analysis is Situ and Emmons' exposition of the two schools of thought involved in the definition of crimes against the environment. The strict legalist perspective, according to the authors, views eco-crime as "an unauthorized act or omission that violates the law and is therefore subject to criminal prosecution and criminal sanction" (Situ and Emmons 2003:3). On the other hand, the social legalist perspective reveals that that certain acts may not violate the provisions of criminal law, but warrant the label of a 'crime' because of their deleterious effects on the environment and human beings. The dominant systems for classifying crime privilege strict legalism, obscuring social legalist perspectives. This, of course, diverts attention from the social practices which, although legal, are equally environmentally disastrous and destructive to the livelihoods of many indigenous communities embroiled in a struggle to preserve their cultural integrity.

Placing the tension between these two perspectives within the critical, and constitutive, criminology literature, we begin to see how much the eco-crimes framework

needs to be reformed. Recall, green criminology aims to draw parallels between ‘green crimes’ and social inequalities; and to identify what role, if any, green social movements play bringing about social change (Carrabine et al. 2004). This, however, cannot be achieved if the field continues to rely on positivist and modernist frameworks.

Intellectual growth in the field can be stimulated through explorations of the abyssal dimensions of eco-crimes. Constitutive criminology has provided us with the platform required for such an undertaking, inviting analyses of how discursive power is exercised by the powerful. Its emphasis on the discursive constructions of *difference* and the denial of one’s humanity can, I believe, be situated in abyssal ideology. Moreover, the distinction between strict and social legalism is an important one, because it illustrates how cognitive injustice escapes scrutiny under the strict legalist perspective. Uncovering such injustice requires a more creative and thoughtful methodological approach. As such, my methodology draws upon the works of Foucault (1980) and Fairclough (1989; 1992), advancing critical discourse analysis as both an important methodology and analytical framework for green criminologists. The remainder of this chapter will be dedicated to providing a succinct description of the country in which my research will be situated.

### **Guyana’s Geography: The Land of Many Waters**

Guyana, also known as Guiana and British Guiana, during the years of Dutch and British colonization, respectively, forms part of the Guiana shield. The Guiana shield constitutes one of two rock formations in South America. Along with the Brazilian shield, it anchors the continent, laying beneath portions of Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, Suriname, French Guiana and Guyana. It is enclosed by the Atlantic Ocean in the north, the Orinoco River in the west, the Amazon River in the southeast and the Japurá River in



the south (Lamb and Hoke 1997; Redfern 2001). The Precambrian geological formation is more than 2.6 billion years old and is an estimated 2,275,000 km<sup>2</sup> (Berry et al. 1995). The shield's higher elevations are referred to as the Guiana Highlands and are noted for its biological diversity and mesmerizing geomorphologic features such as tabletop mountains; some of the highest single-drop waterfalls in the world; the Precambrian lowland wetlands and regions of the Amazon basin (Braun et al. 2007). It is within the Guiana Shield that the *Land of Many Waters* can be found, situated on the northeastern coast of South America. While approximately 80 percent of the country's borders are large bodies of water, the rest of the country is comprised of expansive lowland rainforests, seasonal dry forests, mountains, fertile marshy plains, white sand belts, desert savannahs and small interior lowlands replete with mountains along the Brazilian border (Hennessy 2005). The country boasts 5000 species of trees and plants. It is also inhabited by approximately 728 species of birds, 1998 mammals, 137 reptiles and 105 amphibians (GOG 2000). Its three counties, Essequibo, Demerara, and Berbice, are comprised of ten administrative regions.

Region 1 is known as Barima-Waini and is situated in the northwest of Guyana, covering an area of 20,339 km<sup>2</sup> (Beaie 2007). While heavily forested, this region also features an Atlantic coastal strip with a number of captivating beaches: Almond Beach, Luri Beach, Shell Beach and Turtle Beach, to name just a few. Its capital, Mabaruma, is the administrative centre of the region, situated on a narrow plateau above lush rainforests. Region 2 is Pomeroon-Supenaam and features the towns of Anna Regina, Charity, Pickergill, Spring Garden and Suddie. Region 2 also borders the Atlantic Ocean to the north, covering an area of 6,195 km<sup>2</sup> (Beaie 2007). The Caribs of Guyana inhabit

this area, establishing villages in the Barama and Pomeroon rivers, as well as the northwestern coast. The region's capital, Anna Regina, is in close vicinity to Mainstay Lake, an elegant site featuring white sands and gallery forests.

Essequibo Islands-West Demerara comprises Region 3 and features the following towns: Parika, Schoon Ord and Uitvlugt. This region is also home to the Patamona tribe, which resides in close proximity to Hog Island, Wakenaam and Leguan. Vreen en Hoop is the capital and is surrounded by these islands and their scattered coastal mangroves and riparian forests. It is comprised of smaller communities such as New Road, Plantain Walk, Crane and Coglean Dam. Essequibo Islands-West Demerara is split in two by the majestic Essequibo River, the largest river in the country. This river rises in the Acarai Mountains, which are located near the Brazil-Guyana-Venezuela border, its waters coursing through forests and savannas into the Atlantic Ocean. It bears emphasizing that some of the country's most resplendent rapids and waterfalls are located in this region. The Kaieteur Falls, on the Potaro river, is part of the Kaieteur National Park and is approximately 521 meters high (Bernard 1999). Waters plunge over sandstone and conglomerate cliffs, continuing to flow over extremely steep cascades. The combination of height and water, in conjunction with an average flow rate of 23, 400 cubic feet per second, captures the imagination of observers, making the Kaieteur Falls one of the most powerful waterfalls in the world. The waters of the Essequibo River also flow through the Murrays Fall, Pot Falls and Kumaka Falls. Despite its content of flowing waterways, Essequibo Islands-West Demerara also covers an area of 2,232 km<sup>2</sup> (Smock 2008).

Bordering the Atlantic Ocean to the north is Region 4, also known as Demerara-Mahaica. Coastal dwelling indigenous groups can be found in this region, namely the

Arawak and Waru, in tandem with the majority of Guyana's Indo and Afro-Caribbean peoples. This Region also contains the country's capital, Georgetown. The largest city of Guyana, Georgetown, is dubbed the "Garden City of the Caribbean". Its geography consists of spacious coastal plains, blankets of cane fields spread across marshy swamps and tropical savannas comprised of tree patch mosaics (Jack 1971). Georgetown also contains the seawall, a 280 mile wall which demarcates Guyana's coastline, constructed in 1855 to protect settlements in the coastal areas from the erosion of land by the sea's waters, whilst draining the city's excess water via intricate networks of canals (Kandasammy 2006). Georgetown rests on the Atlantic Ocean coast, located near the mouth of the Demerara River and is the country's retail and administrative center. This region is also home to other towns such as Buxton, Enmore, Victoria and Paradise, covering 1,843 km<sup>2</sup>.

Mahaica-Berbice is Region 5 and borders the Atlantic Ocean to the north. Covering 3,755 km<sup>2</sup>, this region's capital, Fort Wellington, is surrounded by the towns of Rosignol, Mahaicony and Helena (Beaie 2007). Along the region's western border is the Mahaica River, a body of water which drains into the Atlantic Ocean. The Mahaicony and Abary Rivers run south to north, while the Berbice River designates the eastern border of Mahaica-Berbice and rises in the Rupununi region. Flowing northward for approximately 370 miles, waters traverse the region's picturesque, dense forests and coastal plains. Located in the river's banks are the following communities: Everton, Mara, Takama, Kalkuni and Kwakwani (Kandasammy 2006).

In contradistinction to the other regions, East Berbice-Corentyne, identified as Region 6, is approximately 36, 234 km<sup>2</sup>, covering the entire east of the country. New

Amsterdam is the capital and boasts antiquated colonial buildings dating back to Dutch occupation during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This region is also home to the surreal Corentyne River, the longest river in the country. It starts in the Acarai Mountains, flowing northward between Guyana and Suriname and carries its waters into the Atlantic Ocean. Although the river originates on Guyanese territory, a five-member tribunal, operating under the rules set out in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, designated the maritime boundary between Suriname and Guyana in 2007 and declared Surinamese sovereignty over the river (Donovan 2003). This region is also home to the towns of New Amsterdam, Corriverton, Mara and Rose Hall.

Like Region 6, Cuyuni-Mazaruni, Region 7, is another piece of disputed territory, covering an area of 47, 213 km<sup>2</sup>. This region has been the source of an acrimonious debate over sovereignty between Guyana and Venezuela. Its capital, Bartica (an Amerindian word for ‘red earth’), is seen as the “Gateway to the Interior” because it serves as a launching point for those who are employed as miners seeking gold and diamonds in the country’s “bush”. Members of the Akawaio tribe are scattered across this area, providing the community with access to the country’s interior. This region is also home to the major towns of Issano, Isseneru, Kartuni, Peters Mine, Arimu Mine, Kamarang, Keweigek, Imbaimadai, Tumereng and Kamikusa (Beaie 2006).

Bordering Cuyuni-Mazaruni to the north is Region 8, also known as Potaro-Siparuni. This tract of land covers an area of 20, 051 km<sup>2</sup>. Its capital, Mahdia, offers intensive gold and diamond operations, many of which attract immigrants to this small community, promoting commerce via small-scale mining operations (Daly 1974). The land is littered with land dredges in the mining district of Mahdia. Local and foreign

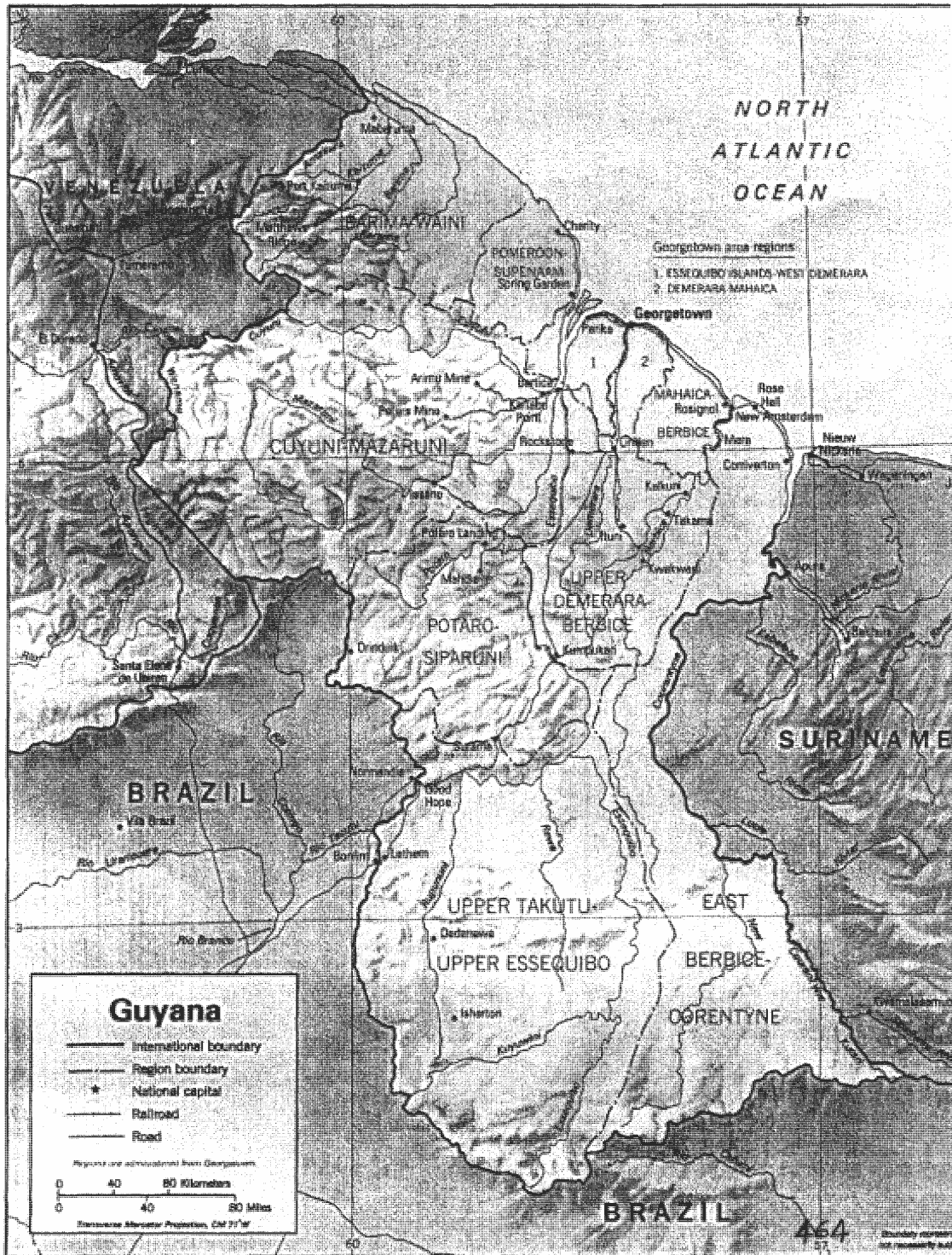
workers migrate to this region in hopes of discovering the elusive gold mines which explorers have written about since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Unfortunately, the zeal of miners has led to the pollution of waterways, accelerated deforestation and open gravel pits which facilitate the spread of malaria by the anopheles mosquito (Woolford 2010). Other prominent towns in this region include Kangaruma, Orinduik, Potaro Landing, Saveretik and Tumatumari.

To the north of Potaro-Siparuni is Upper Takutu-Upper Essequibo, Region 9. This is the largest region in Guyana, covering 57, 750 km<sup>2</sup>. Home to the Rupununi savannah, this landscape is characterized by tropical and subtropical grasslands. The savannah is placed between the Rupununi River and the border with Brazil and Venezuela, exposing approximately 5000 square miles of grasslands, swamp lands and mountains. Noted as the country's most biologically diverse region, the spacious terrain is divided north from south by the marvelous Kanuku Mountains. The extreme south of the region is inhabited by the Wai Wai tribe, while the Makushi tribe is situated in the Northern Rupununi Savannah. The northern section of the district forms seasonally flooded plains, referred to as the North Rupununi Wetlands. These wetlands also include numerous lakes, ponds and inlets, totaling 22, 000 ha (Bicknell 2004). The flooded savannah has intrigued geographers and ecologists for its pathway between the Amazon and Guyana's river systems and its extremely rich biodiversity, respectively. In fact, this region is globally unique because it is home to a vast array of fish species, accommodating over 400 species of fish- a staggering number of creatures compared to the other wetlands of South America (Fernandes 2005). Other remarkable sites include the Dadanawa cattle ranch, located south of the savannah. Serving as one of the largest cattle ranches in the world, it

accommodates national and international studies of the region's flora and fauna. The capital of this district is Lethem. The towns of Aishalton, Good Hope and Surama also comprise the region.

Finally, Upper Demerara-Berbice constitutes Region 10. It is approximately 19,387 km<sup>2</sup> and encloses Guyana's second largest city which also happens to be this region's capital, Linden. This town has attracted many bauxite miners in recent years; its scattered mines, many of which are now in disuse, serve as a poignant reminder of the region's promise as a site for natural resources. Other towns within Upper Demerara-Berbice include Ituni, Kalkuni, Kwakwani, Kurupakari, Rockstone and Takama (Beaie 2007).

Map 1: "The Land of Many Waters" (Map Source: Bulkan 2008)



## **Guyana's Demographics: "The Land of Six Peoples"**

With respect to the country's human communities, Guyana has been referred to as a social microcosm of the world because of the myriad influences from the "East", "West", "North" and "South" (Hennessy 2005). The Amazon, Europe, Africa and India have all played significant roles in shaping the country. Affectionately referred to as the *Land of Six Peoples*, the northern coast accommodates 90 percent of the country's population, which is comprised of Africans, East Indians, Europeans, Chinese, Portuguese and the Amerindians. Based on the United Nations' estimates, Guyana's population, in 2017, stands at 774 407 (United Nations 2017). The indigenous tribes account for approximately 9.2 percent of the population. During the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when European empires first reached what would constitute contemporary Guyana, the region was home to approximately 30 indigenous tribes, collectively referred to as the Amerindians. A mere nine Amerindian tribes inhabit Guyana at present. This number, however, is difficult to verify due to some community members traversing neighboring counties, establishing satellite communities in vicinity to official indigenous villages (Bulkan 2013). Today, the Amerindian population identifies into the following ethnic groups, featuring distinct languages and cultural practices: the Akawaio, Arawak, Arekuna, Carib, Macushi, Patamona, Wai Wai, Wapishana, and Warrau (Hennessy 2005). While some of the country's indigenous peoples reside in the region's interior, pursuing subsistence-based, Amazonian traditions and customs, the majority of the population is concentrated on the narrow coastal belt (Hennessy, 2005).

The second largest ethnic group in the country, the Afro-Guyanese, account for 29.3 % of the population; this group descends from slaves from Africa. During Dutch

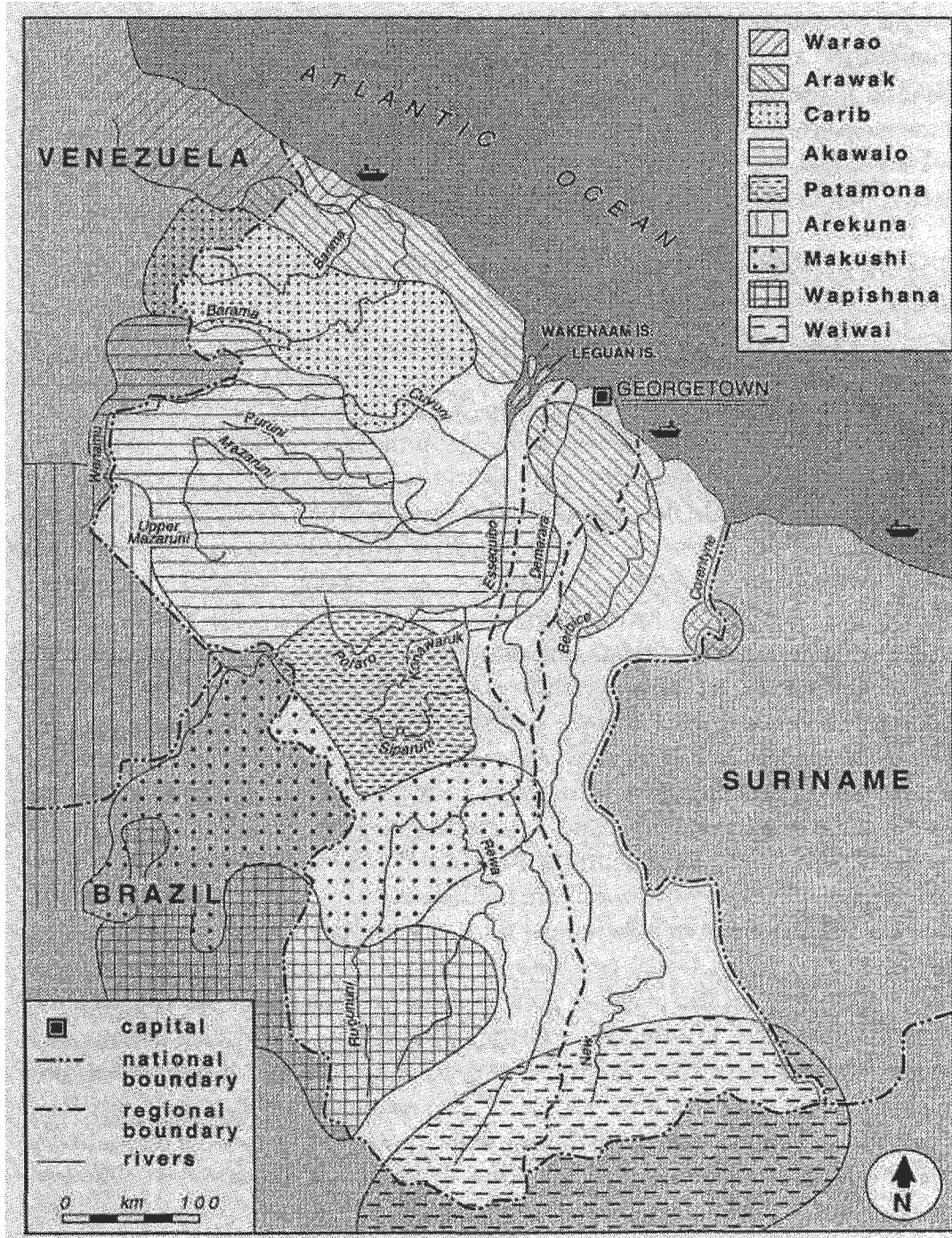


occupation of the country, colonial forces facilitated the establishment of extensive plantocracies, necessitating slave labor. Unable to enslave the Amerindian population, the colonists imported Africans (Rodney 1981). When slavery was abolished throughout the British Empire in the early 1800's, African slaves did not benefit from full emancipation until 1838. It was during this time that former slaves started to migrate from plantation sites, establishing communally owned villages in urban settings (Rodney, 1981). Linda Peake and Alissa Trotz (1999) suggest that this 'village movement' posed enormous threats to the power of the plantation owners over the Black workforce. Up until the 1930s, the Afro-Guyanese comprised the nonwhite professional class, finding work in factories, mining, civil and servant work (Jackson 2006).

The country's socio-ecological landscape was transformed again when the British introduced a new labor force to the colony. The Indo-Guyanese of Guyana are direct descendants of indentured laborers from India. They are the largest ethnic group, constituting 39.8% of the population. Hailing from the Ganges Valley of Northern India and various parts of South India, Indian immigrants, under the British indentured labor system, were brought to the colony during the 1830s. Ralph Premdas (1996) reveals that the Indian laborers were lauded for their ability to fill the void left by the African labor force, transforming certain agricultural industries- namely the sugar and tea trade. The immigration of Indians, however, served as the antecedents of a highly racialized social formation (Rodney, 1972). As the years progressed under British rule, approximately 200 000 indentured laborers (some of which were Chinese and Portuguese) landed in the colony and were utilized by dominant classes to undercut the value of the former slaves' wages. For example, Rodney (1981) avers that Blacks fervently objected to the unfair

wage competition that Indian indentureship introduced, and the manner in which Indians were used by colonial interests to break strikes on estates. The Indian population also availed themselves of the policies which granted them land, neglecting the interests of the Amerindians and Blacks. Despite the fact that the Afro-Guyanese population had moved into urban settings, separating them from their Indian counterparts on the plantation, economic competition over resources and employment ensued, shaping the contours of a volatile relationship between Blacks and Indians during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Today, racial factors continue to influence Guyanese social stratification. Many studies have captured the racialized political environment, documenting the ethnic division which has been attributed to racialized governance structures (Trotz 2004; Peake 1993; Canterbury 2007).

Map 2: Distribution of the Amerindians (Map Source: Colchester 1997)



## **Guyana's History: Dutch Occupation**

European forces first set sight on the Guiana coastline in 1498 but its dense mangrove forests kept explorers at bay (Dalton 1855; Im Thurn 1892; Smith 1956). Guiana, at this point in time, failed to reference specific colonies; instead, the name Guiana designated the land between the Orinoco and Amazon (Coates and Obando 1996). The landscape would, however, intrigue many explorers in the years to follow. For example, stories abound of Europeans traversing the great waters to locate the region's legendary city of gold (Burnett 2000). During the 1500's to 1831, Essequibo, Demerara, and Berbice were under the control of various European nations: the Dutch, French, British and Spanish.

The establishment of the colonies Essequibo (also spelt Essequibo), Demerara and Berbice marked the beginning of Dutch trading networks. In total, these three colonies covered approximately 213,000 square kilometres along the northern coast of South America. It is believed that the Dutch made contact with the original inhabitants of Guiana as early as 1599 and this is substantiated by Fort Kyk-over-al, a settlement near the Mazaruni River (Bulkan 2008). By the time the Dutch West India Company (hereafter WIC) was founded in 1621, there were at least four documented Dutch settlements scattered between the Orinoco and the Amazon, along with settlers in Essequibo. While a comprehensive and thorough overview of the structures of Dutch governance is beyond the scope of this dissertation, I will focus on key institutions, actors and legal developments which, I believe, shaped Dutch/Amerindian relations.

Some of the earliest trading posts were located in Essequibo and the Pomeroon Rivers, but as the years progressed and Dutch influence pervaded the landscape, posts

were set up on the Maroco, Barima and Waini Rivers, and within the hinterlands (Shahabuddeen 1978). Under the WIC's Charter of Privileges and Exemptions issued in 1629, plantation agriculture and the exercise of civil and criminal jurisdiction was encouraged by the founders (also referred to as "patrons") of the private colonies. The WIC was replaced by a new company (which retained the same name "West India Company") and the Company's Charter was renewed in 1674 (Clementi 1937). The legal structure of the colony of Essequibo was heavily influenced by the "Order of Government" and code of laws referred to as the Articled Letter- both of which outlined the frameworks of Dutch governance over Essequibo and Demerara.

The founding and development of Berbice, unlike Essequibo and Demerara, started off as a private initiative (Bulkan 2008). The WIC entrusted settlement near Berbice River to the Van Peeres- a prominent family from the Province of Zeeland. The WIC laid down a number of duties for Abraham van Peere in 1627. These included obligations to the Company, restrictions on trade, and obligations towards the natives (Bulkan 2008). Let us take a closer look at these clauses:

*"11. The Colonists shall have the right and privilege of establishing a fort in the aforesaid river in such a situation as they shall consider most advantageous to their trade with the natives, to open up the forest, fell trees, sow and plant, search for minerals, in short to do everything to advance the interests of the colony; to explore neighbouring rivers, and remove their settlements to any place they consider most profitable.*

*“18. The Religion of the Colony shall be that of the Reformed Church, and the Indians shall be encouraged to adopt the same; no person however shall be prosecuted for practicing his own religion, but should anyone vainly use the name of God or Jesus Christ he shall be punished according to the Regulations.*

*“19. The Indians shall be treated justly and honestly, promises made or held out to them shall not be broken, they shall not be robbed, nor shall the colonists commit adultery with their wives”*

*(Rodway and Watt 1888: 97).*

Reviewing the aforementioned clauses of the agreement between the WIC and the van Peere family, Bulkan (2008) suggests that the latter was given full jurisdiction over the territory, but that such powers were still subject to the sovereignty of native occupants, as the WIC could authorize settlements only in ‘uninhabited districts’. At face value, then, the articles appear to project the benign operations of the Dutch during the establishment of Berbice. Section 11 reveals nothing remotely unusual about the project of colonization, speaking to the establishment of trade with the natives and the infiltration of indigenous land, advancing the interests of the Dutch administration. Section 18, also, presents a relatively innocuous strategy of spreading the colonizers’ religion to the natives, stressing that the Amerindians should be “*encouraged to adopt*” the religion of the Colony. Finally, section 19 serves a reminder of how the Amerindians should be treated by new settlers. Bulkan (2008) argues that the philosophies of comity and accommodation projected

through these clauses must not be read as the result of Dutch altruism and respect for the Amerindians' sovereignty; rather, the relationship between the colonizers and the natives was based purely on political expediency, due to the incessant threat of invasion from rivalling European forces.

Undoubtedly, one of the most influential leaders of the colony was Laurens Storm van's Gravesande, a Dutch official who served as one of the leading Commanders of Essequibo and founder of the colony of Demerara. Gravesande oversaw the protection of the new settlements from rivalling imperial forces and control over the newly landed African slaves- many of whom were brought to the colony for the cultivation of sugar cane. Gravesande also played a crucial role in the development of the Council of Policy and Justice and the College of Kiezers. The colony's demography, geography and structures of governance underwent drastic transformations under his tutelage. From 1743 to 1772, Gravesande served as the region's Director-General, encouraging English colonists to migrate to the colony

The internal and external security of the Dutch settlements was contingent upon fostering friendly relations with the natives of the land. As such, treaties of alliance and friendship were encouraged, in conjunction with the provision of annual subsidies, triennial presents and allowances and rations (Rodway 1896). Appointed Governors presided over criminal matters, while civil matters were reserved for both the Governor and a special Council (Clementi 1937). By 1732, the legal structures of the colony were in full swing and would remain so until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Amid political upheavals in the Netherlands, a massive slave rebellion in Berbice in 1763, the French Wars during the last decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and the protracted competition between

European forces to secure the colonies of Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice, it was the English who captured all three in 1803 (Clementi 1937).

What, then, were the effects of this early political economy on the Amerindians? Rouse et al. (1984) maintain that European arrival in the Caribbean led to the disruption of existing settlements, trading links and intertribal relations, facilitating a reconfiguration of the region's social and political dynamics. Nowhere is this more evident than in the evolution of Dutch/Amerindian relations and the manner in which the latter eventually submitted to the authority of the Dutch administration. Consider, for example, the increasing dependence upon the Dutch for goods and services. Once an independent and autonomous people, the Amerindians, with time, eventually relied exclusively on the political economy established by the new colonizers. Bulkan (2008: 157) provides a concise exposition of the shifting dynamics between the Dutch and Amerindians, identifying how the former achieved ultimate political dominance over the regions they inhabited:

“In time, the cumulative effect of Dutch presence was to have a significant impact on the local peoples, in particular on their livelihoods, economy and material culture. The trade in goods, the Amerindian slave trade and the military and policing services all came to supplant traditional occupations, so that the original dynamic shifted with the dependence becoming more that of the Amerindians upon the Dutch”.

It bears emphasizing, then, that the Amerindians, upon relinquishing their customs and traditions, had no choice but to rely on Dutch subsidies, shaping the contours of

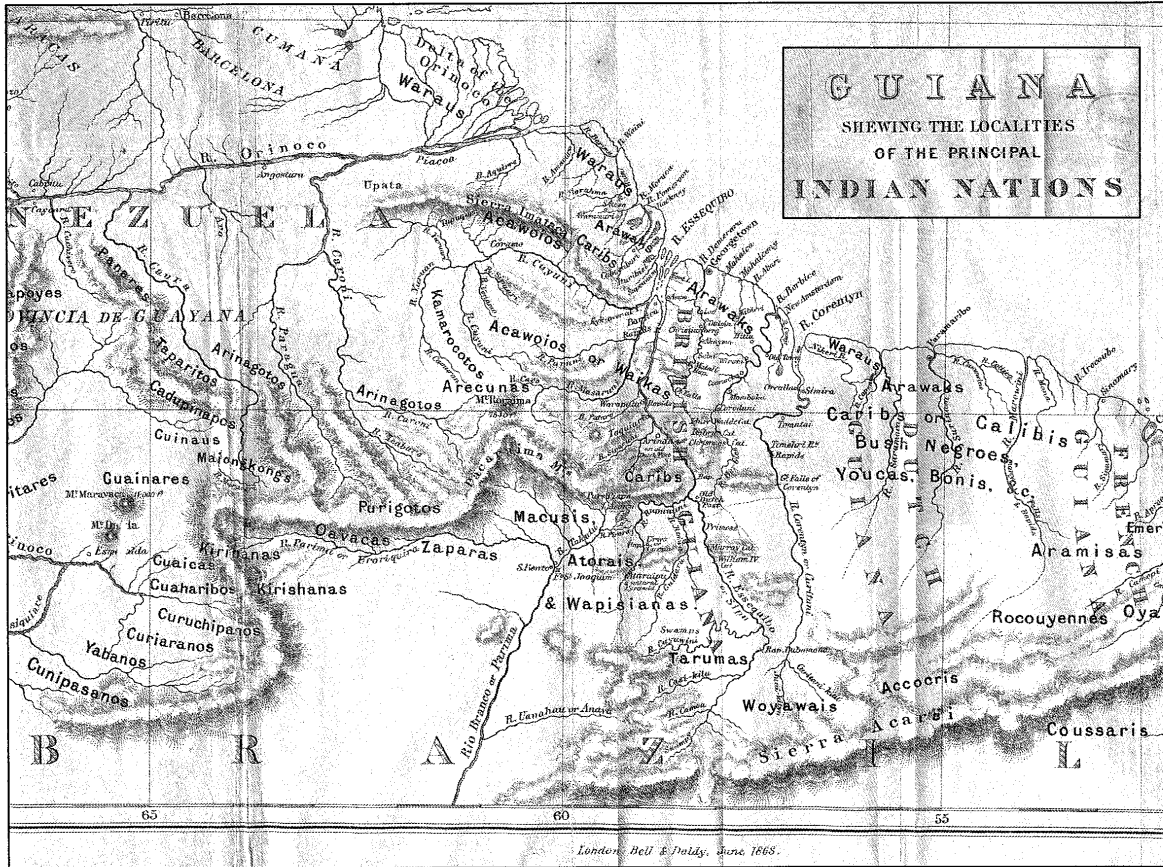


the asymmetric relations of power between Colonizer/Colonized. This is precisely how the Dutch, in Bulkan's words, transformed themselves "from tolerated guests to masters of this domain" (Bulkan 2008: 157).

Key to Dutch governance over the colonies was the establishment of posts and the appointment of Postholders. Intended as trading outposts to oversee the trade of resources such as dyes, cotton, tobacco, etc., these posts evolved into necessary mechanisms of the Dutch administration, occupying points along the remote Essequibo and Cuyuni rivers, as well as the major rivers of Demerara, Mahaicony, Pomeroon, Morkua and Barima. The Postholders encouraged the natives to reside in close proximity to the post, as these settlements were vital during the expansion of the colonies' plantations. The growing plantocracy necessitated an increase in the African slave population and the Amerindians were used as an interior police force, capturing runaway slaves during their 'bush expeditions'. Postholders, then, were charged with the task of fostering friendly relations with the natives; this was accomplished through the distribution of presents and rum (in exchange for services rendered); the facilitation of marriages within Amerindian communities; the mediation of conflicts, so on and so forth. The tradition of bestowing presents to the Amerindians lasted for quite some time, and was inevitably adopted by the English who asserted their sovereignty over the colonies in 1803. With time, the Postholders occupied more political roles in the colonies. For instance, in conjunction with fostering friendly relations with the natives, these officials were in charge of monitoring the traffic along the rivers, overseeing a 'pass' system whereby individuals wishing to travel into the interior were required to obtain, for a fee, a passport from the Postholders.

With the increasing presence of the colonizers in the deep interior, Bulkan (2008: 163) observes that over time, the Amerindians became “trusted spies providing intelligence of impending Spanish attacks from the West, faithful allies performing indispensable policing services and ultimately loyal vassals seeking approval for major actions”. Such an analysis of the exercise of Dutch power over the Amerindians is, however, too simplistic a view, erasing a robust history of the Amerindians’ contestation, negotiation and subversion of colonial power. Dutch imposition of law and morality was no easy feat, as the Amerindians demonstrated resistance to such political power.

**Map 3: Distribution of the Amerindians in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (Map Source: Brett 1868)**



## **Guyana's History: The Birth of British Guiana**

Dutch control over Guiana during the last two decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was tenuous at best; the French and English gained control over settlements and rivers presided over by the Netherlands. This led to the re-organization and modification of the colonies' constitutions during English and French occupation in 1781 and 1782, respectively (Lutchman 1974). The years following the collapse of the West India Company opened up an opportunity for the English to acquire the colonies, which would later be unified under the name British Guiana.

The rise of British Guiana, therefore, was somewhat inevitable. Recall, the early Dutch policies drafted by Laurens Storm van's Gravesande encouraged English migration to the colonies of Essequibo and Demerara, enabling English settlers to gain a foothold in the region's political economy, creating expansive plantations. The consolidation of English rule occurred in 1803, but Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice were formally ceded to Great Britain in 1814, and then unified under the name British Guiana in 1831 (Shahabuddeen 1978). The change in sovereignty, at first, did not significantly alter the structure of the colonies, mirroring the Dutch administration. In fact, Dutch governors continued to play a vital role overseeing the political and economic affairs of the region. Two Dutch officials, Antony Beaujon and Abraham Jacob von Batenburg, retained their positions during the period of capitulation (Menezes 1977).

The governmental institutions scattered across the settlements in Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice were established by the Dutch and, therefore, secured the interests of their companies- namely, the West India Company. Over time, however, there were notable changes. As a result of the influx of English settlers during Dutch rule, the

English, by 1814, had outnumbered the Dutch. The colonies had advanced insofar as enterprises of trade started to burgeon, in conjunction with the unprecedented construction of roads, bridges, schools and canals, facilitating the development of the coasts once inhabited by the Dutch. The political infrastructure of the colonies under the British was an arrangement of inherited structures from previous Dutch and French regimes; slight modifications during the reign of the English satisfied the English settlers' demands for more representative institutions. This, according to some historians, resulted in a political system of administration, legislation and adjudication overlapping one another (Lutchman 1974). What is more, institutions such as the Combined Court- an entity created by the Court of Policy and the College of Kiezers for the purposes of controlling the funds of the Colony Chest- sought a more active role with respect to the colony's mode of taxation and expenditure.

The union of the colonies provided the English with an opportunity to demarcate the powers of the adopted governmental entities. Historian Harold A. Lutchman (1974) notes that from 1825 to 1836, the Court of Policy was extended to two members: the Protector of the Slaves and a representative from Berbice. Full membership of the Court now comprised of official members- that is, the Governor (which replaced the Director-General), the President of the Court of Justice, the first Fiscal and the Protector of Slaves. The Court was also comprised of unofficial members: two for Demerara, two for Essequibo and one for Berbice (Clementi 1937). The body of Financial Representatives, which worked alongside the Governor and Court of Policy, was charged with the task of raising colonial taxes and examining the Colonial Receiver General's accounts. Finally, the College of Kiezers maintained their power by continuing to fill the empty seats in the

government with the sugar planters and landowners of the colony. The planter class had ample opportunity to consolidate their power, turning the cultivation of sugar into a tremendously profitable enterprise, and the effects were quite evident. Consider, for example, the unprecedented expansion of plantations during this period: the cultivation of crops, a tradition initiated by the Dutch, flourished under the British, who were now exporting sugar across the globe. The planter class, then, fought vehemently to protect their interests during the consolidation of English rule, attempting to stabilize taxes so their plantations could run as smoothly as possible. Such an enterprise, however, was threatened during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by proposals from British Guiana's Governor, Sir Benjamin D'Urban, for the manumission of slaves. The planter class viewed such actions as a violation of the Articles of Capitulation.

Proposed bills for the abolition of slavery were viewed as not only impediments to the West Indies sugar trade, but an affront to the political rights of the plantation owners. Despite protests from the planter class, and the assurance that the 'laws and usages of Colony' would be preserved under English rule, a flurry of legislation was passed in the early 1820s dedicated to addressing the inhumane conditions of slavery. In 1833, the Act of Abolition was passed and certain planters felt the repercussions as their plantations fell into a state of abeyance. Beginning in the 1830s, certain governmental bodies tried to secure public funds for the implementation of immigration schemes; such policies encouraged indentured labor during the colony's post emancipation period. After numerous debates and concessions between the planter class, the Governor and Secretary of State, a portion of the colony's funds was set aside for the importation of labor. One plantation owner, John Gladstone, recommended that indentured labourers from India fill

the void left by the Abolition Act; he was given permission to bring the 'Coolies' to British Guiana for the maintenance of his plantations. Other plantation owners followed suit and a new chapter in British Guiana had begun. East Indian immigration to the colony led to fundamental social changes in the English Colony.

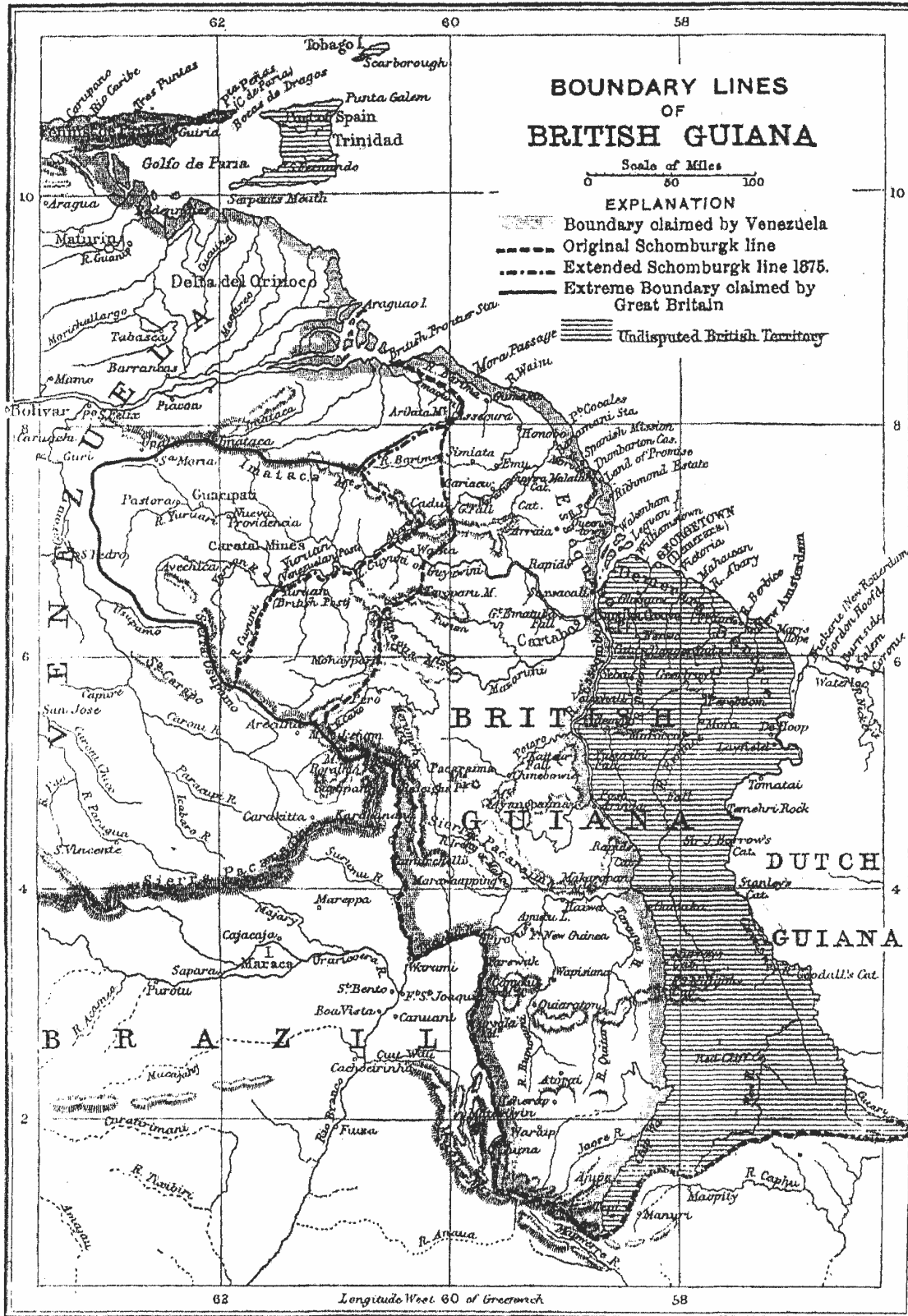
British Guiana's political structure and constitution, suffice to say, was the source of many conflicts between the planters' political representatives and the government. The former aimed to use their power vis-à-vis constitutional organs to advance their interests in maintaining the plantations, while the latter fought to ensure that the wealthy planter class could not use the colony's constitutional and political power to expand their plantocracies (Clementi 1937). The conflict was so intense that the Law Officers of the Crown were called upon to deliberate over the demarcation of powers. Such deliberations served as a framework for the constitutional development of British Guiana. Among the advice tendered by the Law Officers of the Crown, the following was of immense importance with respect to the delineation of powers: the Government and Court of Policy had to defer to the Combined Court; Her Majesty in Council did not possess the constitutional power to raise revenue in the colony, but could legislate on other matters; an Act of Parliament could supersede the powers of the Combined Court and remodel the constitution, conferring powers of taxation on other governmental bodies; and finally, taxes were now disposable by the Court of Policy (Lutchman 1974). Of most import, finally, was the role of British Guiana's Governor, Sir Benjamin D'Urban, who was authorized to make laws "for peace, order, and good government of the colony with the advice and consent of the Court of Policy" (Bulkan 2008: 202). These were just some of

the measures instituted during the early years of the colony, setting the stage for the social, economic and political changes under English rule.

The English colony faced yet another challenge in the 1840s: safeguarding its territorial integrity from Venezuela. Having gained its political independence from Spain in 1810, the country was embroiled in an interminable struggle with the British to reclaim what was previously under Spanish sovereignty. According to the state's ministers, Venezuela owned the Orinoco and regions comprising Essequibo (Ramcharan 2007). The English refused to accept such claims, enlisting in the services of Sir Robert Schomburgk, a German-born explorer for Great Britain who conducted myriad geographical, ethnological and botanical studies. His submissions were used to illuminate British boundaries over the colony, affectionately referred to as the Schomburgk Line. Many failed attempts to negotiate the boundary lines between both Venezuela and Great Britain would not be resolved until 1899, when an Arbitration Commission, presided over by two British Judges, two U.S. Judges and a Russian international lawyer, tendered its decision over the matter. Venezuela was awarded the mouth of the Orinoco River, Point Barima and the interior Yuruari region; Great Britain, on the other hand, was given almost all of their original claims within Schomburgk's boundaries (Ramcharan 2007). British rule over the colony would loosen, however, as political independence became a reality during the mid 1960s with the alignment of certain key political, economic and social variables.



Map 4: British Guiana (Map Source: Scottish Geographical Magazine 1896)



## **Guyana's History: The Co-operative Republic**

The story of British Guiana's journey to independence can be traced back to as early as the late 1890s. Great Britain's constitutional reforms of 1891 paved the way for the emergence of new politicians in local politics; before such amendments, former slaves and newly arrived East Indian immigrants were barred from participating in the colony's political sphere, on account of stringent property requirements for voting and holding office. The amendments, therefore, extended the franchise to some extent (Manley 1979). The country's constitution underwent further reforms in 1928, aligning its political system with other British West Indies nations.

As a result of these constitutional reforms, the powers of the Governor and the Colonial Office were modified; for example, the Governor's appointees constituted a majority in the thirty-man Legislative Council and the twelve-man Executive Council. To some political commentators, the 1928 constitutional changes merely underscored the concentration of political power in the hands of the British. Author Vere T. Daly (1974) suggests that such modifications protracted the interminable struggle for political and economic influence between the White planter class and the other ethnic groups vying for political representation in the system. At best, the changes served the interests of the Europeans, as the British continued to dominate both the Legislative Council and the Executive Council. Despite such a concentration of power in the hands of the planter class, the constitutional changes encouraged more political participation, admitting women into the franchise, and introducing members of the Legislative Council into the Executive (Daly 1974).

With such changes to the constitution, local political movements spread across the colony, eking out better living conditions for those under colonial rule. Organizations such as the British Guiana Labour Union (BGLU), led by Nathaniel Critchlow, were formed in 1919; in 1937, the Man Power Citizens' Association (MPCA) was formed, led by Ayube Edun. Other political representatives reacting against the colonial system included organizations such as the Civil Service Association (C.S.A.) and the League of Colored Peoples (L.C.P.), each protesting against the discriminatory laws and practices of the colonial government. Political turbulence and unrest reached its zenith during this period: the Great Depression affected the Western industrialized world and British Guiana felt the ramifications. Mass strikes and riots unfolded across the country and as a result, trade and union movements started to become more active. Larger segments of the population rebuked the colonial conditions in which they were ensconced. Disorder ensued and the Colonial Office, in 1938, pushed for the appointment of a Royal Commission, under the Chairmanship of Lord Moyne, to investigate the social and economic climate in all West Indian Territories. Referred to as the Moyne Commission, the document drew upon myriad testimonies from individuals and groups scattered across the West Indies. The commissioners recorded detailed accounts of the increasingly high rates of unemployment, malnutrition, ill-health and the glaring inadequacies of the education system of Britain's Caribbean colonies. Concomitantly, the commission recommended that such problems could be addressed only through greater involvement of local people in the government and, again, an extension of the franchise (Daly 1974). In 1943 and 1945, British Guiana implemented some of the recommendations from the report- namely, the reduction of property qualifications for candidates for the Legislative

Council, in conjunction with the reduction of income qualifications for voters and an increase in the number of elected members, thus giving them a majority in the Legislative Council (Daly 1974). Governmental and administrative changes encouraged local leadership and the organization of political parties, both of which facilitated the colony's transition into an independent nation-state in 1966 and a Co-operative Republic in 1970.

Such transitions would never have materialized without the leadership of Cheddi Jagan and Forbes Burnham. The former was an Indo-Guyanese dentist who received his education in the United States and returned to the colony with his American wife, Janet. Jagan's activity in the colony's political sphere ran the gamut from serving as the treasurer of the MPCA in 1945; establishing the Political Affairs Committee (PAC) in 1946; membership in the Legislative Council as a representative for Central Demerara in 1947; and involvement with the Guiana East Indian Association (BGEIA) and the Guiana Industrial Workers' Union (GIWU). After the 1947 elections, he was elected to the Legislative Council.

The latter was an Afro-Guyanese barrister who studied as a "Guiana Scholar" in England, receiving an annual scholarship bestowed upon the colony's top students. In 1950, while these two visionaries were forming the People's Progressive Party (PPP), a constitutional commission, referred to as the Waddington Commission, presented an advanced constitution for the colony, featuring universal adult suffrage at the age of 21 and a Two-Chamber Legislature with a ministerial system, comprised of a Lower Chamber (the House of Assembly) and an Upper Chamber (the State Council) (Nath 1975). As a result of such modifications, British Guiana held its first elections featuring universal adult suffrage in 1953, giving the PPP eighteen of the twenty-four seats in the

House of Assembly, replacing the Legislative Council (Daly 1974). Jagan filled the position of the colony's first Premier under the new constitution, which permitted internal self-governance. Such a victory for the PPP did not bode well with the British because Jagan's political ideology mirrored the tenets of communism. With mounting fears that the former colony would transform into a communist society, the British Government suspended the colony's new constitution, declared a "State of Emergency" and appointed a Legislative Council to replace the House of Assembly. It was at this time that Burnham severed his political affiliation with Jagan and led his own party under the same name. Both men embraced slightly different political ideologies and after the 1957 elections, Burnham restyled his party under the name the People's National Congress (PNC).

The suspension of the constitution was merely the beginning of geopolitical interference in the political affairs of the colony: Britain's Civil Secretary, Sir James Robertson, visited Guyana and drafted the Robertson Commission, a report which sought to justify the suspension of the colony's new constitution. In the Commission, Jagan and other PPP leaders were accused of championing the communist doctrines of Marx and Lenin. Burnham and two other members of the PNC, on the other hand, were identified as socialists. Sir Alfred William Savage, the appointed Governor of the colony, documented potential Communist threats within British Guiana through his Monthly Briefing Reports and Special Reports (Ramcharan 2007). The Jagans were vilified and the British, fearful of the colony becoming the first Communist country in the British Commonwealth, sought economic aid from the United States, fostering a political alliance, which would ensure that the colony would not succumb to the doctrines of Communism. Another election in 1957 resulted in Jagan's PPP gaining nine of the

Legislative Council's fourteen seats; Burnham's PNC attaining three seats; and two other political parties occupying the last two positions. It was at this juncture that Jagan pushed for independence but the British were reluctant to set a date, agreeing, instead, to internal self-governance (Spinner 1984). In another round of elections in 1961, the PPP obtained twenty of the thirty-five seats; the PNC acquired eleven seats and the United Force (UF), led by a Portuguese businessman named Peter d'Aguiar, won four seats (Daly 1974).

*Post-colonial Independence and the regime of "Co-operative Socialism" (1966-1985)*

The 1960s featured an intense ethnic and ideological conflict between the colony's two predominant ethnic groups: the Indo- and Afro-Guyanese, with Jagan serving as the political leader of the former and Burnham leading the latter. The PNC sabotaged the PPP's attempts to consolidate their influence in the Legislative Council. For example, in 1962, Jagan's government prepared a constitutional committee for a London conference regarding the colony's imminent political independence. Burnham and d'Aguiar incited a mass protest involving approximately 60,000 people. Rioting and conflagrations spread throughout Georgetown and eighty people were injured and five were killed (Daly 1974).

One year later, a general strike, which lasted eighty days, brought the economy to a standstill and the colony's import-export trade was delayed, resulting in extensive property damage. Such unfortunate events continued to unfold during the rest of the decade, exacerbating the ethno-political rivalry between the Indo- and Afro-Guyanese. Burnham's ascendancy to political power was attributed not only to his affiliation with the United States and Great Britain, but his recommendation during the 1963 Constitutional Conference held in London that a system of proportional representation

replace the “first-pass-the-post” system (Manley 1979). The 1964 elections introduced this new voting procedure and each party received a number of seats in the new fifty-three seat House of Assembly. Ties between Burnham and d’Aguiar strengthened and the PNC and UF created a coalition government. One year later, the independence constitutional conference was held and it was determined that political independence would be granted not long thereafter. Guyana became an independent nation and joined the Commonwealth on May 26, 1966.

The elections of 1968 were a turning point for Prime Minister Burnham and his PNC. Shrouded in controversy, the results of the 1968 elections led many to believe that fraudulent and manipulative practices occurred (Spinner 1984). The abuse of proxy voting and miscounting of ballots distorted internal voting, while provisions of the 1968 legislation, which, *inter alia*, permitted Guyanese citizens overseas to vote, also skewed overseas voting (Manley 1979). The results were decisive: the PNC obtained 55.81 percent of the vote, while the PPP and UF received 36.49 and 7.41 percent, respectively (Manley 1979). The political terrain was established for an adventurous journey towards self-sufficiency and nationalization. Burnham continued to make the necessary modifications to the political infrastructure of the country: first, the position of Governor General, a reminder of the British Queen’s symbolic control over the colony, was abolished and supplanted with that of the Republic President (Spinner 1984). The presidency was viewed more as a symbolic and ceremonial role, while political power was thrust onto the shoulders of the country’s Prime Minister (Daly 1974). Further, Burnham had made a concerted effort to consolidate power through mechanisms such as the Guyana Defense Force and the Guyana Police Force, both of which were charged

with the task of providing internal security, and staving off border incursions from neighboring Brazil, Surinam and Venezuela. Another noteworthy attempt to concentrate power in the hands of the PNC and UF was the passing of the National Security Act. Spinner (1984: 122) notes that it “gave the government the right to suspend habeas corpus and to detain Guyanese when necessary for national security”. Thus, the political and juridical elements were in place to secure the PNC and UF’s control over the country.

Turning Guyana into a Co-operative Republic encompassed reform of many components of the nation’s economy and political infrastructure, including the very elements which secured the PNC and UF coalition. Not long thereafter, though, the coalition dissolved. Upon d’Aguiar’s departure, the stage had been set for Burnham to perform as sole leader of the nation. Political independence, however, did not serve as a panacea to the county’s political and economic problems. Manley (1979) asserts that by the time Guyana liberated itself from the British, the bauxite industry continued to be dominated by foreign companies: Aluminum Company of Canada and Reynolds Aluminum exercised extensive control over the country’s resources, while British, Indian and American firms controlled the nation’s commercial banking sector. What is more, age-old boundary disputes were revived by neighboring Venezuela and Surinam- the former declaring ownership of all lands west of the Essequibo River, the latter claiming ownership of an area known as the “New River Triangle”.

Despite such obstacles, Burnham championed membership in the Non-Alignment Movement, and its goals of securing the political independence and the freedom of new nations (Ramcharan 2007). He also advanced his vision of a Co-operative Republic and his “self-help” initiatives, which facilitated the establishment of producer and consumer



co-operatives- a vital component of Co-operative Socialism. Guyana was declared a Co-operative Republic on February 23<sup>rd</sup> 1970, whilst remaining within the Commonwealth. Loathe of any foreign aid and the “evils of the capitalist system” (Burnham 1970: 14), Burnham paved the way for his unique brand of socialism, what Hennessy dubs an “ideological anomaly of socialism” (Hennessy 2005: 61). Suffice to say, the time was ripe for economic experimentation. Steps were taken to have the country regain national control over foreign owned industries. As early as 1971, Burnham pushed for the nationalization of both Demerara Bauxite Company, Ltd. and Reynolds Mines, two of Guyana’s largest bauxite mining and processing plants, along with sugar lands and the assets of Jessel Securities Ltd. In 1976, Burnham nationalized assets of Booker McConnell Ltd., an English multinational, resulting in the procurement of the following: sugar lands and mills, the nation’s leading retail stores, enterprises in distilling, drug manufacturing, shrimping, dairy products, cattle ranching, printing, shipping, and insurance (Manley 1979:13). Burnham’s dream of severing the nation’s dependence upon western nations attained its zenith when Guyana adopted “The Action Programme for Economic Co-operation” (Manley 1979). Finally, Burnham’s “self-help” initiatives materialized via the development of the agriculture sector. Under the direction of the Guyana Marketing Corporation (GMC), a state company linked to the Interior Development Department, the corporation facilitated the creation of jobs; the formation of co-operative farming developments; the strengthening of rural economies; and the establishment of government-run commercial farms (Hennessy 2005).

Prime Minister Burnham and the PNC continued to tailor the country’s constitution during the 1970s, ensuring that the Co-operative Republic would not be

subject to the political whims of external powers. Moreover, the Prime Minister introduced a system of national service, which encouraged the republic's youth to engage in a plethora of training programs. These programs spearheaded the national development of Guyana's hinterland- home to myriad Amerindian communities. The world economic crisis and the oil price hike of 1973 brought about an imposition of import restrictions. Burnham responded by controlling the nation's currency by way of various financial plans. The first plan, which covered the years 1966-72, sought external grants and loans. Championing private investment, the plan featured concessions to investors, in conjunction with extensive tax breaks (5 years) from the commencement of production and subsidization of industrial sites (Manley 1979). Due to decisive shortages in resources to fulfill the plan's projections, however, the plan was eventually abandoned.

The second plan, which covered the years 1972-76, was entirely different in tone. The Prime Minister enjoined the country to follow his plans to transform Guyana into a self-sufficient nation. Even Jagan's PPP, who had been subject to political sabotage by the PNC, decided to offer "critical support" to Burnham's vision of combating the waves of economic imperialism and "destabilization" which threatened the country (Manley 1979). The second development plan de-emphasized the role of private foreign investment. Specifically, policy statements read: "When natural resources of the nation are to be exploited in partnership with non-nationals, the state reserves the right to seek majority ownership and control or to share that control with Co-operatives alone to be the major partner" (Hope et al. 1976: 88). Self-reliance and economic development were the pillars upon which the Co-operative Republic would lay. While feeding, clothing and housing all Guyanese was the pledge made by the Prime Minister, attention was also paid

to technological innovation: the 1972-76 development plan earmarked funds for technical education, providing the people with the skill sets required to carry Guyana into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In 1968 and 1971, loans from the World Bank (totaling US\$ 10.4 million) were used to construct sea defenses and agriculture fields; in 1974, while the PNC declared Guyana's regional integration into the Caribbean community through its membership in CARICOM and its goal of coordinating foreign policy with other Caribbean nations (Spinner 1984), an additional US\$ 12.9 million loan was granted by the World Bank. Burnham was getting closer to his goals for his country and people. Manley (1979: 115) summarizes the goals attained by Prime Minister Burnham, stating:

“inherited territory was now more securely held, regional ties considerably strengthened, global alignments more balanced, and the groundwork laid for development of an economy based upon local ownership and control and upon increasing self-reliance and third world cooperation”.

Such accomplishments failed to unite the people of Guyana, however. Fearful of the formation of a one-party state and the consolidation of power at the disposal of the PNC, other political parties and citizen groups emerged during the 1970s, identifying Prime Minister Burnham as a dictator responsible for fostering racial insecurity throughout the country. Some of these entities included: The Working People's Alliance, The People's Democratic Movement, The Fundamental Rights Action Committee, The Guyana Anti-Discrimination Movement, the Civil Liberties Action Council, and The Indian Political Revolutionary Associates- to mention a few (Spinner 1984). Although disillusioned with

the corrupt and fraudulent activities of the PNC in the past, Jagan was an indefatigable proponent of change; he proposed a PNC-PPP coalition, but Burnham refused, continuing to concentrate power in the hands of his political party. The doctrine of “Party Paramountcy” swept the nation, penetrating all governmental institutions, resulting in a plethora of propaganda campaigns and the purported benefits of Co-operative Socialism (Manley 1979).

The glaring disjuncture between Burnham’s dream of a co-operative, socialist state and the stagnant Guyanese economy was evident in the 1977 budget. While 80% of the economy was owned by Guyana, the country was hobbled by burgeoning debt and a plummeting GDP (Hennessy 2005). Strikes against the state-owned Guyana Sugar Corporation (GYSCO)- many of which were organized by the PPP- impeded this sector’s growth, bringing production down by 27% (Hennessy 2005). With a declining economy, the government started to explore external foreign fiscal and trade policy, abandoning its domestic agenda (Hennessy 2005). Finance Minister Frank Hope revealed that the nationalization of certain sectors of the economy; falling sugar prices; and increased oil prices had spelled economic catastrophe and that a large budget deficit loomed over the heads of the people of Guyana. Emphasis was placed on macro-economics and new international alliances. Concomitantly, the country took out loans from the International Monetary Funds (IMF) and other Western capitalist countries (Ramcharan 2007). This, of course, was welcomed by certain geopolitical forces, many of whom relished the opportunity to transform the socialist country to an open, capitalist economy (Hennessy 2005). A stand-by agreement was formed between the IMF and Burnham’s administration, but Burnham continued to avoid extreme fiscal measures. As such, minor

“deflationary measures” were introduced into the country: increased taxes on certain consumer goods, a decrease in government spending by approximately 30%, and the removal of subsidies on basic commodities (Bartilow 1997). Other lending ensued during this juncture: Global institutions such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) provided loans to Guyana, supporting the economy’s various sectors. Despite such financial assistance, the economy continued to decline, resulting in rice production dropping by 22 percent, sugar by 8 percent and refined alumina by a whopping 40 percent (Hennessy 2005). Suffice to say, the IMF was dissatisfied with the country’s performance.

Severe measures were adopted via cuts in housing and healthcare, directly affecting the standard of living for Guyana’s working class (Manley 1979). For example, in 1978, agreements between the IMF and Guyana facilitated public service cuts, in conjunction with a drastic reduction in state employees and a reduction in imports. According to Spinner (1987:184) “Unemployment was about 25 percent, with underemployment bringing the total to about 40 percent. Inflation had been over 18 percent in 1979, with the cost of living soaring upward by about 20 percent”. That same year, Guyana sought a renegotiation of the “deflationary measures” with the IMF and a six-year Extended Fund Facility credit (EFF) was proposed to finance a massive hydroelectric project on the Upper Mazaruni River- a project Burnham had pursued for quite some time. The project, from its inception, however, was mired in controversy because of the potential displacement and resettlement of members of the Akawaios tribe. This placed myriad obstacles in front of Burnham, especially with regard to securing

funding from external donors. Instead, the IMF suggested the World Bank regulate public sector investment programs, in an attempt to ensure that Guyana adhered to its projected goals (Bartilow 1997).

As the people of Guyana observed their economy fall into the orbit of foreign control, Jagan and the PPP demanded the establishment of a “National Patriotic Front Government”; and only fair elections would bring this. What is more, he proposed a new political position: an Executive President. He suggested that Burnham fill this position and he represent the opposition by taking on the role of Prime Minister. Burnham, however, refused and tabled in 1978 the Constitution (Amendment) Bill No. 8, which sought to hold a referendum which would prevent subsequent referendums intent on changing the provisions of the current constitution. The Bill’s *raison d’être* was to postpone the upcoming elections, turning Guyana into a one-party state and perpetuating the PNC’s control over the country (Manley 1979).

As Guyana entered the 1980s, the Inter-American Development Bank revealed in a report that the country’s bauxite industry remained stagnant since Prime Minister Burnham nationalized some of the companies during the 1970s. What is more, per capita production had fell and such an abysmal economic performance meant that no funds were available for domestic investment. This merely reinforced Guyana’s dependence on foreign loans, leading to cuts in education, health, and transportation services. IMF assistance packages in the past aimed to reduce levels of government spending and encourage savings rather than consumption, but unemployment still soared to 40 percent. Subsequent demands were made by the IMF, resulting in a 4 per cent drop in GDP in 1979 and a decrease in state involvement in the public sector (Ramcharan 2007).

According to Spinner (1984), the national debt at the beginning of the 1980s was more than G\$2.5 billion. The funds that had been secured were squandered not only on Burnham's bureaucrats who filled the seats of various governmental institutions, but on the predominantly Afro-Guyanese civil service workers, and, last but not least, Burnham's high hopes of transforming the country into a totally self-sufficient, co-operative, socialist state. Other financial quagmires included Burnham's billion-dollar hydroelectric project, which was shelved, due to a failure to secure funding from external donors (Ramcharan 2007).

The World Bank started structural adjustment programs in 1981 with an initial loan of US \$22 million. Conditionalities included: the devaluation of currency, public sector layoffs, the revitalization of export-oriented production via privatization of state assets, a reformation of fiscal policies in order to attract foreign investment, and further reductions in public spending (Colchester 1997; Hennessy 2005). Further prescriptions of structural adjustment were introduced in the following years alongside US \$300 million in aid. All of this spelled disaster for the working class, for it was their standard of living which was being threatened by the enormous debts accrued by the PNC. The PNC's inability to respond to Guyana's deteriorating economy led to lower production, fiscal deficits, high inflation, depletion of reserves and a rise in external indebtedness (Faal 2003). Opposition groups such as the Working People's Alliance (WPA), who projected trenchant criticisms of Burnham and his PNC, believed that the solution to their plight was a government of "national unity and reconstruction", predicated upon the inter-racial unity of the working class (Spinner 1984).

Such dreams, however, never materialized; one of the members of the political party, Dr. Walter Rodney, was killed in 1980 under rather suspicious and questionable circumstances: a former sergeant of the Guyana Defense Force had given Rodney a highly sophisticated, explosive device which detonated, taking his life (Spinner 1984). Accusations among the WPA that Burnham had been behind the act spread like wildfire, whilst demands for an international inquiry were presented by the working class and other political parties utterly disgusted by such a cowardly act by those responsible. Prime Minister Burnham denied such inquiries from occurring, crafting a new constitution which would facilitate his ascension to power as the Executive President of Guyana. According to Dr. Harold Lutchman (1980:46), the new constitution was merely an attempt to “institutionalize a virtual dictatorship”. Specifically, the 1980 constitution, which would be amended in 2001, institutionalized an executive presidency; a unicameral legislature; and a modified National Assembly, in which 65 members would be directly elected by proportional representation (Ramcharan 2007).

On January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1981, Burnham was inaugurated as Guyana’s Executive President and his reign over Guyana continued. That same year, the State Department, under United States law, delivered its report to Congress on “Human Rights Practices” throughout the world. Some revelations were made about Guyana in this document, as the State Department commented on, inter alia, the government’s involvement in the death of activist Dr. Walter Rodney; its repressive measures against citizens; and the harassment of members of the opposition (Spinner 1984). Meanwhile, President Burnham continued to use highly unethical and unconstitutional measures when dealing with



opponents of the regime, accusing these individuals of treason and causing “public terror”.

By 1982, the Guyanese economy stood at a standstill. The country was bankrupt: more than 50 percent of the nation lived under dire conditions of poverty with low incomes and high unemployment. Domestic agriculture fell into a state of abeyance and massive cuts to food imports led to food shortages, and a black market of various food items. Further, national debt was approximately G\$4 billion at this juncture (Spinner 1984). Such conditions, along with the assistance of the Guyana Council of Churches, mobilized all political parties, citizen groups, business groups and national organizations to unite and undo the work of the PNC. The Executive President, on the other hand, prepared a secret document for the IMF and World Bank officials. The document stated that in order to fix the present crisis, Guyana would require financial aid and, in exchange, the country would allow more opportunities for foreign and local private investment. Meanwhile, another report entitled “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1982” addressed the non-democratic and fraudulent elections which the peoples of Guyana had become accustomed to since the mid 60s. What is more, the report discussed the deterioration of human rights under President Burnham’s attempts to maintain power over the country. By this time, it was quite clear that Burnham’s nationalization of the economy ensured utter dependence on the Bretton Woods financial institutions. Ramcharan (2007: 98) aptly observes: “Guyana for decades suffered from bad stewardship of the economy and from crippling debt incurred from borrowing money to sustain the economy”.

*Post-Socialist Liberalization and 'Reformed' Democracy (1986-2004)*

The transition from Co-operative Socialism to liberalization signaled a complete transformation of the country's political economy (Hennessy 2005). After the death of Burnham in 1985, PNC rule continued under Desmond Hoyte, who took office and served as the nation's President. In a concerted attempt to address the economic crisis, which was a direct result of Burnham's ambitious endeavors to create a socialist state, he halted policies dedicated to Co-operative Socialism, hoping to attract foreign investment from the Western world (Ramcharan 2007). A re-orientation towards a more market driven economy occurred under Hoyte's administration and structural adjustment and the proliferation of extractive industries signaled an extremely important phase for the country. Multilateral financial institutions such as the IMF declared that Guyana was no longer eligible to receive further credits and loans. With international aid waning, per capita GNP also started to drop, in conjunction with state spending on health and education. The forestry and agricultural sectors also disappointed external donors as real GDP averaged a negative 2.8 percent per year between 1980 and 1988, with inflation rising 20 percent (Hennessy 2005). The stagnation of the economy was a clarion call to Hoyte and his administration to reconsider its position in the global economy.

At this point, Guyana was one of the poorest nations in the Western hemisphere and such dire circumstances impelled Hoyte to renegotiate with the IMF in 1988, laying the groundwork for gradual liberalization of the economy (Hennessy 2005). The result of these negotiations was the World Bank's Economic Recovery Programme (ERP), which sought to introduce a pro-capitalist economy (Bartilow 1997). The implementation of the ERP would "stabilize", "rehabilitate" and "recover" the economy, but such rhetoric

translated into a devaluation of the nation's currency; price increases; a reduced expenditure for public spending; the elimination of myriad civil service positions; a liberalized market of foreign currency to allow public exchange; a privatization program to sell off state holdings in all sectors; a 400 percent increase in the prices of electricity, and smaller increases in other utilities; and an increase in prime interest from 14 percent to 35 percent (Faal 2003).

Hoyte's government approved of a plethora of projects- most of which encouraged mining and oil exploration by third parties. The PNC's vision of nationalization ended, in an attempt to secure foreign investment across the globe (Colchester 1997). This is precisely why Hennessy (2005) calls the period after Burnham's failed Co-operative Socialism the era of liberalization: the Guyanese government was forced to sell myriad government-owned businesses. Assets in the timber, rice and fishing industries were all privatized, while international corporations were brought in to manage national companies. American and Canadian companies were granted concessions to develop open-pit gold mines across the country (Hennessy 2005). Between 1989 and 1991, the Hoyte administration eliminated price controls (except for sugar and utilities), abolished import prohibitions, bringing the tariff structure in line with Caricom's Common External Tariff (CET), and introduced treasury auction bills, which encouraged market-driven interest rates (Ramcharan 2007).

As a result of reformed economic policies, under the tutelage of the IMF and World Bank, Guyana's economic performance showed some promise in the early 1990s. As a result of the Hoyte administration privatizing companies such as Guyana Timbers (in 1989) and Demerara Woods, Ltd. (in 1991), GDP rose by 7 per cent in 1991 and 1992.

Export-related production and foreign investment in the bauxite, gold and forestry sectors flourished and inflation declined from 90 percent in 1989 to 28 percent in 1992; fiscal and external deficits were reduced; and private and official capital flows rose significantly (Ramcharan 2007). 1992 featured “an historic democratic process” because it was the year that elections were held, resulting in a PPP-Civic coalition victory. Jagan’s victory was emblematic of reformed democracy in Guyana, moving beyond the corruption and nepotism which plagued the nation since the 1960s. Jagan’s victory, however, was short lived as he suffered a heart attack in 1997 and was succeeded by Samuel Hinds, the Prime Minister in the PPP-Civic coalition. Hinds’ career as President ended when, in the December 1997 general elections, Jagan’s widow, Janet, was elected president and Hinds was re-appointed as Prime Minister.

It was patently clear at this juncture that liberalization and integration into the globalized economy was the only course to follow in order to shed the yoke of failed development and trade. From 1993-1997, Guyana continued to work alongside the IMF and World Bank to stimulate the economy. Tremendous advances were made in agriculture, mining, construction, transport and telecommunications, while GDP grew by an average of 7 per cent a year. Ramcharan (2007:219) records other improvements worthy of mention:

“National savings increased to 16 percent of GDP in 1997 and public finances improved as the overall public sector deficit fell from 21 percent of GDP in 1993 to 3 percent in 1996. Overall balance of the public enterprises improved from a deficit of 5.2 of GDP in 1993 to a surplus of 2.7 percent

of GDP in 1996. External public debt declined from about 461 percent (US\$2 billion) at the end of 1993 to 183 percent of GDP (US\$1.4 billion) at the end of 1997.”

What is more, a National Development Strategy was created in 1996, but was revised in 1998 and 1999, due to more political and civil disturbances over national elections. During the 1999 elections, for instance, the PPP eked out another victory and Bharrat Jagdeo was inaugurated as the President. The elections brought about tremendous unrest, reminding the people of Guyana of the highly divisive struggle between the Indo- and Afro-Guyanese. Such interminable struggles served as impediments to the development of the economy, leading to higher levels of poverty and crime. Concomitantly, Guyana, in 1999, was eligible for various debt relief and forgiveness mechanisms such as Debt Management plans, under the guidance of the UK Department of International Development.

At the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, members of Parliament agreed to the creation of the Guyana Elections Commission, a governmental organ charged with overseeing the conduct of national elections. A Constitution Reform Commission was also created. In its attempts to rid the country of Burnham’s legacies, the commission addressed the imbalances of political power within the government, especially the concentration of power in the hands of the Presidency and the ruling party. Its mandate included seats for 10 members chosen by the country’s elected political parties and 10 members of its civil society (Hennessy 2005).

In the year 2000, the words “Co-operative Republic” were removed from the official name of the country, and the era of liberalization continued unabated. The

government of Guyana, in response to structural adjustment liberalization policies prescribed by international finance institutions in the 1980s and 1990s, adopted a Poverty Reduction Strategy, which was presented to the IMF and World Bank in 2001. Working alongside stakeholders and developmental partners, the nation prepared Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP), which featured a National Development Strategy for 2001-2010. Laudable goals were presented in the document, some of which included: attaining the highest possible rates of economic growth; the elimination of poverty; geographical unity; an equitable distribution of economic activity; and a diversification of the economy (Yaday et al. 2001). President Jagdeo's mandate was clear: creating an environment for broad-based jobs; protecting the environment; improving mechanisms of governance; investing in human and physical capital; and devising intervention programmes to alleviate poverty in diverse regions across the country (Yaday et al. 2001). The nation availed itself of the financing from various global entities and the debt-relief opportunities under the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiatives in 2002 (Ramcharan 2007).

Despite the myriad global mechanisms at the country's disposal, the proper use of external aid has often been impeded, according to external donors such as the IMF and World Bank, by over-centralized processes of decision-making; a glaring disjuncture between public spending and PRSP priorities; and the manner in which the development programmes, loans and projects are delivered (on account of technical staff and institutional capacity). The PRS of 2004, for example, faced many of these challenges, in conjunction with low levels of donor aid and absorptive capacity constraints because of a

massive migration of the country's professionals and the interminable racial hostilities between the Indo- and Afro-Guyanese.

The Executive Board of the IMF, in 2005, championed its Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative and approved debt relief for Guyana. The country's macroeconomic performance, improvements in public expenditure management, and path to poverty reduction have been applauded by global donors, resulting in 100 percent debt relief of all debt incurred before 2005- a sum of approximately US\$65 million (IMF 2005). The 2005 Progress Report noted small improvements in structural reforms; regulatory and institutional reform; public accountability and governance; internal security; investment in human capital and infrastructure to support growth (Ramcharan 2007). Despite the strides made during the era of liberalization, a report by the World Bank reveals that Guyana receives more international aid per capita than 85 percent of the world and yet it remains one of the poorest countries in the Americas. This, of course, can be attributed to the legacy of structural adjustment policies enacted as early as the 1980s; the proliferation of transnational extractive industries; "green" conditionalities for international loans for protected areas; and the presence of international loggers, and gold and mining companies- most of whom gain access to the country's bountiful resources via large land concessions (Hennessy 2005).

### **Eco-Crimes: Why Guyana?**

At this juncture, it is essential to present the *raison d'etre* for applying an eco-crimes framework to the country Guyana. The foregoing analysis of the country's geography and socio-politico-economic landscape provides some context in which my investigation of eco-crimes is situated. Authors such as Jean La Rose (2004), Christopher

Bulkan (2008), Julie Cajune (2008), Martin Vance (2008), Andrew Sanders (1972), Patrick Williams (2007), Neil Whitehead (2002), Logan Alexander Hennessy (2005), Clive Thomas (1975) and Marcus Colchester (1997)- to mention only a few, have produced a substantial literature on the social, political and cultural rights of the Amerindians of Guyana. While these works illuminate the manner in which Amerindians are subject to the detrimental effects of pollution, environmental damage, social disruption, disease transmission and land expropriation, there is a glaring reluctance to describe these acts as *crimes* perpetrated against the country's indigenous groups. Granted, accounts of a handful of development projects gone awry in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been extensively documented. The ecological devastation attributed to the mining and logging industries has been researched, bringing these incidents to the global fore. Post-development theory informs the majority of these works, arguing that the concept and practice of development is merely an extension of Western-Northern hegemony.

Works by Arturo Escobar (1995), Wolfgang Sachs (1999), Gustavo Esteva and Madhu Suri Prakash (1998), James Ferguson (2006) and Serge Latouche (2009) have provided a tenable theoretical foundation upon which to level criticisms against Guyana's development projects, viewing these projects as tentacles of earlier colonial discourse and practice, but a perusal of the voluminous literature covering the social impacts of development projects; mining; logging; untitled land claims; and conservation projects reveals that eco-crimes in Guyana have been under-theorized. One can only speculate as to why scholars have yet to utilize an eco-crimes framework to research the environmental harms and human rights violations which continue to plague the



indigenous communities of Guyana under the guise of neo-liberalism and capitalist globalization. Perhaps the identification of eco-crimes immediately implies that there must, per force, be a perpetrator committing such crimes- the state and multinational corporations, for example. Discourses of state crime and corporate crime may attract unwanted attention to a country attempting to seek financial aid from donor countries and international organizations. For instance, might the designation of environmental harms as eco-crimes deter foreign investment? Would global actors such as Norway, which recently drafted a Memorandum of Understanding with the government of Guyana to employ the country's vast forests as global carbon sinks, think twice about investing in a country deliberately committing crimes of omission? The reasons for failing to identify, classify and categorize the injustices committed against the Amerindians as eco-crimes may, also, speak to larger epistemological issues, casting light on a 'politics of denial' wherein social injury and environmental damage are ignored, redefined in such a manner to undermine the detrimental effects of state-sanctioned practices (White 2002). Finally, acts of ecological devastation and appropriation, in conjunction with the marginalization of the country's indigenous peoples, evade criminological investigation as per the predominance of the strict legalist perspective. It is high time green criminologists expand investigations of environmental harm, opting to view eco-crimes as a dynamic process- a concomitant of abyssal ideology. The practices and policies of the government of Guyana, then, must validly be characterized as criminal, drawing upon a social legalist perspective to understand how legacies of abyssal thinking inform the exercise of hegemony over indigenous communities today. The rest of this chapter, then, will provide some examples of unconscionable practices- practices which have successfully

eluded green criminological investigation, perpetuating the marginalization of the Amerindians.

Critical environmental criminology, it is submitted, promotes situating crimes into context (White 2008). This paradigm dovetails with the research agenda of scholars such as David Pellow (2004) and Robin Saha and Paul Mohai (2005)- to reference only a few. Viewing the disproportionate distribution of environmental hazards in minority communities as events influenced by racist environmental policies, these researchers aver that the centrality of socio-historical processes and context should be further investigated in order to grasp a better understanding of environmental racism. What can be culled from this literature is a new approach which ceases to view eco-crime as isolated incidents. Criminologist Laura Westra's (2008) focus upon the 'global triad of modernity'- comprised of the state, the market and Western ideology- sheds insight of inestimable worth, placing the expropriation of indigenous land, in conjunction with threats to biological integrity, in the context of global capitalism. Rob White (2008) also trumpets the advantages of exploring environmental harm through 'analytic mapping'- specifically, the exploration of the focal, geographical, locational and temporal considerations of harm. Such a technique, the author asserts, is appropriate for advancing research of 'green crimes'. Finally, Reece Walters' (2011) use of Foucault's (1980) procedure of analysis known as 'eventalization' in his analysis of eco- crime seeks to explore the various processes that created 'events' of food crime- specifically, the development and regulation of genetically engineered organisms and food products.

Clearly, mono-causal explanations of eco-crimes do not suffice. Putting eco-crimes back into the rich sense of their context and connections calls for a more

sophisticated analytic foundation- one which ceases to view crimes as an uncomplicated singularity, but as acts historically produced by colonial and imperial structures. Reflecting on the Guyanese case study, I view development projects, illegal and legal logging, unsettled land claims and conservation projects as instances of eco-criminality, situated in state actions, private actions and geopolitical actions. These crimes, therefore, are engendered by a complicated series of deregulations and dispossessions- their structural antecedents originating from abyssal thinking and obscured by the ideology of neo-liberalism.

### **State Actions**

#### *Mining, Logging and Unsettled Land Claims*

The eco-criminality inherent in mining operations in Guyana must be situated in the 'broader picture', identifying the various conditions which facilitate extensive excavation operations on Amerindian land. The clear rivers separating forested banks have, during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, transformed into wide washes of mud and debris by state-sanctioned activities. Perhaps one of the most pressing threats mining poses for Amerindian communities is 'acid-mine drainage' - that is, the residue which accumulates after mines are abandoned, leaking into waters used for fishing and human consumption (MacMillan 1995; Roopnaraine 1996; Bankes and Sharvit 1998). Mining, according to the Commonwealth Secretariat, has also led to changes in river morphology, hydrology and severe mercury pollution, posing serious threats to human health by way of trembling, headaches, blurred vision and unconsciousness (Roopnaraine 1996). A recent report penned by Colchester et al. (2002) reveals that mining operations in close proximity to indigenous villages are responsible for the destruction of crops and other

natural capital important to Amerindians' livelihoods; the desecration of sacred sites; the erosion and clearance of farmlands and forest fallows; social disruption; land expropriation; and the marginalization of Amerindians in decision-making spheres. As such reports suggest, the problem surrounding mining is, unfortunately, systemic in nature, intensified through the machinations and lens of neo-liberal interests. For instance, the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) lacks the administrative teeth to regulate illegal mining operations unfolding in the hinterlands. Understaffed and overworked, the modicum of biologists and toxicologists working for the organization lack the laboratories needed to carry out adequate analyses of the adverse consequences of small-scale mining. Simply put, the GGMC cannot regulate ubiquitous mining projects, as these projects are scattered and dispersed throughout the country's interior, enabling small-scale miners to evade regulatory scrutiny.

Aid agencies also exploit such circumstances, arguing that a more effective approach to monitoring the mining industry entails encouraging large-scale mining by multinational companies. Economies of a larger scale, they submit, enable organizations such as the GGMC to easily monitor and supervise mining operations. Such insidiously clever pleas to the government of Guyana merely dovetail with trade liberalization, one of the many juggernauts of neo-liberalism. Large-scale mining opens up the country's remote regions to foreign companies- many of which yield enough political and economic power to negotiate 'mining agreements' with the Guyanese government and GGMC. Such agreements are established under the tutelage of the World Bank and other foreign conglomerates to restrict Amerindian rights under international law and the

principles of Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), encouraging, favoritism; cronyism and corruption (Colchester et al. 2002; Colchester and Ferrari 2007).

One need only review the 1989 *Mining Act* to contextualize the country's major offensive against the indigenous population. This legislation provides that, “[s]ubject to the other provisions of this Part, all minerals within the lands of Guyana shall vest in the State”. Legislation enables the government to issue mining permits anywhere in the country, including Amerindian titled land. It is legal discourse, then, in conjunction with the paucity of Amerindian representation in the GGMC, which facilitates the absorption of indigenous land into growth-oriented, global economies.

Near the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the *Land of Many Waters* was poisoned by numerous mining companies, irreparably altering the country's landscape. One such beneficiary of the country's policies was Cambior Inc., a Canadian-owned mining company, overseeing the operation of Omai Gold Mines in Guyana. The name of the company was derived from a tributary of Essequibo; at the time of its construction, Omai was one of the largest gold mines in South America, garnering much attention from global actors for its production of approximately 3.7 million ounces of gold (Griffin and Ryan 1995). In 1995, Guyana witnessed an environmental disaster, which would forever taint the waters of the land: 2.3 million cubic meters of deadly cyanide effluent breached the walls of a tailings pond, flowing into the Essequibo river. Estimates revealed that approximately 400 million gallons of cyanide-laced material entered the country's bodies of water (Griffith 1997).

Those Amerindian communities living in close proximity to the environmental disaster complained for days of acute dizziness and skin rashes. The economy, already in

a state of stagnation, also received a hard blow when countries such as Jamaica, St. Lucia and Barbados placed bans on the importation of fish from Guyana. The magnitude of the spill forced Prime Minister Hinds to designate the area as an ecological disaster zone (Shalom 1995). Not long thereafter, the country was forced to enlist in the assistance of the global community: The Organization of American States and the United Nations were a few of the international actors involved in the prompt cleanup and analysis of the contaminated area (Colson 2009).

Not long thereafter, Omai was accused of pressuring the country's officials to circumscribe the scope and duration of public inquiries into the disaster, leaving citizens in complete darkness about the magnitude of the catastrophic spill and the harmful effects of the toxins travelling through the region's waterways. The Guyanese government was equally complicit in the ecological devastation because the country's leaders failed to launch independent Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), relying instead on Omai to conduct their own assessment (La Gra et al. 1996).

In 2002, a small-scale mining operation owned by Wayne Vieira commenced digging near Tassawinni, located in the Barima-Waini region of the country. Much controversy surrounded this operation because Vieira presented a permit received by the GGMC to mine Amerindian land without the consultation of villagers. As a result, the Barama River was destroyed by the dredges used in the Tassawinni mines. Tailings deposited into the river and polluted the waterways, leading to the decline of local fish. Today, mining in the Barima-Waini region is further problematized because some villages have yet to receive formal titles under the Amerindian Act, despite the fact that they have resided in these areas for hundreds of years. Thus, forced relocation is common

for villagers who cannot stop multinational companies from invading these lands. This not only leads to a cycle of violence and abuse, but also the deterioration of socio-cultural practices (Colchester et al. 2002; Hennessy 2005; Bulkan 2008). Consider, for a moment, how mining has transformed some villages by the introduction of cash economies: the forcible demise of existing farms and other traditional ceremonies are the direct result of the integration of these villages into the newly formed industries and enterprises penetrating the remote hinterlands of the country (Colchester and LaRose 2010; Colchester et al. 2002). Today, reports reveal that the exploitation of Amerindians in the Potaro-Siparuni region is rife: Amerindian men are held against their free will to work under unpleasant conditions for menial pay, perpetuating, again, vicious cycles of oppression.

### *Logging*

One of the most forested countries in the tropics, Guyana features over 14 million hectares of land which is loggable. As early as 1815, Amerindians observed the invasion of their forests by woodcutters (Menezes 1979). Like mining projects, logging is an activity sanctioned by the state, attributed to a legacy of colonial rule over the country's vast collection of exotic timber. Near the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, caterpillar tractors, wheeled skidders, chainsaws and lorries penetrated the deepest forests, extracting timber at an alarming rate. Privatization of the country's regions has resulted in the leasing of forests to loggers via 'Timber Sales Agreements'- most of which include stipulations on management plans vis-à-vis annual allowable logging (Sanders 1995; Flaming 1995). The government offices under presidential control grant logging concessions to foreign companies and instances of favoritism and malpractice are rife. For instance, the

concessions granted to Barama Company Ltd. during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have proven to be highly devastating for some indigenous communities which have witnessed the depletion of their village forests. The Barama Company's concessions enclose four communities with titles and as a result, the sovereignty of these villages has been threatened. In 1994, the small Amerindian community of Orenoque was forcibly relocated to accommodate the Barama Company's log pond and office complex. Villagers were promised new buildings for those residents who decided to resettle; the company also failed to provide decent housing and other basic necessities such as access to clean water (Poore 1989; Johnson and Cabarle 1993; Rice and Counsell 1993; Colchester and Ferrari 2007; Colchester 1997).

Despite laudable efforts on the part of Amerindian organizations to protest the appropriation of their land, innovative logging practices such as 'high-grading' and new technology referred to as 'sprinters' have accelerated the rate of illegal logging in the hinterlands, leading to unprecedented rates of unsustainable logging; the pollution of the Orenoque log pond; contamination of ecosystems from various wood preservatives such as insecticides and fungicides; the destruction and degradation of habitats; and the irreversible alienation of indigenous peoples (Colchester 1997; Colchester et al. 2002; Bulkan 2008; Sizer 1996). Furthermore, accelerated logging has also led to the exploitation of non-timber forest products such as manicole palms, a unique species of plant which is abundant in Guyana's coastal forests. The French-owned consortium, Amazon Caribbean Ltd, has single-handedly overharvested this resource, negatively impacting bird and fish populations.

### *Unsettled Land Claims*



Finally, an analysis of state-level eco-criminality would be incomplete without an exploration of unsettled land claims, and the multiple colonial and neo-colonial processes which constitute this event. The interminable struggle of the Amerindians to reclaim land is not an isolated event; rather, it conforms to a legacy of abyssal ideology and social control, dating back to the years of Dutch colonization. The appropriation of land via unrecognized land claims constitutes an eco-crime and such an investigation would have to commence with a thorough analysis of the Amerindian Act of 1976- legislation which accorded special race-based rights to Amerindians (Menezes 1977). The enactment of this legislation was extremely controversial because it facilitated control over indigenous communities by consolidating Amerindian ethno-cultural diversity (Greene-Roesel 1996; Forte 1996; Greenidge 2006; Anaya 2005; Hennessy 2005; Bulkan 2008). The homogenization of Amerindian identity had profound implications for indigenous tribes; for example, under the Act, titled communities were given rights to avail themselves of the resources in their villages, but those rights were extinguished outside of village boundaries (Bulkan 2008). Because of the Act's demarcation of 'villages', certain communities could not access their tribal and ethnic territories- territories they had occupied since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This left most of that land in the hands of the state (Greenidge 2006). Tenets of the Act also prohibited Amerindian activity near community rivers. Despite the fact that village boundaries were designated by rivers and streams, Amerindian ownership of these waterways was restricted, enabling the government of Guyana to encourage river-based mining which intensified the appropriation of resources on Amerindian land (Hennessy 2005).

The revised Amerindian Act of 2006 does little to improve the status of the Amerindians communities. The legislation aims to preserve traditional rights, but it does a poor job of defining what constitutes ‘traditional rights’. The definition captures only rights pertaining to subsistence, excluding other common law rights. Bulkan (2008: 356) explains:

“Section 57 of the 2006 Amerindian Act, which is intended to protect traditional rights over State lands and State forests, applies only to the Amerindian Act and will therefore not protect traditional rights threatened by separate legislation regulating resource-extractive industries. This means that if enacted, pre-existing Amerindian rights to use resources in untitled areas will be vulnerable to suspension and even extinguishment by the creation of private rights in favor of third parties”.

Perhaps the most invasive provision of the 2006 Act is the right of the state to override an Amerindian village’s decisions pertaining to large-scale mining activities on titled lands. Specifically, section 50 reveals that the government can override the refusal of consent when mining activities are deemed to be “in the public interest”. Today, the ‘titling’ process has resulted in approximately 80% of Amerindian communities holding formal titles over 3 million hectares of land (Trevin and Nasi 2009). While a handful of communities still await recognition and title from the state under the Amerindian Act, the legislation continues to be excoriated by international organizations such as the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) for depriving untitled communities of rights to the land they have historically occupied. What is more,

limitations to subsoil rights on indigenous lands have also been a point of contention (Trevin and Nasi 2009). These so-called protections accorded to the country's indigenous communities are superficial at best, enabling global corporate entities to trample on indigenous rights, continuing vicious cycles of marginalization and subordination.

## **Private Actions**

### *Development Projects*

Similar to that of state actions, private interests have also ravaged portions of the country, necessitating analyses of eco-criminality. Similar to mining, logging and unsettled land claims, development projects must be situated in a sociohistorical context which links contemporary control over land to an imperial past. The construction of roads and ranches has brought immense wealth to the country, but the riches have never been evenly distributed, placing the majority of land in the hands of non-Amerindians. Concomitantly, it is the Amerindians who have lost ancestral lands to ranchers and who have been subject to severe health problems due to debilitating disease (Liefers et al. 1993; Benjamin and Laureen 1995; Colchester 1997). As early as the 1920's, Amerindian land was appropriated by private ranchers via pastoral leases. The consequences were dire: Amerindians were transformed into serfs of the ranchers, instead of independent employees. Hunger, malnutrition and smallpox also swept through villages, nearly decimating entire tribes (Myers 1993).

Brazilian private interests also sought entry into Guyana's interior regions during the 1970s and 1980s. In 1982, a joint declaration was signed between Guyana and Brazil, leading to a "Memorandum of Understanding on the Interconnection of Guyanese and Highway Networks". This declaration pushed for the development of a road between

Lethem and Maruba Hill (Colchester 1997). Inevitably, national businesses saw the potential of such development projects and in 1989 the PNC approved of the construction of roads from the State of Roraima in Brazil to Georgetown, Guyana. As development progressed, the Brazilian government expanded the project, constructing an all-weather road from Lethem in the Rupununi savannahs to the Essequibo River, resulting in the settlement of landless settlers, miners, timber cutters and urban squatters. Such development projects proceeded without taking heed of social and environmental impact studies- many of which revealed that projects of this type would threaten to place immense pressure on Amerindian communities insofar as the spread of communicable diseases; the destruction of river systems and the depletion of flora and fauna (Colchester 1997). Today, the most disconcerting aspect of such development projects is the blatant exclusion of Amerindians from decision-making forums regarding their own future. Consigned to the margins of society, these communities are seldom consulted by the government and other actors involved in such projects.

### **Geopolitical Action**

#### *Conservation in Guyana*

Conservation in Guyana presents the quintessential case study of eco-criminality. The establishment of the country's first community-owned conservation area exemplifies abyssal thinking through the Market-Oriented Conservation/Indigenous Conservation distinction. Such a distinction is visible, but is founded upon invisible distinctions which draw upon colonial and post-colonial discourses concerning the epistemological and ontological assumptions about the Amerindian people of Guyana. Moreover, these distinctions adhere to an entrenched legacy of abyssal ideology and cognitive injustice,

discursively representing the Amerindians as racially and culturally. This will be further explored in chapter seven.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Re-Configuration of Eco-Crimes**

The objective of this chapter is to present a technical and exegetical contribution to the corpus of work covering eco-crimes, identifying why a paradigm shift within the field of green criminology is necessary. Such a shift, I submit, can refine the definition of crimes against the environment at the ontological level, offering a more dynamic and imaginative approach to researching ‘green crimes’. The impetus behind this endeavor stems from what I perceive to be a glaring limitation of the explanatory models of eco-crimes. The aim of this chapter is threefold: I begin with a diachronic analysis of the term eco-crime; I proceed by sketching a criticism of the extant green criminology literature; finally, I proffer an explanation as to why the eco-crimes framework should be expanded in order to understand how power and discourse facilitate cognitive injustice

Note, my use of the term eco-crime is interchangeable with ‘green crimes’ and environmental crime as I review some key works in the green criminology literature during the last 24 years. The following definitions of eco-crime, it bears emphasizing, are selective and by no means exhaustive. Many more systems of categorization and classification could have been included, but a rigorous investigation of disparate definitions of eco-crimes is beyond the scope of this dissertation. My objective is merely to critique the selected modes of classification, presenting a paradigmatic shift for studying the specifications of the term.

### **Paradigmatic Antecedents of a Green Criminology**

The identification and analysis of environmental crime is a relatively new phenomenon. During the 1970s and 1980s, legal environmental protection increased in

scope, capturing the intricacies of violations against the environment in the form of corporate, white-collar crime (Sutherland 1940) and organized crime (Bynum 1987). Studies of violations of environmental legislation were confined to analyses of crimes committed by major corporations (Sutherland 1940; Volk 1977; Clinard and Quinney 1973; Nader 1973 and Meier 1977) and other organized, criminal syndicates (Ianni and Reuss-Ianni 1972; Smith 1980; Hagan 1983; Maltz 1985 and Bynum 1987). It was an exciting time for criminologists, indeed. During this period, pioneering research was being conducted on the toxic by-products associated with the increasingly vast production, and proliferation, of chemicals. Researchers explored the unethical and negligent practices of countless corporations, many of which engaged in the illegal disposal of toxic chemicals (Clinard and Yeager 1980). The early 1990s also featured extensive research on the trans-boundary dumping of hazardous waste by Western corporations in developing nations (Clinard 1990; Gourlay 1992; and Leonard 1994). Criminologists were also eager to document the manner in which crimes occurred in the workplace, presenting ground-breaking reports on the exposure of workers to certain toxins which caused reproductive injuries, poisoning and many other illnesses (Claybrook 1984; Clinard 1983 and Braithwaite 1989).

The existence of organized, criminal syndicates also captured the imagination of a handful of criminologists. What roles, if any, were certain criminal organizations poised to play in environmental crimes? The role of the Mafia in New York and New Jersey, in particular, garnered much attention, compelling researchers to record the activity of these major criminal syndicates in the disposal of toxic waste (Savas 1977; Block and Scarpitti 1985; Sarokin, Muir, Miller and Sperber 1985; and Szasz 1986). It can easily be argued,

then, that strands of green criminological thought can be traced back to the mid 1970s. Despite the approaches to identifying and researching environmental harm, attempts to designate crimes against the environment remained somewhat hobbled due to the glaring lack of adjusted terminology and internationally acknowledged definitions of environmental crime (Eman et al. 2009). Today, this is a problem which shows no sign of abating. The 1990s brought with it lively debates as to which branch of criminology would be suited to the task of studying environmental deviations (Edwards et al. 1996). There has been some discussion among scholars in the social sciences to demarcate the parameters of terms such as environmental criminology and green criminology. For example, Bottoms and Wiles (2002) suggest the renaming of the former, which has come to be associated with urban sociology and ‘social-spatial criminology’, which places emphasis on the study of crime, criminality and victimization (Eman 2012). Despite the debates surrounding the selection of the most appropriate term for studying environmental crime, it is safe to suggest that the ‘greening of criminology’ has opened hitherto closed vistas of inquiry into crimes against the environment.

### **The Green Light**

Criminologist Michael Lynch coined the term ‘green criminology’ in 1990. The drift of Lynch’s memorable publication *The Greening of Criminology* is that green criminological inquiry should be premised upon green political theories- many of which view environmental destruction as a concomitant of capitalism. Juxtaposing green criminology with radical criminology, Lynch explores how environmental harm is recognized and treated in modern industrial capitalism. Pronouncements of ‘green crimes’ are based upon myriad corporate activities. This publication was followed Nancy Frank



and Michael Lynch's book entitled *Corporate Crime, Corporate Violence* (1992), which seeks to draw a link between environmental harm and 'above the law' business activities. In 1998, however, the publication of a special issue on Green Criminology by Piers Beirne and Nigel South signaled a growing interest in environmental harm and the importance of studying such issues from a criminological perspective.

An overview of green criminology would be incomplete without acknowledging 'eco-critical criminology' (ECC). Appearing in the pages of the acclaimed *Journal of Criminal Justice Policy Review* during the late 1990s, ECC provides a critique of contemporary environmental policies, offering meaningful policy alternatives (Seis 1999). For practitioners of ECC, environmental degradation has antecedent causes situated in political structures and cultural forms: anthropocentric perspectives on human/nature interaction; the ideology of consumerism; and the commodification and homogenization of nature via neo-liberal capitalism (Seis 1999). Wilson (1999) juxtaposes ECC with green criminology, identifying crucial differences between both paradigms. For instance, both perspectives interpret human exploitation of the non-human world as the source of environmental problems; however, it is ECC's emphasis on political analysis which distinguishes it from green criminological inquiry. Another key distinction is the nexus between politics, policy and victims: green criminologists' investigation of environmental harm, it is submitted, is highly anthropocentric- focusing more on human victims, whereas ECC explores how policy affects both human and non-human victims. Note, ECC theorists do not accuse green criminologists of ignoring non-human species; they merely lament that investigations of environmental harm fail to take heed of the unique characteristics of the harm inflicted on non-human species (Wilson 1999).

Other contributors to ECC include Barnett (2001) and his discussion of Aldo Leopold's (1949) 'land ethic' - a philosophically grounded view used to develop environmental ethics and investigations of harms and rights as they pertain to the environment. The land ethics perspective, then, can be used by criminologists interested in human-nature relations; the manner in which statutory laws are constructed; and the pathological structures of the modern market. Championing a modern environmental ethic, Barnett enjoins humanity to challenge the commodification of nature, subverting dominant economic institutions and their penchant for unsustainable activities. This, asserts Barnett, can be accomplished through fostering an education about the ethics of preserving biodiversity; re-configuring laws so they comport with knowledge concerning environmental harm and the promotion of voluntary environmental compliance to a positive land ethic (Barnett 2001).

Like Barnett, Seis (1999) points out that traditional criminology fails to address the causes of environmental harm- namely, the manner in which multinational corporations have transformed their economic power into political power, undermining individual nations' environmental laws and regulatory structures. In other words, investigations of environmental harm stand to gain much insight from other studies which explore the economic and political power involved in other examples of corporate malfeasance. The scantiness of such investigations is, therefore, a problem within the field of criminology. For Seis, it is no longer worthwhile to assess the immediate political and economic determinants of environmental crimes within nations because it is the impact of the global context which threatens the sovereignty of a nation, encouraging the commission of crimes against the environment. The crux of Seis' argument is that the

goals of global capitalism and the preservation of the environment are incompatible. So long as powerful multinational and transnational corporations avail themselves of international trade agreements, such entities will continue to protect trade to the detriment of the environment and human health.

Finally, in the spirit of critical narrative, Howard (1999) expands the purview of ECC, exploring how waste management regimes and their laws constitute ideology. These regimes recognize environmental and health threats associated with the activity of hazardous waste and municipal waste sites, but continue to codify and privilege corporate interests via legal and enforcement mechanisms- many of which obscure, and even trivialize, destructive environmental practices facilitated by the state. One need only reflect on the paradigmatic shift in the protection of the environment from ‘command and control’ approaches to flexible measures such as self-regulation (White 1998).

Clearly, ECC demonstrates how environmental issues are directly related to economic and political structures embedded in a neo-liberal global arrangement. Although practitioners of ECC do not proffer succinct categorizations or classifications of eco-crime, the field highlights various analytical approaches to exploring environmental laws, crimes and ethics. It can also be argued that green criminology draws upon ECC, refining its own mandate. For example, Carrabine et al. (2004) suggest that green criminology has four main objectives: (1) to record the existence of ‘green crimes’, developing basic typologies and distinctions between primary and secondary environmental crimes; (2) to document the myriad laws which have been established to address eco-crimes, taking heed of the complications associated with enforcement; (3) to link ‘green crimes’ to social inequalities; and (4) to identify what role, if any, green social

movements play bringing about social change, ending the exploitative and ecologically destructive practices of states and corporations. The remainder of this chapter will focus exclusively on green criminology's first task- that is, the formulation of typologies and systems of classifications of eco-crimes.

At present, students of criminology would be hard pressed to find a singular definition of environmental crime, 'green crime' or what some green criminologists have come to refer to as eco-crime. Ulrich Beck's (1992) term 'risk society' undoubtedly takes heed of the many risks introduced through modern technologies. In contradistinction to treacherous earthquakes, floods and many other natural disasters, which took a toll on earlier human civilizations, there is something unique about the risks posed by the *industrial* world. It is humanly produced danger in the form of 'manufactured risks' which threaten the integrity of the planet. While capitalist development and progress accelerated during the industrial revolution, it has reached its apex in the globalized, modern world, ushering in a tsunami of environmental degradation and environmental harm. The emergence of 'green crimes', then, is coterminous with the rise of the new risks associated with industrialization. While some criminologists unequivocally acknowledge the need for clarifying the meaning of 'green', the ontology of such crimes is difficult to establish without the proper theoretical and methodological tools (Groombridge 1998; South 1998). Thorough investigations of environmental harm, for scholars such as Rob White (2008), are informed by various methodological approaches and eco-philosophies, all of which influence how harm is understood and conceptualized. Such a multidisciplinary approach to addressing eco-crimes involves cooperation between different areas of academic expertise, fostering new procedures of analysis with

respect to issues of global significance. While scholars in the field debate the best way to analyze the environment and crime, two approaches have come to dominate the enterprise. The first approach includes the *consideration of environmental issues* from a criminological point of view, encouraging expositions of issues such as illegal logging, declining biodiversity, chemical pollution, etc. The second approach is *conceptual* insofar as debates over the environment are located within a wider context of social, political and criminological theory.

Philosophical perspectives also influence the manner in which environmental harm and eco-crime are conceptualized (Lane 1998; Plumwood 2005; Halsey 2004). White (2008) posits an analytical distinction between three eco-philosophies which influence how green criminologists set out to define crimes against the environment: anthropocentrism, biocentrism, and ecocentrism. Competing eco-philosophical views regarding the ontological specifications of eco-crimes pose grave difficulty for establishing universal definitions of crimes against the environment. This is only exacerbated by the dialectic between the strict legalist perspective and the social legalist perspective of 'green crimes' (Situ and Emmons 2000). The former places emphasis on the centrality of criminal law when defining eco-criminality. In other words, crime is self-evident because it is the criminal code that defines it. This school of thought draws heavily upon fundamental principles of English common law of the 12<sup>th</sup> century- namely, *nullum crime sine lege nulla poena sine lege* (no crime without law, no punishment without law). Thus, for researchers such as Situ and Emmons (2000: 3), such an approach views an eco-crime exclusively as an "unauthorized act or omission that violates the law and therefore subject to criminal prosecution and criminal sanctions". The social legalist

perspective, on the other hand, recognizes how asymmetrical power relations in society result in very powerful actors possessing the resources to present their actions as part and parcel of Free Trade and neo-liberal ideology, evading the criminal justice system's reach. Guided by leading theorists of modern criminology such as Clinard and Yeager (1980); Frank and Lynch (1992); Lynch (1990); and Reiman (1979), proponents of this perspective aver that certain acts may not violate the criminal law, but are so violent in their expression that they warrant the label of crimes.

The social legalist perspective also explores how certain environmental problems are socially constructed, arguing that harms garner public attention due to the successful mobilization of information. This constructionist position is held by Hannigan (2006); Macnaghten and Urry (1998); and Higgins and Natalier (2004). These scholars contend that social problems are constructed through material and cultural forces. This is extremely important when pondering the question of what constitutes eco-crime, given the dynamic social processes of definition, negotiation and legitimation social problems must undergo before being deemed significant by the wider public (Hannigan 2006). Consider, for instance, the clear-felling of old-growth forests, a practice which does not violate criminal law, but is equally devastating for non-human animals and indigenous groups who rely on their forests for subsistence. The destruction of these landscapes will only be viewed as an environmental harm and social problem warranting immediate intervention if powerful interest groups view it as such. There are, of course, groups comprising civil society who champion the social legalist perspective, protesting against *legal* and *legitimate* state and corporate activities, which wreak havoc on the environment and certain people. The crux of the constructionist position, then, is that power plays a

prominent role in the social construction and deconstruction of 'green crimes' and that the enforcement and application of laws against environmental harm favor the powerful over the powerless, obfuscating power relations.

The debate between these two perspectives is ongoing, encouraging green criminologists to adopt different frameworks in order to identify patterns of victimization. Who or what precisely is being victimized is an inquiry which informs research, necessitating a new approach to conceptualizing environmental harm and, most importantly, responses to such harm (White 2008). As such, green criminology has availed itself of the following theoretical frameworks in order to enrich analyses of harm: environmental rights and environmental justice; ecological citizenship and ecological justice; animal rights and species justice (White 2008). Clearly, as a paradigm, green criminology draws heavily upon a substantial corpus of work, encouraging the formulation of categories and classificatory schemes of environmental crimes.

### **Ontological Specifications of Eco-Crimes**

The Sage Dictionary of Criminology (McLaughlin and Muncie 2006) proffers a succinct definition of eco-crime: "illegal and/or harmful behavior including threatening, damaging or destroying the natural environment. It is a term often used synonymously with 'green crime' or environmental crime" (Walters 2006:148). Such a vague definition reveals the complexities of researching environmental wrongdoing. What precisely constitutes environmental harm? Are human beings considered to be a part of the natural environment? Does the emphasis on illegal behavior depoliticize and deflect attention away from the legal, 'business-as-usual' activities of transnational corporate capitalism? Finally, what of the practices under the guise of development and conservation? Do such

activities merit the label eco-crime? As a paradigm, green criminology endeavors to foster an inclusive dialogue, documenting *harm* in various contexts, irrespective of legal status and institutional legitimations (White 2008). Other green criminologists such as Walters (2011) have promoted a more nuanced approach to investigating eco-crimes, situating the meaning of words like *environment*, *harm* and *crime* in the realm of social practice. This approach, it is maintained, provides a rigorous analysis of how these terms evolve and are constructed by sectional interests, instead of relying exclusively on static dictionary definitions.

One of the most influential works in the field would undoubtedly be Yingyi Situ and David Emmons' *Environmental Crime: The Criminal Justice System's Role in Protecting the Environment* (2000). The book explores the contours of the debate between strict and social legalist perspectives, documenting the criminalization of environmental wrongdoing and exploring the nature, causes, prosecution and prevention of environmental crime. What is more, the authors posit a very clever classification of four types of environmental crime: corporate, organized, governmental/state and personal. What makes this work worthy of consideration among green criminologists is its adept use of classical criminological theories to account for the destruction of the environment. For example, Situ and Emmons invoke the following explanatory models and classical criminological theories to account for myriad instances of environmental wrongdoing: *Opportunity* (Frank and Lynch 1992); *Goal Attainment* (Gross 1978; Needleman & Needleman 1979; Vaughan 1982; Clinard and Yeager 1980); *Legal Doctrine* (Minister 1994; Lewis 1985; Herm 1991); *Anomie* (Merton 1938); *Differential Association* (Sutherland and Cressey 1960); *Cultural Transmission* (Cressey 1969); and *Social*



*Control* (Hirschi 1969). The work is groundbreaking in the field of green criminology insofar as it illustrates how investigations of eco-crime can be a legitimate enterprise, drawing upon tenable theoretical frameworks. While there is no attempt on behalf of the authors to posit a classification of these environmental crimes, their examples of corporate, organized, governmental/state and personal wrongdoing encompass industrial pollution; toxic dumping; hazards in the workplace; nuclear testing; disposal of hazardous waste by the military; and environmental damage during wartime military operations- to mention only a few (Situ and Emmons 2000). The authors outline two schools of thought (mentioned above) when attempting to answer the question: what is environmental crime? They concede that the book adopts a strict legalist approach in order to assess the growing number of environmental offences defined as crimes by the criminal justice system. Nevertheless, the authors pave the way for other researchers interested in the ontology of environmental harm.

#### *Corporatist Perspective and Eco-Crime*

Following the social legalist perspective, Michael Lynch and Paul Stretesky (2003) massage the contours of the term eco-crime, situating these crimes in dominant perspectives of green criminology. Understanding that environmental harms are social constructions, heavily influenced by social locations and power relations in society (Seager 1993), the authors explore how the term *green* has been utilized by two diametrically opposed groups: corporate actors and environmental justice actors. Such a distinction, according to the authors, situates eco-crime in a social constructivist framework, demonstrating what role corporations are poised to play in formulating a definition of 'green crime'. Consider, for instance, the manner in which those

corporations engaged in non-sustainable and exploitative practices are praised for being eco-friendly and socially responsible citizens. The ability to ‘appear green’, then, is accomplished via massive public relations and advertising campaigns. Such techniques, the authors submit, present a corporate definition of *green*, de-politicizing environmental issues and movements. ‘Greenwashing’ (Greer and Bruno 1997) is a prominent strategy employed by corporations to respond to various strands of environmentalism.

Lynch and Stretsky (2003) explore how ‘greenwashing’ is used to deflect attention away from the ecologically destructive practices of corporations, convincing consumers that they are, in fact, environmentally conscious and that to take on a *green* position entails consuming a certain product instead of questioning the production of these products. The argument is intellectually balanced but fails to elaborate on how ‘greenwashing’ constitutes Gramscian ideology, serving the interests of an oligarchy. The authors do, however, posit a corporate definition of eco-crime, invoking Situ and Emmons’ strict legalist definition of crimes as “unauthorized acts or omissions that violate the law and therefore subject to criminal prosecution and sanction” (Lynch and Stretsky 2003: 229). Clearly, the appropriation of the term by corporations presents a definition which is meticulously precise and exclusive, leaving little space for reflection on what other activities might constitute an eco-crime. Might such a ‘value free’ approach to defining environmental crimes obfuscate the power differentials inherent in law-making and law enforcement? Lynch and Stretsky (2003) concede that the corporate perspective’s rendition of eco-crimes as *illegal* acts ignores a plethora of other environmental harms- many of which are viewed as ‘above the law’, corporate activity. The corporatist definition of eco-crimes, thus, entails acts of sabotage and destruction of

agricultural and chemical sites, in the name of protecting the environment. The proliferation of terms such as ‘eco-militants’ and ‘eco-terrorists’ is a direct result of such narrow definitions of crime. Eco-friendly protest groups engrossed in interminable struggles to promote the conservation of resources and ecological preservation are labelled as criminals in the eyes of law enforcement organizations. As long as corporations continue to view eco-crimes as unauthorized acts or omissions which violate the law, they are able to portray themselves as victims.

What is missing from Lynch and Stretesky’s presentation of the corporate classification of eco-crime is an elaboration on the ideological impetus behind the corporatist perspective. If we draw upon the work of scholars such as Vold (1958); Quinney (1970); Young (1990) and Turk (1969), we can view eco-crimes as the exercise of power by particular interest groups who occupy dominant positions in society, and who enforce their values upon the less powerful (Henry and Milovanovic 1996). The elite-domination view of law is also relevant to the formulation of corporatist definitions of eco-crimes because the law is interpreted as a weapon in a protracted struggle between different groups. The control over law, then, enables one interest group to maintain supremacy over other groups, utilizing law enforcement agencies to act on behalf of the dominant group (Turk 1969).

When discussing corporate perspectives of the term *green* and eco-crimes, an analysis of legislation used by the powerful to stifle acts of protest and dissent provides a poignant example of how elites wield the law as weapons against environmental groups. The use of law suits, in conjunction with the denial of funding to legal agencies, are just some examples of how the elite avail themselves of the law to bolster their interests and

values. Take, for example, the criminalization of environmental dissent via strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs). It has been noted that the purpose of SLAPPs is not necessarily to ‘win’ in the legal sense; rather, it is deployed to intimidate those who protest various activities pursued by corporations (White 2008). What has also captured the attention of scholars is the manner in which governments and corporate entities misrepresent research in the field of environmental science. In a concerted attempt to suppress information which may criticize the ‘green policies’ of commercial enterprise, corporate bodies lobby at international negotiations, ensuring that such information never reaches the public (Kuehn 2004).

#### *Environmental Justice Perspectives and Eco-Crime*

In stark contrast to the corporate perspective of the term *green* and eco-crimes, the environmental justice perspective explores diverse frameworks for redressing environmental harm. Lynch and Stretesky present three human-centered environmental justice movements: eco-feminism, red-green movements and the struggle against environmental racism.

Environmental justice can be further divided into two broad categories. The first category highlights fairness of procedural rules with respect to the formulation of laws, legal procedures and policies (Bullard 1990; Alberini et al. 1997). The second category focuses on the distribution of environmental hazards and the disproportionate burden of environmental harm shouldered by low-income and minority communities (Bullard 1990; Lavelle and Coyle 1992; Mohai and Bryant 1992; Pellow 1992; Pollack and Vittas 1995; Bryant 1995). No discussion pertaining to environmental justice is complete without analyzing environmental racism, a term coined by former NAACP director Benjamin

Chavez. For scholars like Robert Bullard (2007), environmental racism includes geographical inequities vis-à-vis the uneven distribution of air pollution, municipal landfills and incinerators— to mention a few. Other researchers such as Lisa Anne Zilney, Danielle McGurrin and Sammy Zahran (2006:47) observe that this form of racism includes: “the institutionalized practices of government or corporate decision makers who target communities for least desirable land uses, resulting in the unequal burden of toxic and hazardous waste on communities of color”. In a related vein, David Pellow (2004) argues that some of the driving forces of environmental racism entail the quest for political, cultural and economic dominance and security.

Lynch and Stretesky’s overview of environmental justice encourages them to identify three common orientations: the politics of being *green*; green theory, with a particular emphasis on a theory of oppression; and an appeal to historically situated theories and understandings of environmental injustice (Lynch and Stretesky 2003). The first orientation refers to formulating political plans of action which can be used to necessitate broad structural reforms to address environmental inequities. Political orientation, therefore, is often premised upon either class-based, gender-based and nature-based theories or perspectives (O’Connor 1998).

The second orientation endeavors to cease viewing environmental justice as a monolithic entity, concerned exclusively with environmental transgressions. Various theoretical frameworks comprise environmental justice, promoting a general theory of human oppression which links environmental harms with human justice. Consider, for instance, how eco-feminism sets out to draw parallels between environmental degradation and the broader social structures facilitating gender oppression; the manner

in which red-green initiatives illustrate a nexus between class/economic oppression and environmental harm; or how the struggle against environmental racism links environmental injustice with the marginalization and subordination of racial/ethnic and native groups (Lynch and Stretesky 2003). Clearly, the environmental justice perspective illuminates how environmental oppression is intimately connected to other modes of oppression featured in capitalism's social, economic, and political systems.

The third, and final, orientation is the historical orientation. Referring back to the examples of eco-feminism, red-green movements and environmental racism, the authors illuminate the importance of historical accounts of patriarchy, class struggles, and the political battles for self-determination among racial and ethnic minorities, respectively. James O'Connor (1998) also contributes to the discussion on the importance of the historical dimension of environmental justice movements, stating that environmental history explores how human agency shapes understandings of *nature*, viewing natural and cultural environments as sites in which human activity is either enabled or constrained. What is also important, then, is the interaction of nature with society and the human constructions- namely, laws- which seek dominance over *nature* (Worster 1988).

Clearly, the environmental justice perspective offers alternative procedures of analysis of environmental harm. Environmental justice as a theoretical framework has served as a fertile ground upon which to base green criminological inquiry. While there exists no singular definition of environmental justice, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) posits the following legalistic classification, describing environmental justice as "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, ethnicity, income, national origin, or educational level with respect to the development,

implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies” (Office of Federal Activities 1998:2). Some scholars have challenged the conventional frontiers of this body of knowledge, expanding environmental justice to encompass values, norms and public policies which promote liveable wages and safe jobs, decent housing and adequate health care and deliberative and participatory democracy (Bryant 1995). For the purposes of categorizing and classifying environmental wrongdoing, the environmental justice perspective views eco-crimes as acts which (1) may or may not violate the criminal code or other environmental regulations; (2) engenders observable and identifiable environmental harm; and (3) stems from human activities. Of significance is the manner in which environmental justice opens limitless vistas of inquiry into intersections of race, class, gender, age and ability, bringing to the fore inequities which may not be captured by, say, a corporatist definition of eco-crime. For Lynch and Stretesky, then, the aim of green criminology is to transcend laws, identifying harms accompanying eco-crimes. The import of their work is the presentation of contrasting perspectives of what it means to be *green* and the term eco-crime.

#### *Primary and Secondary ‘Green Crimes’*

Drawing upon Lynch and Stretesky’s contribution to the green criminology literature, one of the earliest classifications of ‘green crimes’ comes from Carrabine et al. (2004). Employing Beck’s conception of ‘risk’, the authors aptly note the role corporations play in accelerating ecological devastation. Their perspective of a truly green criminology, then, is one which takes heed of the finite nature of the earth’s ecosystems. The authors proceed to identify two types of crimes: those which result in the irreversible degradation of our planet’s resources and those which are symbiotic with

processes of destruction and depletion. The former can be identified as primary ‘green crimes’ which serve as concomitants of anthropocentric practices: crimes of air pollution; crimes of deforestation; crimes of species decline; and crimes of water pollution (Carrabine et al. 2004). Primary ‘green crimes’ provide ample opportunity for green criminologists to conduct investigations into the myriad risks associated with industrialization. On the other hand, secondary, or symbiotic ‘green crimes’, the authors intimate, are those acts which result from the flouting of rules and environmental legislation. A poignant example of such crimes is when governments violate their own environmental regulations, which inevitably leads to environmental and other forms of harm (Day 1991). Unlike primary ‘green crimes’, which are usually associated with our growth-oriented system and its anthropocentric, ‘business-as-usual’ tactics, green criminologists interested in secondary ‘green crimes’ proffer a richer exploration of the etiology of governmental crime (Barak 2003; Chambliss 1989; Douglas and Johnson 1977; Geis and Meier 1977; Kauzlarich and Kramer 1993; Sharkansky 1995).

Consider, for instance, state violence against oppositional groups. Examples abound in David Day’s *The Eco-Wars* (1991), a thoughtful analysis of state-sponsored, terrorist-type strategies of violence and intimidation against environmental activists. To illuminate his point, Day highlights the violent, terrorist activities of the French secret service during the 1985 sinking of the Greenpeace flagship *Rainbow Warrior* in Auckland harbor, New Zealand. Sanctioned by the French government, the act targeted protesters against French nuclear testing in the Pacific. The conceptualization of secondary ‘green crimes’ has been further refined by scholars such as Peluso (1983), Brack et al. (2002), Smith et al. (2003), Ginting (2005), Colchester et al. (2006) and



Green et al. (2007)- to name only a few. The common leitmotif in these works is the deadly symbiosis between the state and corporations- what is referred to as state-corporate crime (Kramer 1992).

Another crucial component of secondary 'green crimes', the authors submit, is social exclusion and how such exclusion results in social costs in the form of inequalities. Citing environmental racism as a glaring example of secondary and symbiotic 'green crimes', the authors add a transnational element to this phenomenon, exploring the international trade in dumping. Concerted attempts on the part of industries to evade the flurry of anti-dumping and pollution laws in the United States, for instance, has resulted in the trans-boundary movement of hazardous waste designated unsuitable for landfill burial. Kristin Shrader-Frechette (1991) identifies this as an 'isolationist strategy' whereby the regulations and restraints that corporations exercise in their country are not administered when interacting with developing nations, perpetuating the 'regionalization' of waste through forms of segregation and racism. Contributing to the burgeoning literature of waste removal and the associated externalizing costs, David Pellow (2007) outlines some of the reasons why the illegal transfer of waste to non-metropole countries is so prominent in the global economy. The acceleration of waste production, in conjunction with the enforcement of stringent environmental laws, serves as an incentive for corporate polluters to establish disposal sites beyond national borders. Developing nations in dire need of fiscal relief view the importation of hazardous waste as a form of garbage imperialism, linked to a racist and classist cultural ideology which condones toxic dumping on Southern communities.

Referring back to Situ and Emmons (2000), for a brief moment, symbiotic ‘green crimes’ can be captured in their thoughtful contribution to the cartography of governmental and state crime. While the former encompasses the flagrant violation of environmental laws or principles, in conjunction with the utter failure to enforce environmental legislation, the latter includes various criminal actions which are committed as an expression of official, state policy (Situ and Emmons 2000). The authors proceed by expanding the definition of governmental crimes against the environment by investigating what they refer to as *crimes of commission* and *crimes of omission*. The former entails the military’s production of hazardous waste within the arms industry (Goewey 1987); the release of pesticides and herbicides into the wilderness by state agricultural activities (Breen 1985); environmental damage during wartime military operations (Zilinskas 1995); the illegal disposal of medical wastes by hospitals (Breen 1985); and mass deforestation of national forests due to neo-liberal policies of liberalization (DeBonnis 1991). The latter encompasses the state’s failure to act when there is an obligation to do so. If the state’s inability to act is willful and wanton, the government has failed to uphold certain expectations, failing to meet its statutory and constitutional obligations (Situ and Emmons 2000). Although the term *crimes of omission* does not necessarily include environmental devastation, it has been used by green criminologists to explain a country’s shoddy environmental protection.

#### *Conservation Criminology and Eco-Crime*

Attempts to classify eco-crimes necessitate mutually exclusive crime categories which address conservation crime and criminality. In their 2006 article, Herbig and Joubert boldly assert that traditional criminological research has stymied the development

of a unique criminology dedicated to conservation issues and two tremendously important components of the planet's ecology: the biotic and abiotic community. Green criminology, the authors lament, is riddled with vague and ambiguous terms, militating against proper classification and conceptualization of environmental crimes. Championing conservation criminology, they highlight the nexus between humans and biotic/abiotic natural resources, posing the following definition of conservation crime: intentional or negligent human interference with earth's natural resources, which results in irreversible perturbation and trauma (Herbig and Joubert 2006). Examples of conservation crime, therefore, include exploitation of finite resources. With respect to the biotic community, crimes against fauna and flora in the form of bioprospecting and biopiracy constitute transgressions against biotic elements. The abiotic components of the planet are also subjected to 'contamination crimes'. The marine, aquatic, terrestrial and atmospheric dimensions of the earth's ecology are disrupted through anthropogenic practices. For conservation criminologists, it is not the effect of the crime that should be used as a means of classifying these crimes; rather, it is the intrinsic theme of such criminality upon which criminologists should focus: conservation. Herbig and Joubert (2006: 94) comment, "Armed robbery, assault, murder and so forth, are to violent crime what herpetological (reptile) crime, abalone poaching, smuggling, intentional pollution, etcetera, is to conservation crime".

While the promotion of a research agenda dedicated to exploring conservation-related deviance is a laudable attempt to incite exciting conceptual shifts within academic circles, 'conservation criminology', for whatever reason, has not gained currency among researchers of environmental crime. Instead, the notion of 'conservation crime' has been

subsumed under the term eco-crime. The centrality of Herbig and Joubert's work is their explanation of the importance of crime classification; they contend that it is through a succinct classification of crimes against the environment that environmental law enforcement agencies will be equipped with the knowledge to detect, combat and prevent eco-crimes.

### *Discourses of Harm and Eco-Crime*

The foregoing overview of crimes against the environment reveals green criminology's wide and programmatic objectives as a paradigm. Contributions from authors such as Bierne and South (2007) further the objectives of the discipline. For these authors, investigations of environmental crimes require, at an abstract level, analyses of harms against humanity; harms against the environment; and harms against non-human animals. Viewing green criminology as an extension of critical, democratic and left-oriented perspectives on crime and social harm, the term *harm* encompasses the exploitation of ecological systems; corporate disregard for activities responsible for the destruction of human and non-human animal environs; the adverse effects of military actions during wartime; challenges to international treaties and to acts of biopiracy; the monopolization of natural resources; and, finally, human domination of non-human animals (Bierne and South 2007). Unlike their predecessors, Bierne and South explore the centrality of *harm*, arguing that green criminology should be a harm-based discourse that explores violations of environmental ethics, morality and animal rights. Clearly, the centrality of *harm* in their categorization of eco-crimes is based upon the adoption of the social legalist perspective, documenting the state's unwillingness to address the proliferation of harm and social inequalities. Bierne and South's approach to

investigating eco-crimes also reveals how *harm* intersects with racism, classism, the North/South divide and the hydra of capitalist, growth-oriented economies.

As editors of their highly acclaimed book *Issues in Green Criminology: confronting harms against environments, humanity and other animals*, the authors promote the re-configuration of harm by re-examining human-animal relationships through the formulation of a non-speciesist criminology (Cazaux 2007 and Regan 2007); women's vulnerability to the impacts of climate disruption and male violence (Wachholz 2007); the activity of regulatory regimes dedicated to monitoring and administering radioactive waste (Walters 2007); the piracy of biodiversity and traditional ecological knowledge from non-western cultures (South 2007); and the proliferation of agrichemicals and the globalization of food production (Croall 2009). Thus, Beirne and South's approach to classifying eco-crimes invokes diverse analytical tools, necessitating an epistemology which is both empirically rich and politically active.

#### *Biological/Ecological Integrity and Eco-crime*

In the spirit of expanding the nomenclature of crimes against the environment, in conjunction with various forms of *harm*, Laura Westra (2008) proffers a thoughtful articulation of eco-crimes in her book entitled *Environmental Justice & The Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Drawing upon her previous research, she classifies eco-crimes as acts which are committed by states and corporations. Specifically, an eco-crime is committed in the pursuit of specific goals such as economic advantage. What is more, this act is perceived as unprovoked aggression which produces negative impacts on the environment and human health, raising burning questions regarding global security and justice (Westra 2004). Attacks on human beings, then, result from corporations pursuing

Free Trade under the tutelage of neo-liberalism. For Westra, eco-crimes must be interpreted as acts of violence and human rights violations during which people are deprived basic liberties and freedoms. Sketching the tenets of the ‘cultural integrity model’ and the ‘self-determination model’ (Anaya 2004; Metcalf 2004), Westra refines the categories of indigenous rights, asserting that scant attention has been paid to another model which, contests Westra, is foundational to the rights of First Nations: ‘the biological/ecological integrity model’. This model addresses the right to life, health and normal functions. Thus, ‘cultural integrity’ and ‘self-determination’, equally important in safeguarding indigenous peoples’ inalienable rights, will thrive only if the ‘biological integrity’ of these communities is protected. Situating notions of *harm* in the context of corporate globalization, Westra contends that the eco-footprint of Western developed countries poses a threat to the self-determination of indigenous populations, constituting a ‘second conquest’. The ‘global triad of modernity’ practices eco-violence insofar as indigenous communities are denuded of their rights to health and normal intellectual and physical development. This, undeniably, occurs through the expropriation of land.

With particular emphasis placed on corporate/industrial activities, Westra argues that these ‘eco-footprint crimes’ demand analytic and practical attention because of the grave human rights violations which occur when corporate power and the logic of economics take precedence over life. The resulting injuries from extractive operations- the destruction of a group’s cultural identity via ethnocide and cultural genocide, for example- can no longer be seen as an unexpected externality. A shift from viewing such acts as environmental regulatory breaches to examples of eco-crimes is needed in order to guarantee conditions necessary for health and the ‘preconditions of agency’. This is

precisely why Westra does not hesitate to designate the appropriation of resources, resulting in biotic impoverishment, and the effects of development on indigenous land as genocide. It is these activities, she submits, which undermine communities' rights to biological and ecological integrity (Westra 2008). Clearly, Westra's classification of eco-crimes invokes a social legalist perspective, encompassing harmful acts which infringe on the biological and ecological integrity of indigenous land, but also the lack of protection afforded to indigenous communities ensconced in capitalist globalization. The problem, the author laments, is that eco-crimes are not viewed as crimes in international law. As such, a revision of environmental crime at the conceptual level is needed- one which ensures that these *harms* are clearly understood, codified and tried so that state and corporate actors are susceptible to criminal prosecution.

Continuing the tradition of politicizing social and environmental harm, Rob White (2008) lucidly argues that boundaries of mainstream criminology must be enhanced to account for the interconnectedness of social and environmental issues. Thus, multidisciplinary approaches are needed for researching poverty, the rights of indigenous peoples, the inexorable exploitation of non-human animals, state-corporate crime, etc. Disciplines such as zoology, geography, botany, philosophy and sociology, then, lend much insight to the formulation of an environmental criminology which influences environmental regulation; environmental biosecurity; and environmental law enforcement. Green criminology's *raison d'être*, according to White, is to promote a re-conceptualization of *harm*. This can be achieved by employing four types of perspectives: focal, geographical, locational and temporal considerations (White 2005). Focal considerations entail the identification of victims of harm. Note, the term 'victim'

designates human-beings, the biosphere and non-human animals, raising complex problems regarding ‘who’ or ‘what’ constitutes an environmental victim. Geographical considerations focus upon the various geographical levels at which environmental harm occurs. While some issues are of an international scale, other harms may be found at national, regional and local scales, necessitating co-operation among law enforcement regimes at these different levels of governance.

Locational considerations, White explains, are distinguished from ‘geography’ in that what is being investigated are environmental harms situated in various sites- namely, ‘natural’ and ‘built’ environments. While the former covers components such as wilderness, deserts, oceans, etc., the latter places great emphasis upon sites of human habitation and residency- commuter suburbs and other rural and urban environs, for instance. Drawing upon previous attempts to identify and categorize environmental harm (Crook and Pakulski 1995; Pakulski and Tranter 2004 and Curson and Clark 2004), White proffers an ‘analytical mapping of environmental harm’. For example, ‘brown issues’ cover the myriad harms confined to urban life and pollution. These include air pollution, pollution of beaches, the deployment of pesticides, ‘midnight dumping’ and ‘fly-tipping’. ‘Green issues’ cover the harms inflicted on wilderness areas: acid rain, habitat destruction, decline in wildlife, biopiracy, and threats to biosecurity. Finally, ‘white issues’ explore the harms within science laboratories- chief among them are the production of genetically modified organisms, vivisection, food irradiation and the cloning of human tissue. White champions such an approach to categorizing environmental harm because it illuminates the link between environmental action, in the



form of resistance and protest among members of civil society, and the importance of particular sites in which crimes against the environment occur (White 2005).

Temporal considerations, finally, analyze the short-term environmental effects of the release of toxins into the atmosphere, in conjunction with explorations of the long-term effects of the accumulation of greenhouse gases, enriching epidemiological studies. The environmental impacts of global warming, on the other hand, measure the modifications of ecosystems, documenting rising sea levels, the increase in patterns of precipitation and floods and droughts in Sub-Saharan Africa- to name only a few. Finally, social impacts cover the manner in which humans are affected by environmental harm. Immediate impacts include respiratory problems linked to exposure to asbestos and long-term impacts feature the development of cancer after many years of exposure to toxins found in the workplace setting. White also employs temporal considerations when investigating environmental racism, uncovering how marginalized communities end up living in close proximity to petrochemical plants, toxic waste facilities and incinerators. Do these companies decide to disproportionately distribute environmental hazards in certain communities; or do they establish their factories in areas with depressed housing values which, in turn, attract these communities? For White, temporal considerations hold the potential to answering such inquiries. Clearly, those interested in researching crimes against the environment will face a host of challenges insofar as detection, regulation and prosecution. Analytical mapping of eco-crimes, according to White, places green criminologists on the right trajectory, drawing upon multiple sources of information. It is through focal, geographic, locational and temporal perspectives that criminologists can

work in tandem with the community, creating taxonomies of environmental crime, fostering an ‘expertise from below’ which enhances deliberative democracy (White 2008).

### *Eco-Global Criminology and Eco-Crime*

White’s analytic foundation is further refined through his development of a theoretically informed explanation of transnational environmental harm. White (2011) intimates that some eco-crimes are transnational in scope, involving cross-border transference and global dimensions. His previous focus on *harm* is revisited, as he provides empirically based accounts of transnational harms such as affronts to humans, non-human animals and the abiotic community. Like previous classifications of eco-crimes, White imputes transnational environmental crimes to the state, along with corporations and other powerful actors who wield enough power to ensure that their activities evade criminalization. Such activities can be understood by White’s use of four thematic groupings.

The first category of crimes is ‘*general crimes related to transformations of nature*’, of which resource depletion, disposal of waste, the corporate colonization of nature and irreversible species decline comprise. The following, then, are examples of this grouping: the extraction of non-renewable resources, the incessant overharvesting of renewable resources; the burning of fossil fuels; the chemicalization of agriculture; the proliferation of genetically modified food, which is linked to the simplification of the production of crops; the destruction of wildlife habitats; and the hyper-exploitation of flora and fauna (White 2011).

‘*Specific crimes related to disposal of waste*’ serves as White’s second grouping of eco-crimes. The waste management industry in a globalized world is viewed as highly

criminogenic, as the international trade of and transportation of waste has brought to the fore the role criminal syndicates play in the distribution of environmental hazards (Block 2002) and what is referred to as ‘waste colonialism’ (Holifield et al. 2010). Exporting waste to developing countries is a lucrative enterprise because this service features an inelastic price; in other words, as the price to transfer waste to the developing world increases, so too does the demand (Van Daele et al. 2008).

The third category, ‘*global crimes related to worldwide processes*’, is linked to a rise in social conflicts. These conflicts are concomitant with depleted resources, the impact of climate change, and the cross-border transference of environmental harms. White presents the example of the global circulation of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and how such contaminants have affected Inuit populations in the eastern Canadian Arctic. The use of POPs in industrial societies carries global dimensions, as these contaminants often travel as far as the Arctic via wind, air and bodies of water.

The final grouping of eco-crimes proffered by White is ‘*specific crimes related to particular geographical regions*’. The transfer of waste to developing nations is clearly documented by a cadre of social scientists, but White exhorts researchers to examine such crimes in their immediate geographical context, understanding the ‘criminal specificity’ of certain acts. The exportation of ‘e’-waste to South East Asia and Africa, while similar to the export of agricultural hazards to Latin America, does feature distinctive patterns of illegal behavior. Similarly, illegal fishing of abalone and lobster in Australia and Canada, respectively, encompasses grounds for comparison but also features slight variation in motives, techniques, local cultures and scale of operation (Tailby and Grant 2002). The crux of White’s argument is that eco-crimes contain distinct local and regional variations

with respect to how these environmental harms unfold. White invokes his ‘analytic mapping’ technique as a means of identifying these variations, calling upon criminologists to place eco-criminality in its proper context.

White’s laudable attempt to establish a succinct classification of transnational environmental crime brings to the forefront what he refers to as eco-global criminology (White 2011). What distinguishes this paradigm from previous green criminological inquiry is its emphasis on the global considerations of ecological harms- pollution, climate change and diminished biodiversity, for instance. The sources of such harms are complex and multifarious, necessitating an exploration of the system-level structures and pressures responsible for the exploitation of humans, non-human animals and natural resources (White 2011). What is more, eco-global criminology invokes ‘southern theory’ (Connell 2007) to question the ontological specifications of transnational environmental crime, asking whose perspectives and ideas shape our understanding of environmental harm and, most importantly, whose voices are marginalized in this field? Previous green criminological projects are imbued with a hegemonic tradition which bolsters the perspectives of the Western world (Connell 2007). For White, eco-global criminology must be divorced from parochialism and elitism, presenting categorizations and classifications of eco-crimes which are global in scale, fostering a much needed dialogue between the ‘North’ and ‘South’.

#### *Genetically Modified Food and Eco-Crime*

The final classification of eco-crimes worthy of mention and analysis comes from Reece Walters’ (2011) publication on genetically modified (GM) food. Eco-crime, according to the author, is a breach of law; it is also an act of environmental harm

perpetrated by the state and powerful corporations. Walters situates eco-crime in discourses of power, harm and political economy, taking heed of the manner in which eco-crimes are trivialized as ‘scares’ or ‘scandals’, depoliticizing corporate and state illegalities. Quite similar to White’s use of transnational environmental crime in the field of eco-global criminology, Walters argues that the term eco-crime encompasses existing illegalities and violations of municipal, national and international laws. Employing frameworks of social justice and exclusion, Walters reveals that the term eco-crime is heavily shaped by policy elites and powerful sectional interests, raising questions pertaining to the politics of knowledge and *soi-disant* expertise in the construction of environmental harm.

The social construction of crime is well documented by green criminologists, but it is Walters’ rigorous analysis of the biotech industry’s powerful influence over politicians in the United States which garners momentum in academic circles. His charges of scientific hegemony in the GM debate reveal that it is the vested interests of corporate elites which regulate scientific enquiry, presenting GMOs as a panacea to world hunger. Furthermore, Walters’ emphasis on discourse as a form of power accounts for the ‘corporate takeover of the media’ and the systematic suppression of independent research revealing the allergenicity and toxicity of certain GM food. Finally, the author’s use of Foucauldian concepts such as ‘eventalization’ and biopower reveal how an analysis of eco-crime can explain environmental harm. In the context of food crime, biopower is employed as a means of exploring how the subjugation of populations is achieved not through coercive measures, but through regulation via ‘the protection of life’. Walters’ (2011: 109) observations are telling:

“the promulgation and promotion of GM food as a ‘savior’ to world food shortages, as a benefit to human health provides a ‘technology of power’ through which governing bodies can effectively introduce carte blanche measures. Here, the state and proponents of biotechnology are ‘saving lives’; as a result, policies and practices become justifiable within a politics and ethics of human preservation and well-being”.

For Walters, then, the sick and starving nations of the world fall within the biopolitical imagination of the state and the political machinations of biotech corporations who wish to extend biopower across the planet. Thus, this definition of eco-crimes explores the role of discourse, power and neo-liberal ideology in the sphere of food crime, inciting new approaches to understanding environmental crime.

### **It’s Not Easy Being Green**

The preceding synthesis of green criminology scholarship is an attempt to chart the evolution of the term eco-crime, taking heed of the laudable efforts to establish systems of categorization and classification during the past twenty-five years. It bears emphasizing that this list of authors, and their contributions to the field of green criminology, could have been amplified but, for the sake of brevity and pragmatics, has been limited to some of the key green criminological texts which have sought to define the term eco-crime. Nevertheless, there are noteworthy limitations of these definitions. It is appropriate, at this juncture, to reflect on some of the criticisms levelled against green criminology.

Mark Halsey's (2004) acerbic critique of the field serves as a foundation upon which to mount an attack against the salient environmental perspectives occupying the pages of green criminology texts. For instance, perspectives such as *liberal ecology* (Barbier 1989; Pearce et al. 1989; Pearce 1998), *eco-marxism* (Bahro 1984; Castillina 1985; Dunkley 1992; Pepper 1993), *eco-feminism* (Plumwood 1986; Mies and Shiva 1993), *deep ecology* (Naess 1973; Tobias 1985) and *social ecology* (Bookchin 1986; Clark 1990; Merchant 1992) engender highly problematic and questionable conceptualizations of nature, society and the determinants of environmental crime. It would appear, then, that green criminology does not possess the analytical tools to overcome modernist interpretations of environmental harm. A criminology dedicated to investigating crimes against the environment, it is submitted, must cease the utilization of positivism and binary modes of thought which promote the tendency of viewing the world in polar opposites (Halsey 2004). Perhaps the most insightful criticism levelled against green criminology is Halsey's contention that theorizations of environmental harm must move beyond dialectical models of society and conflict resolution, fostering a more nuanced explanatory model of human/environmental interaction. In order to approach this alternative terrain of thought, Halsey invokes Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's (1980) notion of the *plane of consistency*- that is, a conceptual space prior to the production of words and things, a place of 'pure potentials'. It is through the plane of consistency, then, that scholars can rigorously assess the effects of naming, dividing and dichotomizing the cosmos, challenging planes of organization and substance- both of which sustain the highly problematic, albeit dominant, society-economy-culture-nature nexus.

Green criminology, then, can be enhanced by abandoning the exclusive focus on the dichotomy between “victim” and “victimizer”, offering a more nuanced understanding of the genesis and dynamics of eco-crimes. We can, I believe, begin with analyses of cognitive injustice. While the aforementioned criminologists focus upon social and environmental injustice, I believe there to be an unexplored terrain in the field of green criminology. My contribution, therefore, is an attempt to explore how cognitive injustice is linked to social and environmental injustice. This can be achieved through the use of theoretical frameworks and methodologies such as Santos’ (2006) abyssal thinking and Fairclough’s (1995) CDA, respectively. Like criminologists before me who have advanced perspectives which abandon modernist and positivist principles in favor of qualitatively-based methodologies, my approach to investigating eco-crimes are constitutive in nature. Drawing upon critical social theories such as symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, social constructionism, structural Marxism and semiotics, I contend that crime cannot be divorced from its structural and cultural context. The reluctance to explore the abyssal dimensions of eco-crimes prevents critical, discursive analyses surrounding instances of eco-criminality. Green criminologists, then, fail to view human beings as actively creating their worlds discursively. Constitutive criminology, for instance, views crime as having corporeal effects but does not necessarily attribute criminality to abstract notions of ‘human nature’ or the oft-cited ‘universal subject’; such concepts connote a linearity of cause and effect (Halsey 2004). Crimes, therefore, must be interpreted as expressions of power and the social, economic, cultural and political exclusion of others. Postmodern methodologies are required to analyze criminality, necessitating definitions of harm which are



historically contingent and discursive. Such an approach, it is submitted, enables social scientists to document how relations of power constitute relations of harm (Henry and Milovanovic 1996).

Let me illustrate by way of example. One of constitutive criminology's greatest strengths is its elucidation of language and the role it plays in producing harm. As mentioned before, discourses are perceived to be violent events insofar as language is deployed by the powerful as a means of identifying and exaggerating perceived *differences* among human beings. It is through the construction of categories that 'order' is brought to a seemingly chaotic world, forcing the powerful to adopt these social constructions as reality (Henry and Milovanovic 1996). By virtue of investing energy in their discursively organized categories of 'order', human subjects serve as co-producers of their own and others' agency. As co-producers of this socially constructed 'order', human subjects are ultimately responsible for the harm inflicted upon each other via the co-production of harmful relations. The discursive medium used to exercise harm is situated within society's structure and culture, leading constitutive criminologists to investigate the psycho-socio-cultural matrix through which human subjects inflict harm on others (Barak 2003). Concomitantly, constitutive criminologists examine how structures of power facilitate the perpetuation of harmful relations via discursive constructions of '*difference*'.

The ontological specifications of crime change under this gaze; crime is now viewed as an expression of domination, where human subjects invest energy in harm-producing relations of power, denying others from becoming fully social beings. Henry and Milovanovic (1996), in discussing the metaphysics of human existence, observe:

“crime is defined as the power to deny others the ability to make a difference” (Henry and Milovanovic 1996: 116). The crux of this position is that ‘criminality’ is not necessarily a function of individual pathology, but a direct result of interminable constructions of social identities via discursive practices. Recognizing that harm is a recurrent discursive process and that the interrelationships between social structures, human agents and socio-cultural contexts serve as the determinants of crime, a process of *replacement discourse* is required (Henry and Milovanovic 1996). *Replacement discourse* encompasses the dual process of dismantling hegemonic structures of meaning, whilst replacing these with new conceptions, words and phrases which serve as alternative meanings, subverting the prevailing status quo. Critical and oppositional in nature, *replacement discourse* offers an alternative vision of the world (Henry and Milovanovic 1996).

Smart (1990) adopts the constitutive approach when theorizing the various mediums through which the subversion of dominant discourses occurs. Deconstruction and reconstruction of dominant discourses encompasses the invocation of subjugated knowledges- most of which project different narratives and specificities, challenging the epistemological and ontological specifications of truth and its attendant power effects. What is more, *replacement discourse* aims to enact a ‘multiplicity of resistances’ to the ubiquity of power, promoting discursive diversity. Thus, the seemingly unofficial, informal, denigrated and ignored knowledges which have been sequestered to the periphery are deployed as mechanisms of ‘liberation’, transforming economies of harm and social control through a transpraxis which is both deconstructive and reconstructive (Smart 1990). *Replacement discourse* is quite similar to Foucault’s concept of *resistance* and Santos’ *post-abysal thinking*, inviting an interdisciplinary, and dynamic,

understanding of how ideological hegemony is contested and subverted.

In the previous chapters, I present an exposition of abyssal thinking, highlighting the system and subsystem of visible and invisible distinctions of which abyssal thought is comprised. It is the invisible distinctions which warrant attention because these serve as the foundation for the visible distinctions and, most importantly, facilitate the perpetuation of global cognitive injustice. The humanity of those consigned to “the other side of the line” is denied and interpreted as a sub-humanity (Santos 2006) – that is, in complete contradistinction to those who are situated on “this side of the line”. It is this radicalization of invisible distinctions which necessitates empirical investigation to enrich an eco-crimes analysis of cognitive injustice. Outlining the epistemological operations of the World Social Forum, Santos highlights what is referred to as *the sociology of absences* and *the sociology of emergences* (Santos 2006). As mentioned briefly in a previous section, *the sociology of absences* is of interest to me, as it exemplifies how abyssal ideology leads to the perpetuation of cognitive injustice. *The sociology of absences*, it is intimated, reveals that what does not exist is the result of powerful agents producing a state of non-existence; in other words, alternatives to what exists are rendered invisible and non-credible. This is achieved through five logics or modes of the production of non-existence: *the monoculture of knowledge and the rigour of knowledge; the monoculture of linear time; the naturalization of difference; the monoculture of the universal and of the global; and the monoculture of the criteria of capitalist productivity and efficiency* (Santos 2006). Each of these logics support hegemonic globalization, but it is *the naturalization of difference* which will be exclusively focused on in this dissertation, as I believe it holds much analytic promise

with respect to understanding the abyssal dimensions of eco-crimes.

A logic of social classification, *the naturalization of difference* creates classifications and categories of populations, naturalizing social hierarchies. Santos argues that such ordering of the social world, and its inhabitants, results in relations of domination. Those situated at the top of this hierarchy classify themselves as superior and actively produce a state of non-existence by designating those on the bottom of the hierarchy as inferior. Santos (2006: 17) comments: “the inferior, because insuperably inferior, cannot be a credible alternative to the superior”. This, undoubtedly, is the reason why the author writes, “there is no global social justice without global cognitive justice” (Santos 2006:14).

I would like to extend Santos’ pithy statement by adding that there can be no global social *and environmental* justice without global cognitive justice. Abyssal ideology sustains *the naturalization of difference*, perpetuating the cognitive injustice of viewing populations as “inferior”, “sub-human”, “savage”, “backwards”, “unsustainable”- in other words, situated on the “other side of the line”. A focus on the abyssal dimensions of eco-crimes enables green criminologists to understand how, and why, social inequality persists and, most importantly, how such abyssal thinking can be resisted and subverted by those on “the other side of the line”. Think of the aforementioned works by Westra (2004; 2008), White (2011) and Walters (2011). Each authors’ categorizations of eco-crime serve as thoughtful contributions to the field of green criminology, but if the discipline aims to understand the dynamics between ‘green crimes’ and social inequality, and how social change is effected, a focus on the abyssal dimensions of eco-crimes is necessary. How might each of those authors’ works be

enriched by an emphasis on abyssal ideology and the cognitive injustice of the denial of the victims' humanity through *the naturalization of difference*? Whether it is the victims in Westra's analysis of the infringement of rights to biological and ecological integrity, the victims in White's investigation of transnational environmental crime, or even the victims in Walters' exploration of the political economy of GMOs, it is the *naturalization of difference* which necessitates attention from green criminologists. The cognitive injustice of positioning these peoples on "the other side of the line" through an abyssal ideology justifies and legitimizes the denial of their humanity, serving as an apotheosis of how environmental crimes parallel social inequality.

### **Paradigmatic Shift and the Re-configuration of Eco-Crime**

I have stated in the foregoing section that Santos' remarks regarding global justice can be slightly modified: there can be no social *and environmental* justice without global cognitive justice. My re-configuration of the term eco-crime entails an exploration of the abyssal dimensions of these crimes. A comparative and critical analysis of the discursive representations of Guyana's indigenous population is instructive here, for it is abyssal ideology which justifies the asymmetric relations between various actors and the indigenous peoples of Guyana. From the dawn of colonialism to recent conservation initiatives, abyssal ideology has consigned the Amerindians to a position of subordination via cultural distinctions: human/sub-human, civilized/uncivilized, Christian/heathen, dominant/subordinate, etc. In the case study presented in this dissertation, the system of such distinctions is a direct result of cognitive injustice, rendering the indigenous peoples of Guyana non-existent- that is, radically excluded from "this side of the line". Finally,

the *naturalization of difference* is manifested through such abyssal lines and the impossibility of the co-presence between these lines.

How, then, does a critical and comparative analysis of the discursive representation of Guyana's indigenous peoples fit into an eco-crimes framework? I have outlined some of the objectives of green criminology in the preceding section of this chapter. It behooves practitioners in the field to approach the environment in a more holistic manner, linking environmental crime to social inequality and exploring how social movements effect real change across the globe. If there can be "no global social justice without global cognitive justice" (Santos 2006:14), I suggest there can be no *environmental* justice if the cognitive injustice of denying the Amerindians the right to make a difference in their social world continues. Social and cognitive structures have contributed to the marginalization of the Amerindians through the utilization of certain discursive strategies. What is of burning interest in this dissertation, specifically, is how abyssal ideology, and its invisible distinctions, is captured in past and contemporary discourses.

History professor Jerry Muller (2008) suggests that how human beings interpret the world is highly dependent on the social categories that are available to us. 18<sup>th</sup> century ideas of the "Other", awaiting enlightenment through European principles of human reason, have been captured in the discourses from the earliest years of Dutch occupation and handed down to subsequent regimes. Nowhere is this pattern of domination via abyssal thinking more eloquently addressed than in Edward Said's work *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), in which he states that imperialism and colonialism are "impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain

territories and people require and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination” (Said 1993: 9). He proceeds to explore the vocabulary used by the colonists to describe the populations being dominated: “inferior”, “subject race”, “subordinate peoples”, so on and so forth. This serves as a reminder that power and various forms of communication intersect, producing discursive constructions which serve the interests of a European coloniality of power (Quijano 2000). But if power- in the Foucauldian sense- is diffuse and in constant flux and negotiation, there is space for resistance (Foucault 1980).

Language, power and knowledge intersect in the production, consumption and legitimation of certain discourses and it stands to reason that these discourses can serve both as a mechanism of power and resistance, featuring the capacity to “evade, subvert or contest strategies of power” (Gaventa 2003: 3). It is these capacities for the evasion, subversion and contestation of power that I also seek to discover, exploring how the Amerindians sought to resist the cognitive injustice of being denied their humanity through the perpetuation of abyssal ideology- what the constitutive criminologists refer to as *replacement discourse*. Colonial and legal discourses projected taken-for-granted assumptions upon the Amerindians, establishing a body of knowledge which was used by those in power to exercise domination over these peoples. Dominant discourses from the colonial era suppressed, and erased, the quotidian, micro-political acts of resistance of the Amerindians.

Thus, the dialectics of relations of power between the colonizer and colonized must, perforce, be analyzed in order to capture the dynamic relationship between European forces and the Amerindians. Such an analysis is extremely important because it

challenges the linear, causal, mechanistic and deterministic stance that legal discourses translated into acts of conquest, subordination and appropriation. What is more, it is important to remember that the values inherent in discourses become “socially operative, as parts of institutional and societal processes of struggle” (Fairclough 1989: 117). It is this struggle- the struggle of Amerindians resisting the imposition of abyssal ideology- which is also of paramount importance in this project.



## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodological Statement**

In the previous chapter, I explored the various ways in which the term eco-crimes has been utilized by green criminologists, presenting a re-configuration of the concept and arguments why, *sui generis*, the abyssal dimensions of eco-crimes is an important object of study. The discursive representation of Guyana's indigenous peoples, the Amerindians, features abyssal, ideological forces which can be traced back to the early years of colonization. A legacy of abyssal thinking, then, can be identified if social scientists invoke the proper methodological and theoretical tools. The objective of this chapter is as follows: first, I present a synthesis of academic areas and theoretical frameworks which can be merged and cross-fertilized in order to advance green criminology's investigation of cognitive injustice; this is followed by a brief overview of discourse analysis, highlighting its strengths as a methodological tool for researchers; I proceed by presenting a brief exploration of recent applications of frame analysis in the social sciences; finally, I sketch a convincing argument in favor of the use of critical discourse analysis (CDA) in criminology, presenting my methodological procedures for this dissertation.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework utilized in this study draws heavily from: Foucauldian notions of power (1980); Santosian abyssal lines (2006); and Faircloughian discourse analysis (1995). Recall, the previous chapter invites a comparative and critical analysis of the discursive representations of Guyana's indigenous population. The country serves as a very interesting case study because through various epochs, the Amerindians have been

subject to discursive power which aims to (re)construct their identities, enabling geopolitical forces to exercise domination over them and their lands. During the early stages of colonization, for example, Dutch colonists relied on the Amerindians for trade and the protection of Dutch settlements from other European nations. In fact, in 1621, the Dutch West India Company issued a charter which outlined the importance of creating, and maintaining, alliances with the natives (Ramsahoye 1966). This relationship of expediency between the Dutch and Amerindians necessitated the production, dissemination and circulation of myriad institutional and unofficial discourses regarding the original inhabitants of the country. While the majority of the texts produced during this epoch emphasized the cultivation of comity and friendly relations with the indigenous tribes, there are glaring instances of abyssal thinking- specifically, the invisible distinctions between the colonized and the colonizer. The Dutch discursively (re)constructed the identities of the local peoples as belonging to “the other side of the line”. This delineation distinguished the civilized colonizers from the primitive, sub-human and backwards Amerindians, serving as the inception of an abyssal ideology that, even today, continues to legitimize the marginalization of the county’s indigenous population.

Discourse, in the Foucauldian sense, can be interpreted as a ‘technology of government’ – that is, a collection of strategies and techniques utilized by authorities to exercise a form of control over the activities of individuals and groups (Rose and Miller 1992). Discourses are value-laden and are by no means objective; rather, they are articulated in hegemonic structures, controlling populations through more subtle means. Such means are discursive in nature because texts are comprised of multiple and

conflicting readings which construct social hierarchies, projecting a particular perception of social life (Shuter and Turner 1997). Foucault (1977) highlights this point: power, knowledge and discourse are intricately interwoven insofar as power determines what constitutes knowledge and these bodies of knowledge are transmitted to the population through discourse. Foucault's body of work also illustrates how discourses and discursive practices become conventionalized, becoming taken-for-granted-aspects of social life. In a related vein, power relations shape not only history, knowledge and discourses, but who and what are considered discursive subjects and objects. Power, therefore, is dialectical in nature because it is not seen as exclusively negative. Power, too, subsumes the positive, facilitating cooperation and compliance from the population (Foss and Gill 1987).

Foucault's exposition of discourse and power lends credence to the constitutive criminological tradition whereby words are interpreted as violent events. The violence of language, according to Henry and Milovanovic (1996), provides insight into how the disempowered and marginalized are denied expressive forms for making a difference in their social worlds. Santosian abyssal lines can also be invoked in a similar fashion, leading to more nuanced understandings of the effects of discourse and power- namely, the radical divide between "this side of the line" and "the other side of the line". Such a radical division of social reality accomplishes the creation and perpetuation of an ideology that the co-presence of both sides of the line is impossible. This translates into the production of nonexistence, if you will, for anything situated on the "other side of the line" is rendered invisible. Santos (2006: 14) explains: "whatever is produced as nonexistent is radically excluded because it lies beyond the realm of what the accepted conception of inclusion considers to be its other". Santos continues: "the other side of the

line harbors only incomprehensible, magical or idolatrous practices. The utter strangeness of such practices led to denying the very human nature of the agents of such practices” (Santos 2006: 4). There is, however, one limitation to Santos’ work: while he provides an eloquent exposition of how abyssal thinking operates as a system comprised of visible and invisible distinctions, he does not explain *how* one sets out to uncover the invisible distinctions which serve as the foundation of the visible distinctions. There is a taken-for-granted assumption that the reader can excavate these invisible systems without the proper methodological tools. In this chapter, I argue that CDA can be used to excavate the invisible distinctions in Santos’ intricate system of abyssal thinking.

At this juncture, we must begin to inquire how Foucauldian power and discourse and Santosian abyssal lines can be integrated into an eco-crimes framework. I have stated in the previous chapter that little consideration has been given to the abyssal dimensions of eco-crimes. This, I contend, is because green criminologists have yet to see the potential of utilizing CDA. If, as Foucault (1970) argues, discourse is social practice which includes not just dialogue but activity and systems of behavior, how do discourses about the Amerindians transform into taken-for-granted assumptions and absolute truths? This question will be answered in the following chapters, as I explore how abyssal ideology is transmitted through myriad discourses which shape power relations in Guyana. Specifically, I am interested in how the Amerindians have been constructed as discursive subjects throughout history through various discursive events and, most importantly, how they have resisted the exercise of such power, creating a more dynamic and nuanced dialectics of struggle.

## **Discourse Analysis**

A thorough overview of discourse analysis is beyond the scope of this chapter. In what follows, then, I will sketch a succinct summary of some of the influential research in the discipline. Weiss and Wodak (2003) note that the term ‘discourse’ takes on various meanings by researchers in different academic cultures. For instance, in the German and Central European context, scholars distinguish between ‘text’ and ‘discourse’, drawing upon a rich tradition in text linguistics and rhetoric (Vass 1994; Brunner and Grafen 1994; Wodak 1996). In the English-speaking world, ‘discourse’ is employed to capture the specifications of written and oral texts (Schiffrin 1987). There is also a cadre of researchers who explore the abstract nature of ‘discourse’, viewing ‘texts’ as a concrete realization of abstract forms of knowledge (Lemke 1995). For Foucault (1972:8), discourse is “the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements”. What is more, Foucault views discourse as historically variable ways of identifying knowledge and truth. Power, then, is constituted through discourse, specifying what is and what is not (Wetherell et al. 2001). New fields of inquiry include discourse-historical approaches to discourse analysis, seeking to link sociocognitive theories to ‘texts’, presenting ‘discourse’ as a form of knowledge and memory (van Dijk 1984; 1993; 1998). Such sociocognitive theories dovetail with views that texts and discourse are vital elements in the technologies of social organization. For example, Lemke (2000) asserts that texts play a quintessential role in social structuration. As material-semiotic artifacts, then, texts serve the organization of social systems across timescales.

Carabine's (2001) work also approaches discourse analysis from a Foucauldian framework, tracing power/knowledge networks evident in social policy. The author reveals how groups of related statements 'cohere' in some manner so as to produce meaning and effect in the social world. Through this perspective, discourse is seen as having force. It 'coheres' in the sense that it constructs a representation of a topic or issue, producing the objects of which they speak. Discourse is also constitutive insofar as it constructs a particular representation of an object of analysis, producing intended power outcomes and effects. Regimes of 'truth', in turn, are established which dominate the socio-political landscape and possess the capacity to invalidate and marginalize other epistemological accounts of 'truth' (Carabine 2001). It is the ability of discourses to transform into normative ideas and common-sense notions, therefore, that has captured the attention of discourse analysts, encouraging them to document the material effects of discourse production and use.

As a methodology, discourse analysis explores language in use and the patterns which constitute a 'transmission model of communication' (Wetherell et al. 2001). It is concerned with the process of theory formation in pluri(multi-)disciplinary, transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary settings, stressing the role creativity plays in research (Wodak 1997; van Dijk 1997; Reisigl and Wodak 2001). Knapp and Landweer (1995), Gallego and Hollingsworths (2000) and Weingart and Stehr (2000) speak to the issue of interdisciplinarity within discourse analysis, arguing that traditional hierarchal structures inhibit creative and innovative research. In fact, what is needed, these scholars suggest, is 'nurturing leadership' - that is, project management which promotes respect and cooperation among different scientists. There is, however, an important distinction to

be made between pluri(multi-)disciplinarity, transdisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity. In the former, the disciplines remain independent of one another, leaving existing theories as they are. This mode of analysis approaches a given subject from disparate disciplinary perspectives. Transdisciplinary research, on the other hand, features research across different disciplines revealing a common axiomatic theory and interpenetration of disciplinary research methods. Finally, interdisciplinary inquiry integrates different theoretical frameworks, creating a new holistic approach to conducting research, in contradistinction to pluri(multi-)disciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches which do not modify the individual academic branches (Nowotny 1997). In fact, some researchers have attacked conventional modes of disciplinary research, subjecting this approach to radical critique. Graham (2003), for example, observes that disciplinarity is alienation exemplified, involving the conscious production of ‘otherness’ through formulating specific methods of thinking about the social world. An institutional and historical process of ‘reordering’ intellectual discourses, disciplinarity inevitably involves the valorization of particular modes of understanding the social world, and the simultaneous devaluation of other modes of research (Fairclough 1992; Lemke 1995). Without interdisciplinarity, then, researchers will suffer from a form of intellectual ghettoization, preventing holistic and fruitful investigations of social phenomena from different perspectives. For the purposes of this dissertation, more emphasis will be given to interdisciplinary approaches to research and its endeavors to operate multimethodically.

Interdisciplinarity reminds researchers that systems of communication are not static; rather, they are constantly changing depending on social and cultural contexts. What is more, the use of language can never be perceived and interpreted as transparent

and reflexive because it is constitutive insofar as meaning is socially constructed to cater to sectional interests. Serving as an alternative to positivistic modes of research, discourse analysis is viewed as a postmodern and poststructuralist tool because it does not seek to capture the objective truth of reality, but instead offers partial interpretations of reality based on the premise that the social world is a complex and dynamic unit of analysis and the constellation of factors operating in the social world render attempts to control and predict reality futile (Banister et al. 1994). This dovetails with a constructivist epistemology which views knowledge as not some passive reflection of a phenomenon 'out there' but a projection from 'within' the researcher, the academy or Western culture (Jørgensen 2003). Discourse analysts, then, investigate meaning and significance in the social world, acknowledging that there is no neutral, single universal truth. This is due to the fact that any investigation of a social phenomenon is inevitably imbued with the special interests of the observer. As such, to promote a universal and objective 'truth' is to categorically deny the rich diversity of other viewpoints and epistemological claims of other people (Said 1978). The postmodern and poststructuralist tradition also asserts that no single truth is attainable through conventional research methodologies because reality is neither static nor single, but comprised of multiple truths, raising not only epistemological but ontological issues regarding the nature of the social world. Ergo, knowledge is partial, situated and relative at best.

Claims made by social scientists Denzin and Lincoln (1998) regarding the "double crisis of representation and legitimation" in research bring to the fore very important questions regarding the utility of discourse analysis. While the crisis of representation refers to the fact that researchers cannot present their findings as objective



knowledge of the world, the crisis of legitimation speaks to the glaring absence of well-established procedures for evaluating the knowledge arising from certain research projects (Denzin and Lincoln 1998). There are also interminable debates around the status of language in discourse analysis. For example, some researchers posit that language must be reconceptualized as an object of analysis, while others see it as a resource (Brown and Yule 1983; Johnstone 2002; Renkema 2004; Bhatia 2004; and Gee 2005).

Taylor (2001) highlights four approaches to discourse analysis, providing a rich illustration of the manner in which discourse analysis is utilized across many different fields. The first approach focuses on variation and imperfection of language systems, situating this variation in different social situations and environments. For example, discourse analysts and linguists share an interest in the diverse patterns of language use, documenting elements of discourse: vocabulary, structure, functions, etc. (Maybin 2001). It is also within this approach that analysts will invoke concepts such as ‘genres’ and ‘codes’ in order to present a tenable interrelationship between language and social situations (Hodge and Kress 1998). The second approach brings attention to discursive practice- that is, the activity of language use. This mode of analysis looks at language use as a complex and dynamic process, identifying patterns used by the parties interacting with each other. It bears emphasizing that human subjects are not seen as free agents using language as they see fit, but are inhibited and constrained by the interactive context. Patterns of language use, therefore, are deconstructed as a sequence of contributions in an interaction (Taylor 2001).

The third approach also features patterns in language use, but in contradistinction to the second approach, emphasis is placed on discursive patterns associated with a specific topic or activity- medical jargon or legal jargon, for example. Operating under the presupposition that language is constitutive, new concepts and terms associated with an esoteric domain enable human agents to master this lexicon, enabling the creation of new meanings. Thus, as in the medical and legal practice, language is specifically situated, revealing its constitutive nature (Taylor 2001). Finally, the fourth approach to analyzing discursive power is to detect patterns in texts or spoken words within larger social and cultural contexts. The investigation of language and its utility in macro-scale processes explores the ideological nature of written texts and spoken words, gauging the consequences and social effects of these modes of communication. Analyses of power and resistance, as well as contests and struggles, serve as areas of interest in this approach, revealing that language enables and constrains human agents' expressions and actions (Taylor 2001).

Now that the salient modes of discourse analysis have been sketched, it is appropriate at this juncture to discuss exactly how discourse analysis is conducted. Discourse analysis can either be qualitative or quantitative; for the purposes of this chapter, however, I will be focusing exclusively on a qualitative approach which, by virtue of its open-ended and circular nature, is iterative. Central to this exercise is the formulation of techniques for sorting and categorizing data. Practitioners of discourse analysis refer to this procedure as *coding* (Potter and Wetherell 1987; Fielding 1993; Seale 1999; Silverman 1998; Taylor 2001). *Coding* enables the translation of research data into categories. Once the categories are formulated and the data has been sorted,

analysts embark on a search for prominent patterns in language use. *Coding* also enables researchers to formulate concepts for organizing data such as *interpretative repertoires*, *ideological dilemmas* and *subject positions* (Edley 2001).

The relationship between *interpretative repertoires* and discourse is linked to the concept of ideology insofar as human agents are encultured into particular ways of ordering and understanding reality. While discourse analysts have come to embrace the concept of discourse as mirroring Foucauldian operations of power, explorations of *interpretative repertoires* focus on human agency and the flexibility of language, viewing such patterns of language use as discursive practices (Taylor 2001). *Interpretative repertoires* have gained currency in many disciplines. For example, researchers Potter and Wetherell (1987: 138) define *interpretative repertoires* as “a lexicon of terms and metaphors drawn upon to characterize and evaluate actions and events”. As a pattern of language use, then, *interpretative repertoires* are linguistic resources utilized by agents engaged in social interactions; they are coherent ways of producing discourses about objects and events in one’s social world. Edley (2001) advances a helpful metaphor of *interpretative repertoires* as books on a shelf in a public library, available to all. The crux of the author’s argument is that these books must be shared among community members and that such texts constitute the building blocks for consensus within the community insofar as they provide the basis of social understanding among community members. Implicit in Edley’s (2001) elaboration of his metaphor is the vital role *interpretative repertoires* play in structuring language use. It is contended that when human agents engage in an interaction, they do so influenced by socially entrenched *interpretative repertoires*. Human agents’ discourses, then, become a mere rehearsal or recital of

historical repertoires, which have become naturalized and legitimized over time.

Conversations too, it is intimated, are comprised of a patchwork of quotations from different *interpretative repertoires*.

Another analytic concept employed by discourse analysts is an *ideological dilemma* (Billig et al. 1988). Advanced by McLellan (1986), the concept speaks to the dynamic nature of ideology. A great many practitioners of discourse analysis operate on the assumption that ideologies constitute a coherent set of ideas which become naturalized and legitimated via powerful institutions in society, serving the interests of the elite (Gramsci 1971). *Ideological dilemmas* aim to question and problematize this Marxist notion (Billig et al. 1988). Conceptual distinctions, then, are made between ‘intellectual’ ideologies and ‘lived’ ideologies. The former offers the classical Marxist approach to investigating domination and social control, while the latter refers to the beliefs, values and practices of a group of people- in other words, their ‘way of life’ (Williams 1965). Resembling what social theorists refer to as culture, ‘lived’ ideologies are often inconsistent, fragmented and contradictory- hence their dilemmatic nature. Edley (2001: 203) comments: “instead, we see that it contains many contrary or competing arguments. For example, it tells us that we must ‘look before we leap’ whilst at the same time warning us that ‘he who hesitates is lost’; it informs us that ‘many hands make light work’ but also that ‘too many cooks spoil the broth’”. While some discourse analysts claim that ‘lived’ ideologies feature too many inconsistencies in order to identify patterns in language use, others have embraced the indeterminacy of ‘lived’ ideologies, viewing them as rich and flexible resources for social interaction (Edley 2001). The overlap between *ideological dilemmas* and *interpretative repertoires* is intentional: both

serve as language resources, providing a tenable foundation for social interaction. If *interpretative repertoires* are interpreted as the linguistic building blocks of a culture's 'lived' ideologies- their common sense, if you will- then *ideological dilemmas* reveal that there is a multitude of *interpretative repertoires* for the 'same' social object and that each repertoire is constructed rhetorically, created through contradictory and dialectic exchange (Edley 2001).

The final analytic concept worthy of mention when conducting discourse analysis is the *subject position*. Prominent in the field of cultural studies, this concept is based on the 'ideological state apparatus' (Althusser 1971). Ideology works on various levels in society, constructing 'subjects'. Subjectivity, then, is merely an ideological effect- a function of discursive regimes. Specifically, through a process of subjectification, people are simultaneously produced and subjected to ideology (Edley 2001). Consider, for example, the concept of *interpellation* (Althusser 1971), which encompasses the act of being 'hailed' by discursive regimes. Social psychologists Holloway (1984); Walkerdine (1990); and Wetherell et al. (2001) have explicated the concept of interpellation, arguing that human agents do not encounter discourses per se, but are re-constituted as 'subjects' the moment discourses are consumed. Identity, then, is intimately tied to the consumption of discourses. Identity, therefore, is contingent on the 'lived' ideologies (Edley 2001). The concept of *subject position* links discourses and *interpretative repertoires* to the social construction of reality and, most importantly, the construction of identities via talk and text.

## **Critical Discourse Analysis**

The foregoing section highlights discourse analysis as an apt theoretical and methodological tool available to social scientists, describing some of the approaches used by practitioners in the field. For the sake of brevity, an extensive review of the robust literature on discourse analysis cannot be presented in this chapter. My aim is merely to grant legitimacy to the methodology. At this juncture, however, I would like to turn to an innovation within discourse analysis- that is, the formulation of critical discourse analysis (CDA), speaking to its utility for the purposes of this dissertation.

If there is a relationship between language and unequal social relations, CDA holds promise in bringing such a nexus to the forefront because social critique is seen as the *raison d'être* for analysis. The 'critical' component of CDA is believed to have originated with the Frankfurt School in Germany in the 1920's. Fairclough (2000) intimates that the school's insistence that cultural processes produce material effects, producing various domains of struggle, has served as a crucial element in the formation of 'Western' Marxism. Other scholars who have contributed to the study of discourse and the tradition of critical inquiry include Foucault (1969) and his work on discourse as systems of knowledge which are utilized by governments to create 'technologies' of power in modern society; Althusser's (1971) contention that 'Ideas' are not abstract entities, but material social processes characteristic of institutions within contemporary society; Volosinov's (1973) linguistic theory of ideology which views linguistic signs and language use as ideological; Habermas' (1984) formulation of a communication-based version of critical theory and the critique of 'systematically distorted' communication; and Bakhtin's (1986) thorough analysis of the dialogical properties of

texts and his theorization of 'genre' - that is, the different types of texts available in a culture and their combination in a multitude of everyday interactions. All of these works have served as theoretical points of reference for CDA, inspiring highly imaginative ways of conducting discourse analysis by exploring gender issues, issues of racism, media discourses, political discourses, organizational discourses and dimensions of identity (Wodak 2002; Fairclough and Wodak 1997).

The focus on issues of social importance, then, seems to be a salient theme inherent in CDA. O'Connor (1996: xi) suggests that CDA is highly political in its intent, encouraging analysts to effect real social change by reducing harm and promoting social justice, whilst creating a space where people are not discriminated against because of 'sex, color, creed, age, or social class'. In fact, Anthonissen (2003) uses Critical Linguistics (CL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) interchangeably, given their interdisciplinary nature. Both approaches draw upon a vast array of communicative methods and the complex linguistic, extralinguistic, and contextual components of texts and discourses (Anthonissen 2003).

Practitioners in the field agree that there is no uniform and common theory formation of CDA; rather, this methodology draws upon rhetoric, textlinguistics, applied linguistics, pragmatics and socio-linguistics (Weiss and Wodak 2003). Thus, power, hierarchy, gender, etc. are all relevant concepts and are explored through epistemological theories, social theories, middle-range theories, microsociological theories, sociopsychological theories and linguistic theories (Wodak and Meyer 2002). Clearly, then, CDA does not attempt to provide a unitary and 'fixed' approach to developing theory; studies in this field are multifarious, as even the terms 'discourse', 'critical',

‘ideology’ and ‘power’ seem to differ depending on which researcher is using the methodology.

CDA is seen as inherently interdisciplinary, facilitating much needed dialogue between those interested in linguistic and semiotic analysis and those preoccupied with formulating theories of social change. Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) expand on this fruitful exchange of ideas between disparate disciplines, calling for creative ‘interdisciplinarity’. For these authors, an ‘interdisciplinary’ dialogue is committed to formulating new theories and new modes of investigative research, cutting across seemingly barricaded and insulated disciplines. The critical component of CDA also aims to problematize these taken-for-granted assumptions. The methodology is critical because it promotes progressive social change via emancipatory ‘knowledge interests’ (Habermas 1971). In conjunction with investigating how language is deployed within social relations of power and domination, researchers inquire how language operates to sustain ideology, constructing personal and social identities through linguistics.

For some scholars, language is not powerful on its own; rather, it gains power through the manner in which it is deployed by the powerful. It is argued that unequal relations of power are dependent on exclusive control over scarce social resources (van Dijk 1993). It bears emphasizing, however, that such resources are not only material, but symbolic too, as in Bourdieu’s (1988) ‘symbolic capital’. For example, knowledge and access to public discourse serve as major symbolic resources appropriated by the elite. Van Dijk (2003) stresses that in order to study the abuse of power, researchers must examine how powerful groups and institutions manage to project their values and beliefs- their knowledge, if you will- in public discourse. The legitimization of knowledge, in



conjunction with its distribution, must be considered when conducting critical discourse analysis because both processes illuminate the social strategies of dominance and knowledge management. This allows for a holistic investigation of cognitive knowledge structures and strategies, and how they affect discourse structures, and vice versa (van Dijk 2003).

Weiss and Wodak (2003) argue that CDA invokes the perspective of those who suffer and are subjected to the power of language in order to critically analyze how the existence of social inequality might serve as a concomitant of the use of language by the powerful. Thompson (1984), for example, establishes a relationship between the concepts of ideology and culture, exploring various aspects of mass communication and the manner in which social processes facilitate the circulation of symbolic forms throughout the social world. Language, for him, is seen as mediating ideology in a variety of social institutions, maintaining unequal power relations. Eagleton (1991), too, contributes to the discussion by warning critical discourse analysts to be cognizant that the study of ideology draws upon a variety of theories and theorists exploring the link between thought and social reality. Therefore, a degree of specificity is required in the field if one is to understand the “specific historical reasons why people come to feel, reason, desire and imagine as they do” (Eagleton 1994:15). Critical discourse analysts are also interested in documenting the role of ideology in relation to discursive acts of resistance which subvert of the status quo, cultivating ‘self-consciousness’ about language through a process of demystifying discourses by deciphering ideology (Weiss and Wodak 2003).

Fairclough (2000) notes that approaching language in a more critical vein is extremely important in modern society, given the rise of ‘knowledge-based’ economies

of late. Such economies, it is intimated, are inevitably 'discourse-based' insofar as new epistemologies are formulated and circulated around the globe. This marks an important shift for language, as it comes to be viewed as a commodity (Lyotard 1987). This importance of language as a resource and commodity evokes conscious attempts on the part of the elite to master and control it, so that it meets institutional and organizational objectives (Wodak 1996). Drawing upon Foucault's interest in the social technologies of modern society, Fairclough (1992) identifies this process as the 'technologization of discourse' - that is, the institutionalization of research on language; the formulation of discursive practices; and the training of personnel in such practices. The 'technologization of discourse' also speaks to the increasing 'reflexivity' of social life. Giddens (1991), for instance, argues that human agents possess the capacity to shape their lives, drawing upon knowledge and information about their social practices. The 'technologization of discourse' and reflexivity of language, then, are two important features of contemporary social life, fostering a critical awareness of the deployment of language in everyday interactions. The most important point here is that reflexivity is not confined only to academic analysis of language; rather, language becomes an object of intense scrutiny among all human agents embroiled in unequal relations of power.

Now that a brief overview of the theoretical origins of CDA has been posited, let us turn to the components of critical discourse analysis. The first noteworthy component is *semiosis*; practitioners of CDA view *semiosis* as material social processes, proceeding under the assumption that social life is comprised of interconnected networks of diverse social practices and all of these practices feature the following elements: productive activity; means of production; social relations; social identities; cultural values; and

consciousness (Fairclough 2000). Harvey (1996) argues that these elements are dialectically related, each ‘internalizing’ the other without being reducible to them. Simply put, CDA is a thorough analysis of the dialectical relationships between *semiosis* and the diverse elements comprising social practices. While the critical component of CDA explores power relations inherent in discursive regimes, it is also concerned with radical changes unfolding in contemporary social life (Fairclough and Woak 1997). Fairclough (2000) contends that the importance of *semiosis* in social practices should not be taken for granted and must be rigorously studied. This is because *semiosis* is integrated in social practices through processes of ‘social activity’ and ‘representations’. The former refers to employing language in a particular way within a particular context; while the latter suggests that human agents construct ‘representations’ of other practices, whilst producing reflexive ‘representations’ of their own practices. It is maintained that the process of ‘representation’ and reflexive self-construction shape all social processes and practices (Bernstein 1990; Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999). Discourses, for example, are generally diverse representations of other human subjects; these representations are inherently positioned insofar as one’s positionality will force them to ‘see’ and represent facets of social life in different ways. This, inevitably, serves as a constellation of social practices which come to resemble a particular social order in which an ‘order of discourse’ is entrenched through various social structures. Fairclough (2000: 235) explains,

“an order of discourse is a social structuring of semiotic difference- a particular social ordering of relationships amongst different ways of making meaning. One aspect

of this ordering is dominance; some ways of making meaning are dominant or mainstream in a particular order of discourse, others are oppositional or 'alternative'.

Clearly, Gramsci's concept of hegemony can be applied to analyses of 'orders of discourse', illustrating how a particular social structuring of semiotic difference becomes legitimized as 'natural' or 'common sense', sustaining and replicating relations of domination (Forgacs 1988; Fairclough 1992; Laclau and Mouffe 1985). It bears emphasizing, however, that hegemony will always be challenged and contested to some degree because social orders are not closed and rigid systems, but open systems where resistance and struggle shape the dialectical nature of competing discursive regimes (Fairclough 2000).

Perhaps one of the most important perspectives in CDA is the view that 'power' is not the work of a single text or a particular human agent. Discourse in the form of text is never attributed to a single entity, but a network of powerful human agents. What is more, texts feature sites of negotiation and struggles for dominance insofar as they are governed by differences in power, determined by extremely specific discourses and genres. Critical discourse analysts, perforce, have to document the intertextuality and recontextualization of competing discourses in public spaces and genres by highlighting the myriad ways in which language indexes power, expresses power, and facilitates challenges to power (Weiss and Wodak 2003).

One of the earliest analytical frameworks for CDA can be derived from the notion of 'explanatory critique' (Bhaskar 1986). Premised upon critical theory, 'explanatory critique' encompasses five important steps. Step one establishes the critical intent of

identifying a social problem. CDA identifies social problems as embedded in social practice, or in the representation of a social practice. The social problem can be addressed, then, through the production of knowledge which, in turn, can lead to emancipatory change (Fairclough 2000). Step two highlights the perceived obstacles to the social problem being addressed. For example, a thorough analysis of the network of social practices in which the social problem is located would inevitably lead to other obstacles such as the relationship between *semiosis* and social practice and, most importantly, the 'order of discourse'. Identifying the 'order of discourse' can facilitate interactional analysis, interdiscursive analysis, and linguistic and semiotic analysis. Detecting such obstacles enables the researcher to understand how the social problem arises and how it is reproduced through social practices, becoming rooted in the very fabric of social life. Researchers are also encouraged to identify the 'object of research' - that is, what the social problem is and what obstacles prevent us from tackling this problem. Obstacles at the local level, often times, can be attributed to the global level (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Under these circumstances, structural and interactional perspectives are required in order to understand how the 'order of discourse' is structured and what the content of the discursive texts and interactions accomplish at the local and global level.

The next step requires a critical analysis of the function of the unequal social order. Specifically, the researcher must identify those who benefit from the social arrangement and what exactly they have at stake in perpetuating social practices based upon relations of power. At this juncture, discourse analysts apply the concept of ideology to the 'order of discourse', recognizing that certain representations sustain domination between different groups in society, enabling one group to exercise

hegemony over another. It is also during this step that researchers conclude that these social problems can be addressed only through radical social transformation (Fairclough 2000). The identification of possible methods to overcoming the aforementioned obstacles is the fourth step of 'explanatory critique'. Embracing a dialectical logic, discourse analysts during this stage seek variation and difference within the network of practices, documenting the potential for emancipatory change within the social order. Unlike the previous steps, which highlight the manner in which networks of social practice are held together and sustained, this step encourages researchers to detect the gaps and contradictions which exist in these constellations of power.

Finally, step five is not necessarily a part of Bhaskar's framework of 'explanatory critique', but Fairclough (2000) exhorts discourse analysts to ruminate on their social positioning when conducting this type of research. Recall, unlike the positivist tradition of research, the search for some universal and objective truth is not the objective of CDA because practitioners in the field are aware of the subjective component of research in the realm of discourse analysis. For instance, if social life, as Fairclough (1992) maintains, is merely a network of social practices of which *semiosis* is one element, then academic exercises such as discourse analysis, too, are located within these networks, constituting an 'order of discourse' where the body of knowledge produced may be perceived as a barrier to people in other social practices seeking emancipatory change in tackling a social problem. It is incumbent on academics in this discipline, then, to ponder ways in which their work may marginalize the 'alternative' epistemological claims of others. Furthermore, researchers must be cognizant of how their research may replicate political, social and cultural domination- the very social problems they set out to address.

It is safe to suggest that Bhaskar's 'explanatory critique' served as the impetus for the development of Fairclough's own frameworks within the field of CDA. In a seminal piece entitled *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, Fairclough (1995) sketches his own (macro/micro) explanatory framework. 'Micro' events encompass common verbal events, whereas 'macro' structures serve as the conditions for and products of 'micro' events. Fairclough (1995) highlights the crucial relationship between the 'micro' and 'macro' wherein 'micro' verbal interactions and events cannot be interpreted as merely 'local' discursive events because they contribute to 'macro' structures, and vice versa. The reproduction of domination, then, is captured in the intricate relationship between 'macro' and 'micro' modes of analyses of discursive events. It is also through this framework that analysts begin to view various institutions as producers of what he refers to as 'ideological-discursive formations' (IDFs). He observes that IDFs serve as 'speech communities' through which discourse norms are established and entrenched within the 'order of discourse'. This arrangement within institutions leads to the formation of institutional subjects and it is the dominant IDFs which impose ideological and discursal constraints upon institutional subjects, encouraging them to conform to 'naturalized' ideologies- most of which sustain power relations (Fairclough 1995). Recall, CDA promotes interdisciplinary approaches to conducting research. In fact, Fairclough concedes that his 'three-dimensional' framework for conducting CDA draws heavily upon not only Bhaskar's 'explanatory critique', but Halliday's (1978) multifunctional view of language and systemic linguistics, Bakhtinian theory of genre and Gramscian theories of hegemony (Fairclough 1995). Let us now turn to Fairclough's influential 'three-dimensional' framework for critically analyzing discourses.

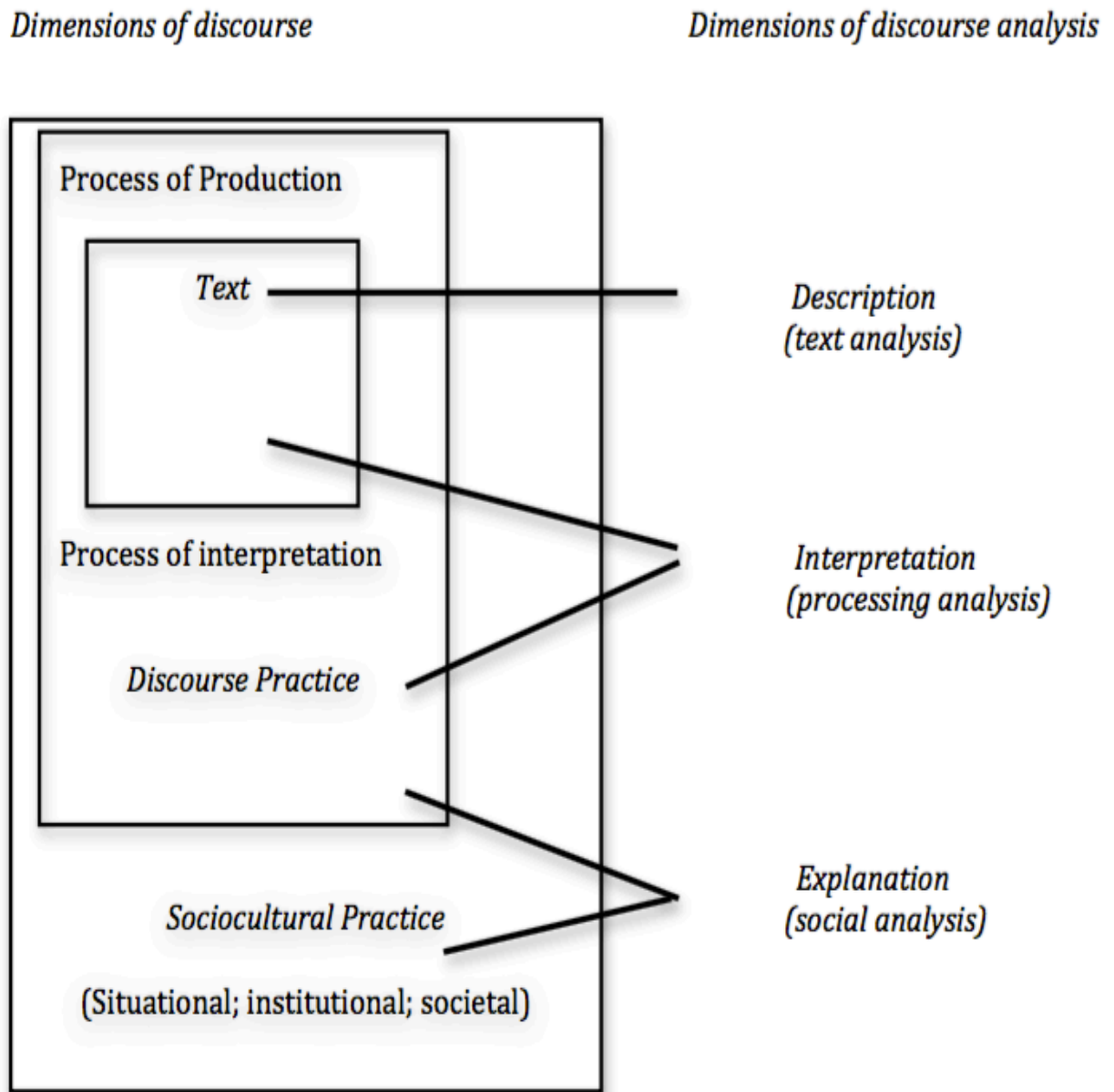
Texts are viewed as social spaces comprised of two important social processes: cognition and representation of reality and social interaction. Inevitably, analyses of texts demand a diversity of focus, taking heed of not only the function of language, but the various levels of analysis required to capture the nuances of phonological, grammatical and lexical components of discourses in sociocultural practices (Fairclough 1995). CDA endeavors to combine Gramsci's concept of hegemony with the concept of intertextuality, highlighting the link between power, text and social practice- all of which are mediated by discourse. As a methodology, CDA uses theories of language and grammar- both of which highlight the ideational, interpersonal and textual functions of language. Fairclough argues that CDA can be consolidated as a 'three-dimensional' framework, encouraging three separate modes of analysis: analysis of spoken or written language texts; analysis of discourse practice; and analysis of discursive events as social practice. Fairclough (1995: 97) explains, "Discourse, and any specific instance of discursive practice, is seen as simultaneously (i) a language text, spoken or written, (ii) discourse practice (text production and text interpretation), (iii) sociocultural practice at a number of levels; in the immediate situation, in the wider institution or organization, and at a societal level".

Presenting the methodological guidelines for conducting CDA, the author recommends *describing* the text; *interpreting* the relationship between both the productive and interpretive discursive processes of a text; and *explaining* the complex relationship between discursive processes and social processes. It is the emphasis upon *description*, *interpretation* and *explanation* which has served as the foundation of CDA. Fairclough, however, also laments the technical and formalistic approaches to textual



analysis adopted by some discourse analysts who reduce all of social life to discourse and all social science to discourse analysis, leading to a form of gross reductionism. The solution, according to Fairclough, is to use the analytical framework to engage in linguistic and intertextual analysis, capturing the complex, contradictory sociocultural processes of discursive events. Consider Fairclough's (1995) diagram depicting the application of CDA in critical research:

**Figure 1 Fairclough's Application of CDA**



The first dimension of Fairclough's analytical framework seeks to *describe* spoken or written texts. This draws upon linguistic analysis insofar as investigating the phonology, grammar, vocabulary, semantics, punctuation, turn-taking, and the overall structure of interactions. This dimension also explores non-linguistic features such as the use of graphics, color, font size, so on and so forth (Fairclough 1992). Intertextual

analysis, conversely, illustrates how texts draw upon ‘orders of discourse’ within particular social institutions. It is through this dimension that the experiential values of words are interrogated. The use of metaphors, euphemisms and nominalizations are recorded, shedding insight into how processes of “Othering” are accomplished. There is also emphasis upon sentence structure insofar as analyzing how seemingly simple sentences are linked together or how complex sentences are coordinated within certain discourses. Analysts are also encouraged to identify whether the sentences are declarative or imperative in nature. For example, when Fairclough speaks of experiential, relational, expressive, or even connective values of a text, he is gauging the values of the producer of a given text- most importantly, how that producer projects (and imposes) her views of the world (Fairclough 1992).

While the first dimension encourages an analysis of only the discursive materials themselves, the second dimension forces researchers to understand that the manner in which a text is produced and interpreted is highly contingent on sociocultural practices. *Interpretation* involves bringing attention to the relationship between texts and dominant social structures. Fairclough (1995: 141) observes that the values uncovered in discourses become “socially operative, as parts of institutional and societal processes of struggle”. The critical component of CDA emerges through *interpreting* texts because it enables researchers to demystify texts, unveiling the ideological effects of language. Note, the act of *interpreting* features two levels of interpretation: the first takes place when subjects make sense of a text; the second takes place when critical discourse analysts decide on what to do after conducting a textual analysis. There is a dialectical interplay, then, between the actual text and how it is interpreted. This dimension of analysis distinguishes

between levels of interpretation- that is, an analysis and interpretation of utterances, the coherence of a text, and the overall structure and summary of a text- and context, which refer to situational and intertextual characteristics of discourses. Both levels of interpretation are crucial because a subject's ideological beliefs and background knowledge dovetail with different levels of interpretation. Perhaps the most effective interpretative strategy is situating the texts in the social practice and activity, taking into consideration who is involved and what precisely these individuals have at stake in the production and distribution of these discourses (Fairclough 1992). In other words, an investigation of texts in isolation from analysis of institutional contexts is unproductive, obfuscating how the interpretation of texts constitute a dialectical process resulting from the interpretative resources human agents employ when encoding texts, and the ontological specifications of the text (Fairclough 1995).

The final dimension of analysis encompasses an *explanation* of the commonsense and taken-for-granted assumptions and values inherent in discourses. Investigating both social struggles and power relations through social processes and social structures, respectively, analysts seek to delineate and explain how domination is reproduced through text. What is more, this facet of investigation is concerned with the reproductive effects of discourse which, in turn, influence social structures. It bears emphasizing, though, that this process is not linear, but cyclical: social structures shape knowledge and ideology, inevitably transforming into discourse. Discourse, however, is a site of struggle and re-negotiation and alters bodies of knowledge and ideology, challenging power relations which constitute social structures. This is precisely why Fairclough recommends explaining discourse at three levels of societal organization: situational, institutional and

societal (Fairclough 1995). What is more, *explanation* entails an exploration of how discursive events are dependent and shaped by language and the ‘order of discourse’. It is through this dimension that textual analysis is situated in the social networks of power, bringing attention to the historicity of discursive events. Analyses of the production, consumption and distribution of texts, Fairclough asserts, are central to CDA, enabling researchers to document how texts are circulated within ‘orders of discourse’.

The three-dimensional framework posited by Fairclough (1995) has proven to be an apt theoretical and methodological tool for social scientific research. Language and power, it is maintained, are fundamentally questions of democracy; human agents affected by discursive power and who are subjected to linguistic forms of domination and manipulation are encouraged to identify the “hidden social structures” inherent in texts, understanding how the production and re-production of social control is accomplished through discursive regimes (Fairclough 1989). Exercising resistance encompasses a great diversity of social practices and such practices are highly contingent on whether those embroiled in struggle and resistance have access to the theoretical and analytical resources required to effect social change.

### **Frame Analysis**

No project of discourse analysis is complete without reference to framing. Originating within the disciplines of sociology and psychology (Scheufele and Tewsbury 2007), scholars like Goffman (1974) have expanded on the practice of framing, arguing that frames are configurations used to categorize and organize human experience.

Goffman (1974: 10) explains that human experience entails:

“Definitions of a situation built up in accordance

with the principles of organization which govern events- at least social ones- and our subjective involvement in them; frame is the word I use to refer to such as these basic elements as I am able to identify. That is my definition of a frame”.

For Goffman, the ‘schemata of interpretation’ enables one to engage in the process of ‘frame analysis’- that is, the act of uncovering meaningful aspects of seemingly meaningless scenes (Kendall 2005). This dissertation operates on the basis that frames influence interpretations of reality and follows recent applications of framing within cognitive, constructivist and critical perspectives (Reese 2007). It is the critical perspective that interests me for the purposes of this project, because it regards frames as mechanisms of hegemonic control employed by elite structures. What is more, this perspective explores how social forces discursively construct subjects through language, selecting very specific aspects of perceived reality (Entman 1993). Similarly, Reese (2007:150) views frames as “structures that draw boundaries, set up categories, define some ideas as out and others in, and generally operate to snag related ideas in their net in an active process”. As organizing schemata, then, frames work alongside concepts such as scripts and stereotypes which enable receivers of the discourses to process the information. Framing must, per force, be interpreted by the broader political and social context.

Scholars such as Van Gorp (2007) have also identified the dialectical nature of discourses, linking the analysis of frames to CDA. The author’s work on frame packages is instructive: a frame package is “a cluster of logical organized devices that function as

an identity kit for a frame” (Van Gorp 2007: 64). While he asserts that journalists employ packages of organized devices which serve to assist in the identification of certain frames, his concept of frame packages can be used for other forms of discourse analysis, especially his use of *manifest framing devices* (word choice, metaphors and arguments), *manifest and latent reasoning devices* (implicit and explicit statements of a text) and *implicit cultural phenomenon* (the socio-cultural context) (Van Gorp 2007). The crux of his argument, like that put forth by critical discourse analysts, is that socio-cultural dimensions and influences must be taken into consideration when reading texts. Thus, frame analysis and CDA share an interest in how discursive practices encompass social practice- that is, the process through which texts are produced and consumed and how these texts become situated in matrices of power.

For the purposes of this project, I use CDA, and frame analysis, to reveal how language is utilized to maintain abyssal ideology, further entrenching asymmetric relations between the Amerindians of Guyana and: the colonizer, the state and international NGOs. Inherent in these texts, I argue, is abyssal thinking and repetitive discursive frames which result in the cognitive injustice of denying the Amerindians their humanity and right to make a difference in their social world.

### **Critical Discourse Analysis in Practice**

#### *Green Criminology*

How might the theoretical underpinnings of CDA and frame analysis enhance research in the field of green criminology? CDA, I believe, is the avenue by which eco-crimes and cognitive injustice can be methodically examined. Some of the earliest texts written about, and for, the Amerindians since the early years of Dutch colonisation, for

example, feature invisible distinctions. Such distinctions constitute discursive practices and an ‘order of discourse’. This matrix of social control and domination must be placed in its sociocultural context when investigating the institutionalization of injustice.

As mentioned in a previous section, CDA promotes an interdisciplinary approach to research. Green criminologists stand to gain much insight through collaborative efforts with other disciplines if we are to understand the nature of power and how it works. Suffice to say, the perpetuation of abysmal ideology, and the cognitive injustice of denying the Amerindian tribes the right to make a difference in their social world does not constitute a crime from a strict legalist perspective. It is the social legalist perspective, then, which must tackle such an affront against the Amerindians, understanding how social control and domination inhere in language and knowledge. This study aims to facilitate a dialogue between green criminology and interactional, interdiscursive, linguistic and, most importantly, discourse analysis, with the hopes of creating a new framework of critical inquiry.

#### *Data Selection and Analysis*

Data were culled from a large collection of personal dispatches, policy documents, discussion papers, and newspapers. One of the notable obstacles I faced when undertaking this project was locating the necessary texts for analysis. After conversing with many academics from Guyana, I learned that the country’s universities and governmental institutions are notorious for shoddy record-keeping. Locating the country’s constitution and Conservation International’s policies were relatively easy to access, given their recent drafting. Finding Dutch and English charters, ordinances and laws, however, was a daunting task. Thus, the majority of the texts analyzed in this



dissertation are derived from secondary sources- that is, previously written articles, books and dissertations on the history of Guyana. The National Archives of the United Kingdom, the Public Record Office in London, the National Archives of Guyana, the Church Missionary Society, and the Society for the Propagation of the gospel also served as a great resource for data. Employing the qualitative data analysis (QDA) computer software program, NVivo, I coded the gathered data, creating distinct categories enabling me to identify certain discursive motifs which could be interpreted as frames. Importing approximately 115 documents into NVivo was relatively easy because most the documents retrieved from online archives were converted either into Microsoft Word documents, or PDFs.

The analysis of the aforementioned texts presents a variant framework that merges CDA, frame analysis and green criminology. Specifically, this project explores how institutions (past and present) employ language that perpetuates abyssal ideology. The cross-fertilization of CDA, frame analysis and green criminology is informed by Fairclough's three-dimensional analysis of the text, the arena of text production and the socio-cultural context:

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Research Structure in this project</b>
Text	Textual analysis through Frame Analysis and Eco-crimes framework
Discourse Practice	Relationship between texts and social structures
Socio-cultural Practice	An exploration of contextual and Socio-cultural features

This project also employs frame analysis to assist in a critical discourse analysis of personal dispatches, journals, newspapers, charters, laws, ordinances, constitutions and policies of various institutions since the colonization of Guyana. Arguing that geopolitical forces have sought, and continue, to cast an abyssal ideology over the Amerindians of Guyana, I endeavor to situate these discourses into an imperial, colonial and neo-colonial socio-cultural context in order to demonstrate how abyssal thinking justifies the cognitive injustice of denying the Amerindians their humanity.

### *Scope of the Project*

CDA entails analysis of text, discourse practice and an exploration of socio-cultural practice. To fully apply the principles of this methodology, I would have to provide an in-depth assessment of personalities and biases of those responsible for drafting the texts included in this dissertation. Undertaking this dimension of discourse analysis is outside the scope of this research; the time and resources required to overview each author's personal logs during the years of colonization, in conjunction with conducting interviews with members of the Government of Guyana and Conservation International, will not permit such an investigation. There are, then, potential limitations of this project. Scholars such as Widdowson (1998) and Stubbs (1997) outline some of the weaknesses of the methodology- namely, that approaches to data collection and text analysis are limited to mere text fragments. As such, the act of selecting, and analyzing, texts is a subjective one. This means that my own interpretation of the texts may be heavily biased by my knowledge of Guyana's history and present socio-political context, affecting my findings and perspectives. Nevertheless, the social sciences have identified

the merit of such a methodology with respect to understanding how hidden values, ideologies, biases and exercises of power inhere in text.

### *Methodological Procedures*

The methodological procedures used in this dissertation entail: (i) formulating a probable list of frames to be identified in each included text; (ii) assessing the frames of each selected text using Fairclough's three-dimensional framework; (iii) and exploring how lexicalization, syntax, nominalizations, metaphors and hyperboles serve as discursive structures, perpetuating abyssal thinking through the radical division of social reality: The realm of "this side of the line" and "the other side of the line". This, in turn, enables me to better understand the cognitive injustices committed against the Amerindians of Guyana and how they have been discursively (re)constructed as the "Other". This *naturalization of difference*, then, justifies the appropriation of their land and resources by different geopolitical forces, during different epochs, creating a legacy of subordination and marginalization. The units of analysis in this project include personal dispatches of colonial officers, journals, logs, colonial charters; laws; ordinances; Guyana's constitution; and the policies of Conservation International.

With respect to data collection and selection, the corpus was generated from an extensive on-line search for texts written during Dutch and English occupation of Guiana; the country's transition into the Co-operative Republic of Guyana; and the country's participation in conservation initiatives during the contemporary neo-liberal era. As mentioned above, locating some of these documents proved futile, as Guyana's record-keeping practices left much to be desired. Correspondence with the faculty of the University of Guyana revealed that any documents worth investigating

were presumably destroyed. What is more, the dearth of data pertaining to the status of the country's indigenous population during the years of colonization may also be attributed to complete disregard for their well-being. Historian Mary Noel Menezes (1977: 127) observes: "if records were kept after 1873 they were not preserved by the government, an indication of their complete lack of interest in the fate of the aboriginals, who not until 1881 were included in the population census". Accessible data could be located in the United Kingdom's national archives. I also relied on secondary sources for data, collecting books on the history of European colonization.

These texts proved useful because many of them included excerpts which would lend itself to a promising discursive analysis. Relying on secondary sources also provided a thorough understanding of the socio-cultural context in which these texts were produced and circulated. Acquiring recently drafted texts such as Guyana's constitution and the policies of Conservation International was relatively easy; the former was accessible through the University of Guyana's libraries, while the latter was found on Conservation International's website. I also contacted a representative from the organization in order to acquire more literature on the recently established community owned conservation area (C.O.C.A.). Local newspapers also provided with me with the context required to understand the logistics, and potential problematics, of this conservation initiative. Guyanese newspapers such as *Guyana Chronicle*, *Stabroek News* and *Kaieteur News* were scanned for any articles regarding the partnership between the government of Guyana and Conservation International. Once again, these sources provided me the context needed to gauge the socio-cultural dimensions of texts produced by Conservation International.

### *Potential Bias*

Research which is qualitative runs the risk of featuring a potential bias from the subjectivity of the researcher, as briefly mentioned above. For example, the process of frame identification is completely subjective insofar as I am bringing a critical perspective to the texts I am analyzing. Another researcher may very well read the same texts and argue that there is no evidence of abyssal ideology or domination being reproduced, and that these texts work in favor of the indigenous peoples of Guyana. Another point worthy of mention is that a researcher may be identifying certain discursive themes or frames because she is actively looking for those frames, thus compromising the objectivity of the study. Discourse analysis is a departure from positivist traditions of inquiry. There is, therefore, no objective and universal ‘truth’ to uncover because discourses are socially constructed and historically specific (Carabine 2001). I will have to ruminate on the potential drawbacks of using historical sources of data, or how reliable these sources are, keeping in mind that all knowledge is to some degree situated, contingent and partial (Denzin and Lincoln 1998; Carabine 2001).

### *List of Potential Frames*

Reliance on frames is also vital to this project, as it creates more objectivity when engaging in discourse analysis. For example, Tankard’s (2001) systematic frame analysis is slightly modified for this dissertation, positing a *list of frames* approach so that a collection of frames is formulated by surveying the literature related to the subject matter. This dissertation does not include all aspects of Tankard’s *list of frames* approach for the sake of brevity, but does slightly modify his techniques in order to present a list of frames identified in the texts subject to analysis in this project.

The literature upon which I rely for devising my list of frames includes books, articles and official statements/policies on the Amerindians of Guyana. If the same frames can be found within this project, CDA holds the potential of exploring how and why frames and discourses continue to be reproduced in a given socio-cultural context. For example, authors such as Christopher Bulkan (2008), Julie Cajune (2008), Martin Vance (2008), Andrew Sanders (1972), Patrick Williams (2007), Neil Whitehead (2002), Logan Alexander Hennessy (2005), Clive Thomas (1975) and Marcus Colchester (1997)- to name just a few- have explored the social, political, economic and cultural rights of the Amerindians of Guyana. What becomes apparent in these works are glaring instances of marginalization, structural violence, paternalism and assimilation- all of which place the Amerindians in a position of perpetual subordination. From the earliest ordinances drafted during the colonial era to the recent Memorandum of Cooperation between the government of Guyana and Conservation International, the indigenous communities are situated in a matrix of asymmetric relations of power. Thus, drawing upon Tankard's *list of frames* approach, I present a collection of frames likely to be applied to the experiences of the Amerindians of Guyana.

### **Colony/Nation Ascendancy Frame**

When exploring the social, political and cultural rights of the Amerindians, their freedom to use their lands as they see fit is always presented as contingent upon the approval of some higher, geopolitical power. The interests of the Dutch and English, the government of Guyana and Conservation International always seem to take precedence over the interests of the local inhabitants. Examples of this frame are peppered throughout different discourses concerning what role Amerindians are poised to play in

society. Whether the issue is the protection and maintenance of Dutch and English colonies during the colonial era, or the demarcation of untitled lands for the protection of property, it is the interests of the Amerindians which are consigned to the periphery, so to speak, by processes of colonialism, imperialism, co-operative socialism, and neo-liberalism. This places the Amerindians in a perpetual struggle to exercise their autonomy. This frame also operates within a socio-cultural context which perpetuates abyssal ideology, justifying, and legitimating, the ascendancy of the geopolitical force in question.

### **Assimilation Frame**

During my research on the history of Amerindian rights in Guyana, I have identified the unrelenting force of Western powers seeking to integrate the country's indigenous communities into the established social order and status quo. From the early years of missionization, to the recent preponderance of neo-liberal regimes across the globe, the Amerindians have always been encouraged to adopt the prevailing ethos of the day. This was most obvious the moment the Dutch reached the coasts of the bountiful country, seeking to expand trade and agriculture, whilst providing the Amerindians with incentives to participate in such enterprises. The same can be said of the English who attempted to follow these Dutch policies, but unlike their predecessors, attempted to impose moral and legal precepts on the local inhabitants. When the country gained independence during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the nation experimented with co-operative socialist programs, attempting to, once again, encourage the Amerindians to assimilate, so that they may better serve the government of Guyana. Finally, once the principles of co-operative socialism transmogrified into full-scale economic liberalization, Amerindians were encouraged to participate in campaigns of mass resource extraction such as large

and small-scale mining in the mid 1980s (Canterbury 2007). Assimilation into the state's plans for liberalization of the economy was evident in discourses produced by numerous governmental institutions (Colchester et al. 2002). Today, Amerindians are reminded of the environmental advantages of assimilating the conservation campaigns of Conservation International (Choudry 2003; LaRose 2004). Thus, the assimilation frame serves as a discursive feature of some of the texts under analysis in this project.

### **Paternalism Frame**

The discursive (re)construction of the Amerindians as mere “wards of the colony”, or the benighted children of an uncivilized and backwards peoples, is crucial to understanding how the Europeans, followed by the government of Guyana, interacted with the local inhabitants of the country. It is this frame which portrays Amerindians as incapable of managing their resources, necessitating external and technocratic regimes of management and regulation of their land. There is also an important abyssal component to this frame which legitimates and naturalizes the status quo of both colonial Guiana and present-day Guyana. In traditional Marxist fashion, then, abyssal ideology sustains power relations, portraying external geopolitical forces as charged with the task of providing guidance and instruction to the child-like indigenous communities (Bulkan 2008). A strategic feature of political rule, abyssal ideology also persuades local communities to accept forms of inequality and social domination; this is most evident in the texts regarding Amerindian use of resources; unsettled land claims; and conservation initiatives.



### **Deficit-Oriented Frame**

In conjunction with the paternalism frame, this frame attributes a pathological set of behaviors to the Amerindians, constructing very negative stereotypes about these indigenous communities. The frame also operates within different social contexts, discursively presenting these peoples as “sub-human” and “savage”, possessing low social and economic aspiration. Their inability to attain Western ideals of Christianity or civilization presupposes deficiencies with respect to understanding the principles of religion, law, morality, reason and etiquette. This encourages, then, a “white man’s burden” for the external geopolitical forces occupying the country. Consider, for example, the attempts by the Dutch and English to impose the structures of civil and criminal law onto the unsuspecting natives and the project of missionization in the remote hinterlands of the country (Menezes 1977). These examples, and many more, reveal a deficit-oriented frame which suggests that the local inhabitants are in dire need of moral instruction, order and enlightenment because of some sort of deficiency which retards their development. Finally, this frame blames the Amerindians for this supposed deficit, failing to contextualize perceived ‘deficits’ as a consequence of socio-cultural processes of domination.

### **Collaboration Frame**

The collaboration frame promotes processes of cultural exchange and syncretism between indigenous communities and global conservation actors. Specifically, these collaborative conservation partnerships promote co-management and participatory management vis-à-vis management of wildlife and forests and community-led socio-ecological governance (Chung Tiam Fook 2009). While there is much emphasis on

relationship-building, knowledge production, power-sharing and benefit-sharing, conservation initiatives reinforce an abyssal ideology, which translates into asymmetrical power relations between indigenous communities and external conservation actors. The critical literature on conservation reveals how inequality and domination are reproduced through initiatives which impose fortress style and command-and-control approaches to conservation, alienating local communities from their lands and resources (Anaya 2005). The collaboration frame, then, features power imbalances in regards to knowledge production and dissemination, research, discourse, management and decision-making processes, technology, and even social interactions (Chung Tiam Fook 2009). This frame, exclusive to the texts surrounding the establishment of Guyana's C.O.C.A., encourages an integration of conservation projects into an eco-crimes framework, inviting a thorough assessment of its abyssal dimensions.

## **Chapter Four**

### **The Inception of Abyssal Ideology and Dutch Occupation of Guiana**

The preceding chapter outlines the utilization of critical discourse analysis (CDA), and frame analysis, as apt methodologies for identifying, and interpreting, the visible and invisible distinctions of abyssal ideology through discourse. Most importantly, I contend that such methods can be deployed when embarking upon a critical and comparative analysis of the discursive representations of the Amerindians of Guyana. The common motif in these discourses is the imposition of abyssal ideology- specifically, the radical division of social reality into two, separate realms and the impossibility of co-presence between abyssal lines. This chapter aims to theorize the origins of this Us/Them dynamic between the early Dutch colonists and Guiana's indigenous peoples, and how this relationship between Colonizer/Colonized proved vital to the inception, and perpetuation, of abyssal thinking on the colonial ground.

A handful of scholars have produced tremendous works on the early interactions between the Amerindians and the Dutch during the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. I am referring, of course, to Anna Benjamin and Laureen Pierre (1995), Mary Noel Menezes (1977), Christopher Carrico (2007), Arif Bulkan (2013), Janette Bulkan (2013), Christopher Bulkan (2008), Justin Greene-Roesel (1996) and Marcus Colchester (1997), to name just a few. What can be gleaned from the aforementioned authors is a complex and dynamic relationship between the Amerindians and the Dutch and English colonizers. I use the words complex and dynamic because the available historical records reveal that some of the Amerindians were, for the most part, spared the brutal and violent workings of colonialism- an unfortunate fate reserved for the African slaves who were uprooted from

their homes and brought to the South American country to aid in the expansion of extensive sugar plantocracies. For all intents and purposes, then, those Amerindian tribes in close proximity to Dutch settlements were autonomous peoples, oftentimes assisting in the maintenance of posts and forts. Despite their *soi-disant* autonomy and sovereignty, authors like Christopher Bulkan (2008) argue that colonial laws and policies created asymmetric powers relations. What Bulkan and other authors fail to do, however, is reflect on the cognitive injustices of colonization. Invoking an eco-crimes framework, I use CDA to interpret colonial texts, presenting evidence of abyssal ideology through discourse. Abyssal ideology, I aver, facilitates the cognitive injustice of discursively re(constructing) the Amerindians as the “Other”- that is, diametrically opposed to the values of the European race and irrecusably subordinate and inferior. It is such constructions of the Amerindians and their social reality, therefore, which impelled the slow and successive appropriation of their culture, resources and land.

The aim of this chapter is twofold. The first section presents a critical discourse analysis of Dutch Charters and laws drafted during the expansion of Dutch power over these regions. Triangulating these data with the personal dispatches of colonial officials, I present evidence of discursive strategies buttressing abyssal ideology. Note, since the founding and settlement of Berbice was the result of a private initiative, not much primary official documentation exists. As such, the personal dispatches will come predominantly from officials presiding over the colonies of Essequibo and Demerara. I end the chapter with evidence of Amerindian resistance to abyssal ideology, presenting the micro-political and quotidian struggles of the indigenous tribes against the imposition of abyssal ideology through discourse. If, power, in the Foucauldian sense, is neither

concentrated nor possessed but diffuse, embodied and enacted by various agents, we can gain an understanding of how the Amerindians negotiated, contested and reconfigured their identities through myriad interactions with the Dutch colonizers- all of which were captured through primary sources such as personal logs, journals and reports by colonial officers.

In chapter one, I address the alliances established between the Dutch and indigenous peoples of Guiana, but such alliances must be critically analyzed if we are to dig deeper into the imperial dynamic. Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1994), Nicholas Thomas' *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (1991), T.O. Beidelman's *The Culture of Colonialism: The Cultural Subjection of Ukaguru* (2012), Allistar Pennycook's *English and the Discourses of Colonialism* (2002) and Césaire Aimé's *Discourse on Colonialism* (1972) capture colonialism's "separating, essentializing, dominating and reactive tendencies" (Said 1994: 17). As will be revealed later on in this chapter, despite the recorded comity between the Dutch and the Amerindians, I propose that the utilization of CDA uncovers what Raymond Williams (1977) refers to as "structures of feelings" during Dutch occupation of Guiana.

### **The Origins of Abyssal Ideology**

If we are to unravel the origins of abyssal thought in Guiana, we must, perforce, fully grasp the implications of the culture of imperial and colonial activity. Historian D.K. Fieldhouse (1991: 103), reminds us that the "basis of imperial authority was the mental attitude of the colonist. His acceptance of subordination- whether through a positive sense of common interest with the parent state, or through inability to conceive of any

alternative- made empire durable”. Said’s work is also of inestimable worth when discussing how exactly the imperial dynamic unfolded on the ground- especially via discourse. In *Culture and Imperialism*, for instance, the author argues that the authority of the colonizer is supported by a cultural discourse, which relegates and confines the non-European to a “secondary racial, cultural, ontological status” (Said 1994: 59). Let us now reflect on Santos’ abyssal framework in the context of colonization: The Dutch, I argue, employed an ideological system of visible and invisible distinctions, the latter serving as the foundation of the former and it was through such a system that radical lines were drawn between Us/Them and Colonizer/Colonized, facilitating the division of social reality into two realms. Colonizers occupied “this side of the line”, while the colonized, and their alleged primitivism and barbarism were cast off to “the other side of the line”. What is more, these sub-humans were oftentimes produced as nonexistent- that is, radically excluded because they lay beyond both realms and were understood as incapable of coexisting with those on “this side of the line”. The “structures of feelings” of European colonization featured a common motif: no European identity could exist by itself without an array of opposites, negatives and oppositions (Said 1994). It is this notion of polarized oppositions which intrigues me, especially in the context of abyssal ideology. Let me now present how abyssal thinking was exercised by the early European explorers in Guiana.

Cultural and discursive representations of the land known today as Guyana precede the representation of the Amerindians. Some of the earliest written accounts of the country are taken from personal logs of the Spaniards from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, many of whom were in search of the legendary city Manoa and its king, El Dorado (Roth 1915).

English explorer Sir Walter Raleigh, who embarked on an exploratory voyage in 1595, filled the heads of travelers with dreams of infinite wealth and riches for the taking in the elusive city. Myriad expeditions were launched and many lives were lost in search of this majestic landscape replete with gold and silver. As early as the late 1500's, Guiana captured the imagination of the Europeans. Brookes (1995: 462), intimates that language constructs meanings which signify people and events in the world in specific ways. Such significations were crucial to the origins of abyssal ideology on the coasts of Guiana. Racial hierarchies, which purportedly differentiated the colonizers from the backward natives, instituted an Us/Them dichotomy between the Dutch and Amerindians. Selected texts from the era of Dutch occupation shed invaluable insight into how abyssal ideology became entrenched in key social institutions, serving as extremely influential 'orders of discourse'. Such discourses not only dichotomized the powerless from the powerful, but entrenched unequal relations of power within this given social order. The identification of specific discourse structures and strategies- what I refer to as frames- will aid in a more nuanced understanding of power and the crystallization of abyssal ideology.

Let us first explore some of the earliest representations of the natives of Guiana. The word 'Bokken'- first employed by the Dutch to describe the Amerindians- has various meanings: 'wild', 'uncouth' and 'untamed' (Bronkhurst 1881). It is from this word that the term "Buck" is derived, a derogatory name reserved for the Amerindians, even to this day. Such negative discursive representations of the country's indigenous peoples gained currency during the earliest interactions between European explorers and the Amerindians. Authors Colin Henfrey (1964) and W.M. Ridgewell (1972), for instance, note various descriptions of the Amerindians as 'naked savages', 'children of

nature', 'the unfortunate race', 'the peoples in a state of barbarism', so on and so forth. Such grossly distorted images of these peoples created the underpinnings of an ideology of cultural inferiority, irrecusable barbarism and unregenerate primitivism. Now, there appears to be somewhat of a disjuncture between the discourse and the deed, as it were. If the dominant discourses during this period of European expansion portrayed these 'denizens of the forests' as heathens, why didn't the Dutch, like the Spaniards, conquer and enslave these peoples? As mentioned in chapter One, the Dutch adopted policies of comity with the original inhabitants, assuring certain tribes- the Caribs, for example- their freedom. Scholars such as Menezes (1977) present evidence that from the advent of the colonization of Guiana, the Amerindians refused to be enslaved; in fact, they demonstrated an "unwillingness to be used as field-workers" (Menezes 1977: 3). The Amerindians, then, were essentially an autonomous people, refusing to submit to the rules and laws of some 'alien state'- especially if their rights were threatened. Dutch interaction with the Amerindians also resulted in political, economic and social bonds, resulting in what William Hillhouse, an English Quartermaster-General of the Indians, described as "broomstick relations"- that is, the act of Dutch colonists taking native women as their housekeepers, and gaining invaluable insight into their language and customs (Ishmael 2013). The promise of comity and friendship assured the Amerindians that they would never be exploited or enslaved. But what precisely was the nature of such relations? Menezes (1977) suggests that these treaties and bonds merely reflected Dutch self-interest and political expediency; the Dutch were well aware of their circumscribed Euro-colonial powers at this juncture in history. The Dutch, upon gaining independence from the Spanish, occupied a very precarious position with respect to empire-building.



The risk of incessant attacks from other maritime nations was imminent and they required as much support from the Amerindians as possible.

A brief exploration of the Charter of the WIC is most instructive, evincing the goals and objectives of the Dutch. Consider, for instance, a translated sailing regulation from the Company's Charter, dated July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1621, encouraging Dutchmen to "*sail westward of the Oronoque to do all hostilities and damage to the King of Spain, his subjects and adherents, by water and by land*". Consider, also, an excerpt from the 1675 Charter of the new WIC, which provides some insight into how the natives were to be treated. Article 64 read:

*"All persons high or low, are charged not to ill-treat the native inhabitants of the countries they visit, or to injure them in any way in their persons, goods, women or children, but to regulate themselves by this Articled Letter and the Instructions and Orders of the Directors, and the commands of their superiors, on pain of a fine or corporeal punishment"* (as cited in Rodway 1891: 22)

Both texts clearly identify the philosophies adopted by the Dutch: the Spanish were to be prevented from expanding their Euro-colonial presence and, for all intents and purposes, friendly relations were to be secured with the Amerindians. If Dutch officers "*ill-treated*" or "*injured*" the indigenous tribes in any way, they were subject to "*corporeal punishment*". This was a rather expedient policy, as alliances with the Amerindians translated directly into a reserve army of native communities, prepared to assist the Dutch in defending the colonies from the Spaniards.

Instructions to the Postholders were no different in intent. These instructions for a Postholder in Essequibo, dated November 29<sup>th</sup>, 1757, read:

*“That the official in charge of the said post or guard, by our express and positive orders, will treat the neighbouring Indians with the greatest consideration and friendship, without distinction or favor of any kind, and be careful not to injure them in any way; and if, perchance, the said Indians should request his help against any of the savage nations, he is bound to assist them with the guard as far as possible” (FO 420/27B, National Archives [UK])*

At first glance, the directives reveal Dutch intentions to cultivate, and perpetuate, peaceful and conciliatory relations with the natives. However, if we apply CDA to this text, the lexical devices provide us with some insight into how abyssal ideology influenced how the Dutch perceived the Amerindians of Guiana. Consider the phrase *“if, perchance, the said Indians should request his help against any of the savage nations, he is bound to assist them”*. This text features what I refer to as the deficit-oriented frame, in conjunction with a set of invisible distinctions which buttress the visible distinctions between Us/Them and Colonizer/Colonized. For example, Said (1994) reminds us that a quintessential component of European imperial and colonial rule over foreign cultures is the power of representation: from racial hierarchies to concepts about barbarism, primitivism and civilization, the objective of the colonizer is to reduce and reconstitute the native as an entity to be ruled and managed. In Guiana, this dynamic unfolded in a more nuanced fashion. As can be gathered from the above extract, a clear distinction is drawn between *“Indians”* and *“savage nations”*. CDA allows us to critically analyze the

term "*savage nations*" in the context of these instructions to the Postholders, as it is patently clear that the Dutch created a system of classification- a hierarchy, if you will- of those "savage-like" communities residing in the hinterlands of the colony. The communities living in close proximity to the Dutch, on the other hand, were spared such a negative classification, and were simply referred to as "*Indians*".

What, then, might account for such a curious distinction among the Amerindians? Recall, one feature of the consolidation of the European colonizer's identity was the creation of what Said (1994) refers to as opposites, negatives and oppositions. In the above extract, though, we witness how the Dutch extended their identities to those Amerindians living near to them, reserving the designation "*savage nations*" for those Amerindians outside the orbit of Dutch expansion. Such distinctions, then, are deliberate because they speak to the advanced development of those tribes who availed themselves of Dutch "civilization" and the "*savages*" who presented imminent threats to these settlements. Such discursive representations gained currency among Postholders; for instance, the term "free nations" was reserved for those groups who resided around the Postholders' posts. Among these groups were the Caribs, the Arawaks, the Akawaios and the Warrus- all of which were used by the Dutch to do their bidding with respect to the thriving slave market. The "*savage*" groups were liable to enslavement and Dutch officials exploited inter-ethnic rivalries, employing the Caribs to help them enslave the "*savage nations*" along the Barima River (Bulkan 2008). We can reflect, at this juncture, on how abyssal ideology operates through discourse. Invisible distinctions between the "free nations" and "*savage nations*" translate into dichotomies of Civilized/Uncivilized or Human/SubHuman, reinforcing Dutch moral and cultural superiority over the Other, and

their gifts of “enlightenment”, “civilization” and “freedom” certain Amerindian tribes stood to gain by forming alliances with the Postholders.

Some of the earliest dispatches from Dutch official, Laurens Storm van’s Gravesande, also reveal how the colonizers perceived the original inhabitants of the lands, providing a much more nuanced understanding of Dutch/Amerindian relations. Consider one of his journal entries, dated January 24<sup>th</sup> 1759:

*“As long as I have had the honour of being at the head of this Colony, I have ever tried to cultivate the friendship of the Spanish nation, our nearest neighbours. I have always used all my power to prevent the savage Caribs doing them the least wrong”* (P.R.O. 170/129, as cited in Harris and De Villiers 1911: 364).

In complete contradistinction to the Charter of the WIC, which encouraged the elimination of the Spanish empire and the cultivation of friendly relations with the natives, this dispatch reveals Gravesande’s aspirations to establish a friendship with the neighbouring Spaniards, staving off the “*savage Caribs*” from attacking them. The deficit-oriented frame is captured, again, in this dispatch, attributing a pathological “savagery” to the “subhuman” Caribs of the land. Like the instructions above, the Amerindians are discursively constructed as “savages” and must be prevented from inflicting harm on the European race. What is most interesting about Gravesande’s log is his use of the term “*savage Caribs*” because the Caribs, recall, not only resided near Dutch posts, but were trusted allies of these officials. Through the eyes of Gravesande,

however, they were nothing more than a violent and barbaric people. Such a view of the Caribs draws upon previous discourses of the Amerindians as ‘wild’, ‘uncouth’ and ‘untamed’, reinforcing invisible distinctions between the Civilized/Uncivilized and Human/Subhuman. As will be seen throughout this chapter, this pathological and “savage” behavior is often viewed as a threat to Dutch aspirations or a resource to be exploited in defending Dutch settlements from neighbouring indigenous tribes.

Another personal dispatch from Gravesande to the Directors of the WIC, dated 1769, presents the advantages of having the Caribs near Dutch settlements:

*“There is no one, Your Honours, who is more convinced how advantageous and necessary the friendship of the Indians is to this colony, because so long as we are fortunate to have them living around us we are quite safe inland, and having nothing to fear concerning the desertion of our slaves. I therefore neglect no possible opportunity of cultivating their friendship and protecting them from ill-treatment and tyranny of the whites as far as it is expedient to do, and in this way I have made myself so beloved of them that I can now get them to do whatever I wish”*

(Quoted in Menezes 1977: 47).

This dispatch features the colony/nation ascendancy frame insofar as comity and friendly relations is not sought for through an understanding of the Amerindians as equals, per se, but what they can do to advance the interests of the Dutch colony- namely the suppression of African slaves and the protection of Dutch settlements from other European nations. This is captured in the following phrases: *“how advantageous and*

*necessary the friendship of the Indians is to this colony*”, or “*we are quite safe inland, and having nothing to fear concerning the desertion of our slaves*”. Thus, it is the colony’s interests which are *really* of importance, not the sovereignty and autonomy of the Caribs. These “savages” Gravesande sought to prevent from sabotaging Dutch/Spanish relations in the previous dispatch is the same tribe he is praising in this example, transforming their “savagery” into a resource to be used to advance Dutch interests.

The paternalism frame is also featured in this dispatch where Gravesande states that he plans on protecting the Amerindians from “*ill-treatment and tyranny of the whites*”. This is a rather peculiar use of rhetoric because it presupposes that the natives are incapable of protecting themselves from colonial forces. Recall, there is a substantial account of Amerindians resisting submission to colonizers (Rodway 1891; Clementi 1937; Menezes 1977; and Bulkan 2008). Therefore, what sort of protection could Gravesande possibly afford the natives that they themselves could not exercise? The use of the word “*tyranny*” creates an image of the seemingly inexorable wrath of the “*whites*”, which can only be staved through Dutch protection. Even the use of the term “*whites*” is interesting; Gravesande could have used the term “French”, “English” or “Spanish” to prove his point, but the reliance on the word “*whites*” immediately establishes a dichotomy- a relational paradigm, if you will- which pits the Amerindians, who come to signify “*unwhite*” against the seemingly superior and dominant “*whites*”. This protection, according to Gravesande, will only be given to the natives “*as far as it is expedient to do*”, meaning their welfare is contingent on whether such provision of care is practical and convenient for Gravesande and his troops. Finally, the paternalism frame

is captured in the final sentence of the dispatch: “*I have made myself so beloved of them that I can now get them to do whatever I wish*”. The re(construction) of the Amerindians as naïve and obsequious children, who passively submit to the wishes of the Dutch, is crucial to abyssal ideology and its invisible distinctions between Dominant/Subordinate or Adult/Child, shaping the contours of Dutch/Amerindian relations.

The exploitation of the Caribs for the purposes of advancing Dutch interests, again, is captured in the following report from Gravesande, dated 22 February 1763, who discovers that a neighbouring indigenous group from Brazil, the Manoaas, were attempting to infiltrate Dutch settlements, competing with the Caribs for trade:

*“On the other hand, the Caribs are assembling from all sides in order to oppose them, so that it is possible that we shall this year see the bloodiest and most obstinate fights that has probably taken place in these parts for 100 years or more. I hope the Caribs may get a good hiding, because I have always wished to see few Manoaas here, being convinced that it would be of considerable advantage to this Colony”*

(reproduced in Harris and De Villiers 1967: 407).

This text reveals Dutch machinations for the Caribs, viewing them as mere pawns in the expansion and protection of their settlements. The colony/nation ascendancy frame is articulated in the phrase “*I have always wished to see few Manoaas here, being convinced that it would be of considerable advantage to this Colony*”. It matters not that this war between the two indigenous tribes may be “*the bloodiest and most obstinate fights that*

*has probably taken place in these parts for 100 years or more*”, only that the Caribs will sacrifice their lives defending Dutch posts. Invisible distinctions between Dominant/Subordinate reveal that the Dutch view the Caribs as no more than *expendable* allies, so long as Dutch expansion continues unabated.

Here is another example where Gravesande comments on another “war-like” nation, the Acuways:

*“The tribe of the Acuways, which is very strong in the interior, and some of whose villages both in Essequibo and in Massaruni and Demerara are situated next to the plantation “Oosterbeek”, and massacring those they found there. Thereupon they spread themselves and caused terror everywhere. Most of the planters living in Massaruni retired to an island with their slaves and their most valuable goods, and none of them dared to stay at night on their plantation”* (P.R.O. 469/176, as cited in Harris and De Villiers 1911: 340).

Again, this extract features- to borrow Said’s (1994) term- “caricatural essentializations” of the Amerindian peoples. Both the deficit-oriented frame and invisible distinctions between Civilized/Uncivilized or Human/Subhuman are present in the rhetorical and lexical devices which discursively portray the Acuways as brutal, cold-blooded killers. Phrases such as *“massacring those they found there”* and *“they spread themselves and caused terror everywhere”* reinforce their sub-humanity and the grave threat they pose to the civilized planters along the Massaruni. Pathological in nature, then, the Acuways are



represented as devoid of reason and rationality, relying solely on animalistic and predatory propensities.

The following dispatch is part of a longer dialogue between Gravesande and his superiors regarding how he plans on responding to the imminent threat of the Acuways' barbarism:

*“If the Caribs come (which they will certainly do at at the first invitation), they will come several hundred strong and begin by asking for bread and other provisions, of which we have none. Secondly, they will also ask for some guns, powder and shot, and in such quantities that I hesitate about putting all these weapons into their hands, the Indians being as a rule not greatly to be trusted and friendly towards us rather through fear or by reason of the profit they make out of trading with us than from inclination (as cited in Harris and De Villiers 1911: 342).*

This dispatch reveals Gravesande's real thoughts regarding the relationship between the Dutch and the Caribs. We have here, then, a synthesis of both the colony/nation ascendancy frame and the deficit-oriented frame. The former is captured in the latent meaning of the text: Gravesande enlists in the services of the Caribs to advance his interests of expanding Dutch presence throughout the colonies and this entails the suppression of the Acuways. There is nothing remarkably unique about such political and military expediency, as thoroughly documented by Menezes (1977) and Bulkan (2008). What is noteworthy, however, is how the deficit-oriented frame is captured through

Gravesande's thoughts of the "character" of the Caribs. We have already established that the Caribs' "savagery" was viewed as a resource to be exploited by the Dutch, but in this excerpt we come to learn that Gravesande is reluctant about providing the Caribs with arms; in fact, he clearly states that he "*hesitates*" to do so, because they are not to be trusted. Gravesande proceeds by stating that it is through "*fear*" and "*reason of profit*" that the Amerindians aid the Dutch. Visible distinctions between Us/Them, also, are undergirded by invisible distinctions between Ally/Enemy, as we come to learn that the thin veneer of comity between the Dutch and Amerindians is actually built upon distrust and suspicion.

There is further evidence of Gravesande's distrust of the Caribs. Consider the following dispatch in which he comments on the inevitable demise of the colony of Essequibo:

*"For it is the height of imprudence in the colonists that, urged on solely by an unworthy thirst for gain, they themselves put into the hands of that warlike nation, who beyond dispute are the bravest and most numerous on this coast, the weapons which in future may bring about their own destruction- I mean the fire-arms, powder, and ball so often given them in exchange for slaves"*

(as cited in Harris and De Villiers 1911: 268).

These texts trouble the narrative of comity and alliance-building featured in contemporary accounts of Dutch colonization, illuminating the extremely volatile relations between the Dutch and Amerindians. The ontological status of the Amerindians is rendered pathological, untrustworthy, warlike, producing an incessant fear in the Dutch

that they may, at any time, bring about the destruction of Dutch plantations and settlements.

The colony/nation ascendancy frame is vital to understanding how the exploitation of neighboring tribes unfolded during Dutch rule. It should come to us as no surprise that some tribes were strategically pitted against each other to advance Dutch interests. The following dispatch, dated July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1753, reveals such strategic maneuvering on the part of the Dutch:

*“J.L. Marcand, Poiret, and Watje, three of our colonists, having gone up the Essequibo with the intention to try to establish some trade with the Portuguese along the Amazon, have been killed in a murderous way by the tribe named Mapissanoe, without having given the slightest cause therefore. This is not the first occasion that these have so acted, becoming daily more bold through impunity, daring to say openly that they will act thus to all whites who fall into their hands, because they are not men, and take no revenge...I intend (with Your Honours’ approbation) to attack them with the assistance of the of the Caribs, who have come to offer their services for this purpose”.*

(P.R.O. 469/100, as cited in Harris and De Villiers 1911: 302).

In their thorough investigation of Gravesande’s journal entries and dispatches, Harris and De Villiers (1911) reveal that the aforementioned Mapissanoe are none other than the Wapisanas of Guiana. What can be gleaned from this text is the role given to the Caribs, who are summoned to attack the Mapissanoe because the latter are inhibiting Dutch

interests- namely, trade with the Portuguese. The colony/nation ascendancy frame, in tandem with invisible distinctions between Dominant/Subordinate, are captured in this dispatch, then, reminding the Zeeland Chamber of the WIC that the “savage” Caribs subject to Dutch rule serve as a reserve army, and can be summoned at any moment to protect the Colony’s borders.

The paternalism frame, coupled with invisible distinctions between Adult/Child, again, are identified when critically analyzing Gravesande’s personal dispatches to the Zeeland Chamber of the WIC. The infantilization of the Amerindians is a common motif through these exchanges. In the following excerpt, dated July 20<sup>th</sup>, 1746, we see just this:

*“The colonist C. Finet, who has returned from up the Cuyuni, has informed me that the report of the Caribs made to me some months ago is true, namely, that the Spaniards have established a Mission up the said river, and have built a small fort there, he himself having been there and spoken with the priest and soldiery; that they were busy making many bricks, with the intention of founding yet another Mission and fort some hours further down this river next year; all the Indians from that direction are flying hither and praying for protection”* (P.R.O. 468/78, as cited in Harris and De Villiers 1911: 302).

Gravesande begins his report to the WIC by stating that he has received word that the Spaniards are establishing Missions near Dutch settlements. This is followed by the somewhat exaggerated rhetoric of the Amerindians “*flying hither and praying for*

*protection*”. I call this an exaggeration because we have evidence, from Gravesande’s previous dispatches, that the Spanish did not easily capture and enslave the natives of Guiana, and that he had to prevent the “savage” Caribs from attacking them! The paternalism frame and the Adult/Child distinction, therefore, serves to reduce the Amerindians to passive, child-like wards of the Dutch colony, “*praying*” for the benevolent Dutch to protect them from rival European forces.

Four years later, legislation pertaining to woodcutting was drafted in the colony of Berbice. Let us consider the following extract from one of the ordinances, dated 16 January 1750:

*“Warning*

*Each and everyone, whoever he might be, is herewith warned, and prohibited from felling wood or having wood felled on the grounds belonging to the Honourable Colony, under whatever pretext it might be, without being provided with a permit from his Honour, the Governor; on penalty that those who are found to have felled any wood or have it felled without being provided with such a permit, shall forfeit a fine of 25 guilders over and above the confiscation of the wood felled; and the slaves or Indians who are caught in the act of felling wood shall be taken prisoner, and not be delivered again until the fixed fine shall have been paid”*

(C.O. 116/68).

At first blush, there is nothing remotely remarkable about this piece of legislation; such assertions of colonial power over settlers, and indigenous peoples, were attempts to conserve resources. Gravesande's policies encouraged mass migration of English settlers to the Guiana colonies, and the truth of the matter is the Dutch were most likely incapable of exercising hegemony in their governance over the colonies' bountiful resources- in this case, timber. This text, like many others drafted during this period, illustrates attempts on the part of the Dutch administration to monitor free settlers who were taking "public" resources. Settlers, slaves and Amerindians were expected to apply for a permit and gain consent from the Dutch before felling any wood.

Fairclough (2000) observes that when an audience consumes a given text, they must be cognizant of the manifest as well as latent meanings in the text because all discourses are produced within an ideological, political and socio-cultural context; thus, there should be an analysis of what the discourses state explicitly as well as what they render implicit. In the aforementioned passage, the manifest and explicit meaning of the text is that those who fell wood on land belonging to the "*Honourable Colony*" will be subject to some form of punishment. What the latent and implicit meaning of the text reveals is the abyssal re(construction) of the Amerindians. Note, these were "free" peoples who worked alongside their Dutch counterparts, securing the colony from rival European nations, entering alliances based on trade of goods, and the capture of runaway slaves. Despite their freedom and autonomy, this text reduces the ontological status of the Amerindians to that of the very slaves they were instructed to capture! Let me explain: it is presumed that the payment of 25 guilders and confiscation of the wood felled is a penalty reserved for European settlers, while the threat of imprisonment is presented

explicitly for the slaves *and* Amerindians. The abyssal, ideological distinction between Us/Them is exemplified in the penalty reserved for the natives. The clause deliberately reveals that confinement is a fate awaiting *only* slaves and Indians, while settlers receive a milder punishment, by way of a pecuniary fine. Practitioners of CDA take heed of such underlying, latent structures because they expose how domination occurs at a socio-cognitive level. In this case, the association between Amerindian and slave, and the punishment awaiting both of them, reveal that they are cognitively on “the other side of the line”- the total opposite of the European settlers and the treatment afforded them.

The above examples demonstrate the intricate workings of abyssal ideology through discourse. In each extract, we bear witness to a sophisticated constellation of visible and invisible distinctions, the latter serving as the foundation of the former. Discursively produced as “pathological savages”, “untrustworthy barbarians”, “child-like” and perpetual “subordinates”, the Amerindians were subject to radical, abyssal lines which facilitated the division of social reality into two distinct realms: the realm of “this side of the line” and the realm of “the other side of the line”. In each text above, the country’s indigenous peoples were consigned to the latter realm- their ontological essence discursively constructed as the polarized opposite of the Dutch colonizers. For instance, if the Amerindians were portrayed as “uncivilized”, the Dutch, perforce, were “civilized”; if they were “subordinate”, the Dutch, again, were “dominant”; finally, if they were “subhuman”, the Europeans, predictably, were “human”. Such invisible distinctions between these two groups served as a glaring reminder of the impossibility of co-presence between both sides of the line, so to speak, for the cultural “superiority” of the Dutch was highly contingent on the contrived “inferiority” of the Amerindians. This

dynamic between Us/Them and Colonizer/Colonized initiated a legacy of oppressive relations between the Europeans and Amerindians- a legacy which continued unabated well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the Dutch colonies capitulated to the English.

### **The Negotiation and Contestation of Discursive Power: Amerindian Resistance**

There exists a pressing tension between Dutch Charters, laws and the personal dispatches of colonial officials and what occurred on the colonial ground- between the discourse and the deed, as it were. This chapter employs CDA to uncover how the Dutch imposed abyssal ideology through discourse, reconstituting the identity of the Amerindians as irrecusably and unregenerately “inferior” to themselves. The triad of power, language and knowledge worked in tandem to establish, and entrench, asymmetric power relations between Colonizer/Colonized. But power, in the Foucauldian sense, is neither concentrated nor possessed but diffuse, embodied and enacted by agents (Gaventa 2003). CDA, for example, recognizes the complexity of power as a politico-ideological construct, viewing human subjects as constantly engaged in the negotiation of knowledge, social relations and identity. While it is not feasible to present accounts of Amerindian resistance to Dutch power through personal narratives, we can identify the negotiation and contestation of power through dispatches from certain Dutch officials. To state that the discursive power exercised by the Dutch was imposed upon the passive and obsequious natives erases a rich history of Amerindian resistance to Dutch occupation. Such a dialectic often escapes scrutiny due to the dearth of evidence, but such accounts can be identified if we carefully analyze some of the discourses of the colonizers.



This personal dispatch from Gravesande, dated December 29<sup>th</sup>, 1747, delineates the extremely fragile, and somewhat precarious, relationship between the Dutch and Amerindians:

*“Two of our itinerant traders, named Hermanus Bannink and Gerrit Goritz, have been murdered in the Upper Essequibo by the Indians. That such a thing has happened by no means surprises me, but rather that this does not happen much oftener, because the brutal dealings of that sort of people, who hesitate at nothing, must stir the Indians to revenge”*

(P.R.O. 468/137, as cited in Harris and De Villiers 1911: 231).

There are two noteworthy components of this text; first, it demonstrates that settlers-traders, in this case- clearly did not follow Dutch laws and Charters pertaining to the “just” treatment of the natives of the land, as Gravesande alludes to the “*brutal dealings of that sort of people, who hesitate at nothing, must stir the Indians to revenge*”. Secondly, the text demonstrates the inability of the Dutch to control the disposition of the natives. We know from archival records that Gravesande served as the leader of the colony of Essequibo and that he made a concerted effort to promote comity and friendly relations with the indigenous tribes of this colony. We also have documents in which he states “*I have made myself so beloved of them that I can now get them to do whatever I wish*” (cited in Menezes 1977: 47). Yet, despite such grand assertions of control over the native population, Gravesande, in this particular example, seems incapable of preventing the murder of Hermanus Bannink and Gerrit Goritz. In fact, he states: “*That such a thing has*

*happened by no means surprises me*". This clearly reveals that the Dutch realized the limits of their power, illuminating their precarious position throughout the settlements.

Dutch ambitions of expanding trade and exploration did not come easy. Granted, the preceding section presents compelling evidence of the colony/nation ascendancy frame- a discursive strategy used to convince the Zeeland Chamber of the WIC that the natives were supportive and complicit in such activity. Yet, Amerindian resistance can be revealed in the journals of Gravesande's Postholders. The following dispatch to Gravesande, dated sometime between 1741-1746, is most instructive:

*"The miners have just come down the river, and have reported to me that, notwithstanding the sufferings caused by illness and want, they have examined the heaven-high mountains up in Essequibo; that many of them, being absolutely treeless, presented a fair appearance of containing ore, among others, the Calikko or Crystal Mountain, the top of which is full of brimstone and vitriol, and almost covered below with crystals and beautiful veins of silver ore; but the Indian tribes living in that district had not permitted them to approach it without a deal of difficulty"* (as cited in Harris and De Villiers 1911: 74).

The narrative of Dutch/Amerindian comity and alliances is slightly troubled by this dispatch to Gravesande, demonstrating that the Amerindians residing near his posts were not the loyal vassals he discursively (re)constructed them as. In this example, the Postholder reveals that the Indian tribes prevented miners from completing their exploration for ore and other minerals. Thus, the Amerindians engaged in quotidian acts

of resistance against Dutch rule, constantly asserting their autonomy and sovereignty as an unconquered nation.

Finally, consider the following dispatch from Gravesande, dated January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1750:

*“Now, finally, it has come to pass that my prophecies have been confirmed, as one of those itinerant traders, by the name Jan Stok, an insolent and godless man, according to unanimous report committed horrible enormities there. Accompanied by a party of Orinoco Caribs, he attacked the natives our friends close by the Post Arinda, caused all the men to be killed, and carried the women and children away as slaves, ruined all the provision gardens, and perpetrated many other unheard-of things. In a word, they have made the Indians desperate, who intend to take vengeance therefore, so that the other traders who are still up the river are in extreme peril of life, and the plantations up the Essequibo run the risk of being deserted. On this account the manager of the plantation Oosterbeek (now St Jan) has come down in order to ask assistance in case of need” (P.R.O. 468/252, as cited in Harris and De Villiers 1911: 251).*

This personal dispatch reveals the disjuncture between Dutch laws and regulations, and what was occurring on the colonial ground. Despite the legislation promoting the protection of the natives and their sovereignty, some settlers ignored such laws,

exploiting the Amerindians for personal gain. In this text, we learn that the Amerindians residing near the Post Arinda have been victimized by Jan Stok and a group of Caribs, evoking indignation among the indigenous groups under Gravesande's rule. He proceeds by stating that he fears that "*other traders who are still up the river are in extreme peril of life, and the plantations up the Essequibo run the risk of being deserted*". This dispatch is extremely important because it challenges the taken-for-granted assumptions regarding the relationship between the Colonizer/Colonized. In the preceding section, I explore the various discursive strategies used by the Dutch to re(construct) the Amerindians as passive, loyal vassals of the Dutch. This dispatch challenges that narrative of perfunctory comity, and conciliation, presenting a dialectic between these two groups. The Amerindians, in this dispatch, are viewed as an inexorable force which will seek vengeance for the wrongs committed against them, abandoning their role as guardians over Dutch plantations. This clearly proves that the Dutch did not have as strong a grasp over the native population, resulting in a much more nuanced and dynamic relationship of power.

## Chapter Five

### The Creation of British Guiana and the Perpetuation of Abyssal Ideology

This chapter explores the period of British rule over the three colonies Demerara, Essequibo and Berbice, which became British Guiana, and the perpetuation of abyssal ideology through practice and discourse. The Santosian radical divide between “this side of the line” and “the other side of the line” is exemplified during this era, delineating a distinction between the new colonizers and the Amerindians. The prosaic distinctions between Us/Them and Colonizer/Colonized, however, require a more nuanced analysis. Alastair Pennycook’s work entitled *English and the Discourses of Colonialism* (2002) reminds us that colonialism was not a “site of colonial imposition, not merely as a context in which British or other colonial nations’ cultures were thrust upon colonized populations, but also a site of production” (Pennycook 2002: 2). Such a site of production is responsible for what he refers to as the “constructs of colonialism” – that is, discourses of the Self and the Other which engender a series of dichotomous pairs (cultured/natural, industrious/indolent, clean/dirty, etc.). The detection of such dichotomous pairings, I believe, can be achieved through the use of CDA, lending insight into how discursive power works to perpetrate cognitive injustice and processes of nonexistence- in other words, the radical and violent exclusion from the colonizer’s conception of what is to be “included” in their realm of social reality.

Despite the legal terms and provisions of British Guiana’s laws- most of which assured the preservation of Amerindian proprietary rights to land- the English, like their predecessors the Dutch, invoked abyssal lines in order to justify the exercise of power and domination over the local inhabitants. I begin this chapter with a brief overview of

the consolidation of British sovereignty over the colonies through the passage of various ordinances dedicated to exercising surveillance and governance over private land and the native inhabitants of the colony; I turn then to an analysis of legislation covering both the forestry and mining sector, ascertaining the nature of Amerindian rights vis-à-vis Crown land; this is followed by an exploration of abyssal practice and the manner in which colonizers sought to produce the Amerindians as nonexistent (Santos 2006); I proceed by providing a critical discourse analysis of selected texts, illuminating the manner in which CDA can be used to uncover the invisible distinctions buttressing the visible distinctions between Us/Them and Colonizer/Colonized; finally, I explore the dialectic of control and resistance between the English and the Amerindians, providing fragments of resistance against the abyssal apparatus exercised by the latter. Note, given that this chapter aims to present a diachronic analysis of the consolidation of British power over the colony by exploring the evolution of ordinances and regulations, there may be some overlap between the sections which explore the surveillance and governance of private and public (Crown) land.

### **The Consolidation of British Power**

During the transfer of the colonies to the British (see chapter One), what, exactly, were the implications of capitulation for those possessing private land? As noted above, the presence of a substantial number of English settlers during the reign of the Dutch enabled this group to consolidate their political power, influencing certain governmental and constitutional organs. As such, each time the colonies capitulated to the British, they did so on favorable terms for the expanding planter class. The terms of capitulation featured assurances that existing laws and customs would be preserved. The rules were

quite simple: the new colonizers would not seize private property, allowing local inhabitants to retain their existing proprietary rights and customs; public property- that is, property that was once controlled by the West India Company and vacant lands- was transferred to the Crown. These terms were also accompanied by laws, which explicitly forbade English troops from infringing on the rights of the local inhabitants (Dalton 1855). In an attempt to ensure the stability of legal and administrative systems in Essequibo and Demerara, the Governor and Court of Policy presented the following articles on September 18<sup>th</sup>, 1803:

*“The laws and usages of the colony shall remain in force and be respected, the mode of taxation now in use be adhered to and the inhabitants shall enjoy the public exercise of their religion, in the same manner as before the capitulation; no new establishments shall be introduced without the consent of the Court of Police as the legislature of the colony. The public officers and the constituted authorities whether in the civil law or church establishments as well as the members of the respective courts (except the Governor General) shall be continued their respective offices and situations, until His Majesty’s pleasure shall be known. The inhabitants, those who are at present in the colony, as well as those who may be abroad, shall be protected in their persons and have the free enjoyment of their properties, without being molested or*

*troubled for any acts whatsoever, other than such as they might commit subsequent to the capitulation and in violation of the oath of fidelity they shall be required to take”*  
(CO 111/5/4, National Archives, UK).

The terms outlining the capitulation of Berbice on September 24<sup>th</sup>, 1803, were comparable. Articles 1 and 2 read:

*“The inhabitants shall have the full and immediate enjoyment of all property, whether onshore or afloat. The plantations, lands, manufactories, workshops, slaves, effects and possessions of the Berbice Association, of whatever nature, shall be considered as private property, in the same manner as is agreed to by the Capitulation with General Whyte in May 1796. All private property whatever of individuals to be respected”*

(CO 111/98, National Archives, UK).

While 1803 marked the year that the colonies surrendered to the British, it was not until 1814 that the regions were ceded to the English empire according to the Anglo-Dutch Convention- an agreement which, again, conformed to the Terms of Capitulation. Consider article VI which read:

*“The High Contracting Parties, desirous to bury in entire Oblivion the dissensions which have agitated Europe, declare and promise, that no Individual, of whatever rank or condition he may be, in the Countries restored and ceded*



*by the present Treaty, shall be prosecuted, disturbed, or molested in his person or property, under any pretext whatever, either on account of his conduct or political opinions, his attachment either to any of the Contracting Parties, or to any Government which has ceased to exist, or for any other reason, except for debts contracted towards Individuals, or acts posterior to the date of the present Treaty”* (as cited in Clementi 1937: 424)

It is quite evident from the aforementioned extracts, then, that private rights were preserved during the capitulation of the colonies to the British. Bulkan (2008) argues that such legal terms and provisions clearly revealed British adherence to the doctrine of continuity- that is, an internationally recognized legal doctrine which influenced the development, and application, of *common law*. Essentially, the doctrine presumed “the continuity of pre-existing systems of laws and institutions along with respect for private proprietary rights upon conquest” (Bulkan 2008: 182). What, then, was the understanding of Amerindian land rights at the time of capitulation? Secondly, were indigenous landholdings preserved under the principles of continuity? Recall, dispossession of indigenous peoples was prohibited under Dutch rule and there were no examples of legal extinguishment of the Amerindians’ pre-existing rights to land and resources. Thus, reviewing myriad Crown policies, Bulkan (2008) asserts that the *common law* recognized the rights of native peoples and the Amerindians, for all intents and purposes, were not exempt from the doctrine of continuity.

The British crown, then, acquired jurisdiction over the three colonies: it possessed the power to administer the affairs of the colony; exercise jurisdiction over its residents; and regulate relations with foreign entities. With respect to control over land, the following Letters Patent of 1831 provide a clear indication as to what the Crown acquired. Consider, for example, the following extract to Sir Benjamin D'Urban, British Guiana's first Governor. Pursuant to this written order, he was given the power to:

*“Make and execute, in our name and under the Public Seal of our said Colony, grants of our waste land to us belonging within the said Colony, to private persons for their own use and benefit, or to any persons, bodies politic or corporate in trust, for the public uses of our subjects, there resident or any of them”* (as cited in Shahabuddeen 1978: 157).

The “*waste lands*” referred to above must, perforce, refer exclusively to “public lands” – that is, lands that once belonged to the Dutch West India Company and vacant lands. “Public lands” or “*waste lands*”, therefore, did not include lands subject to the Amerindians’ pre-existing customary interests, on account of the principles of the doctrine of continuity (Bulkan 2008). Moreover, pursuant to the legislative scheme instituted in British Guiana, the Amerindians’ rights to such territories could only have been lawfully extinguished if (a) legal entities possessed the constitutional authority to extinguish such rights and (b) if legislation featured a ‘clear and plain’ intention of extinguishment (Bulkan 2008).

The aim of this chapter, like that of the previous one, is to identify the disjuncture between institutional and legal discourse and what actually happened on the colonial ground. We must recognize how abyssal ideology penetrated certain social structures, shaping the asymmetric powers relations between the English and the Amerindians. What is of import, therefore, is understanding how the indigenous peoples went from being a relatively autonomous ally of the British to subjects of the Crown (Greene 1946). Often described as complex and expedient (Menezes 1979), the policies of the British government embraced both humanitarian and non-humanitarian philosophies. Governors, Secretaries of State, Members of the Legislature, and many more, saw the potential of fostering friendly relations with the Amerindians, but this was short lived. As mentioned in chapter One, the years following the unification of the colonies in 1831 brought about tremendous changes in the colony: the abolition of slavery, the influx of indentured laborers, and the redefining of constitutional powers among various governmental institutions and political bodies.

What, then, were the effects of the colony's new political economy on the native population? In the previous chapter, I presented a succinct look at how the Dutch settlements and forts affected the Amerindians: increasing dependence upon the Dutch for goods and services supplanted traditional occupations, altering communal dynamics and lifestyles. As stated above, the operative principle guiding the British administration was the doctrine of continuity and the preservation of laws and existing rights to private property. Certain administrative bodies- the office of the Postholder, for instance- remained untouched. As alluded to in the previous chapter, the role of the Postholder had become overtly political. Charged with the task of maintaining order and promoting

peace among the community members in close proximity to the posts, the English, like the Dutch, fostered good relations with the natives and this was evident in some of the Instructions to Postholders enacted by the Court of Policy in 1803. What is also of import during the years preceding English rule over Guiana was the establishment of the post of the Protector of Indians. Historian Mohamed Shahabuddeen (1978) suggests that the office was created between 1793 and 1803 and that it must have been the creation of the Dutch. This office, however, seemed to flourish under British rule because by 1824, there were 6 appointed Protectors scattered across Essequibo and Demerara (Menezes 1977). The Postholders were expected to submit journals to the Protectors, documenting notable occurrences near their posts; if the Amerindians wished to make complaints about being mistreated, the Protectors would conduct investigations into the matter. What is more, the Protectors drafted reports for the Governor, keeping track of the number of natives on their reservations.

The maintenance of good relations between the British and the Amerindians during the early years of the new administration was clearly evident in the numerous Articles of capitulation, republished bans against Amerindian slavery, and Instructions governing the Postholders. Consider, for example, the Proclamation of January 26<sup>th</sup>, 1808, which reiterates the position embraced by the English regarding the enslavement of the Amerindians. It read:

*“Whereas it is of the utmost importance for the welfare of the colony, that the aforesaid laws [forbidding the enslavement of free Amerindians] be strictly observed... no person or persons whatsoever shall be permitted in*

*these Colonies either to purchase, possess or treat as slaves any of the free Indians of this country (it being understood that in this prohibition are included all such Indians as are offered for sale by other Indians, of whatever tribe, sex, age, or condition that they may be) ”...*

(C.O. 116/64, National Archives, UK).

Consider, too, some of the Articles from the Court of Policy outlining the duties of the Postholders. The following are extracted from Governor D’Urban’s log, dated May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1827:

*“Article 1*

*The Postholder shall keep an Accurate Journal of his proceedings and all the occurrences at the Post.*

*Article 2*

*He shall transmit (quarterly) a copy of his Journal to the protector of his district.*

*Article 3*

*In case of any extraordinary occurrence; at or near the Post, he shall immediately acquaint therewith the Protector.*

*Article 4*

*He shall take care to keep the Post in good order; and he shall use his utmost exertions to attach to the Post, the Indians who call upon him, or who live in his vicinity.*

*Article 5*

*He shall endeavor on all occasions to prevent misunderstandings or quarrels between the several Indian Tribes; and where any such exist, he shall exert himself to restore peace.*

*Article 6*

*When required by the Protector, he shall be obliged to repair to him Without loss of time, and to execute promptly any orders he may Receive from the Protector.*

*Article 7*

*He shall not permit any persons, whether Whites, free colored, or Negroes, to pass the Post unless they show him a pass, from the Governor, or from one of the Protectors of the Indians; the latter being empowered to grant such passes, which must always specify the reason why the Persons therein are to go beyond the Post.*

*Article 11*

*He is on no account to compel the Indians to do any job, or work of whatever nature for him.*

*Article 13*

*Should any Indian apply to him with complaints of ill treatment against other persons, he shall repair with such Indian to the Protector, who will then examine and enquire into the complaint and give redress if the case requires it.*

*Article 18*

*In case of any Indians passing the Post to go down the River, the Postholder shall recommend to them to wait on the Protector”*

(C.O. 111/60, National Archives, UK).

The aforementioned Proclamation and Articles must be put in historical context: drafted during the years preceding the abolition of slavery in the British Empire, such texts address the implications of slavery’s abolition, whilst encouraging the surveillance of indigenous peoples and the rise of the protectionist/assimilationist era. One component of Dutch policy that the English failed to embrace wholeheartedly was the system of patronage. Created during the reign of the Dutch, the system provided presents to the Amerindians for services rendered, but the new government viewed this as an unnecessary expense. The expenditure reserved for the Amerindians’ rations declined substantially because the tremendously influential planter class did not approve of such trivial expenses, neither did the Colonial Office in London. Consider, for example, a letter drafted in 1813 by one Edward Codd, Acting Governor of Essequibo and Demerara. In this letter, Codd is asking the assigned Postholder to answer questions pertaining to the status of the Amerindians, in an attempt to gauge whether or not the government could reduce the expenditure on rations and allowances for the natives:

*Sir,*

*I have the honour to request that you will by the first opportunity transmit to me for the information of his Majesty’s Ministers, answers to the following questions, and the Return sent herewith is to be transmitted henceforward every three months, beginning*

*with the first of next October.*

*Question 1. How far do the Indians under you contribute to their own support by cultivating the Ground, raising stock, hunting or fishing?*

*Question 2. What kind of rations or allowances are given to the Indians at your post, and what expenses may the establishment Of your post, annually cost the Government?*

*Question 3. What employments are the Indians under you generally engaged in, and could not their labour in some manner be directed to objects useful to themselves and the Country, so as to lessen the annual expense of supporting them?*

*Question 4. What is your opinion of the practicality of inducing The Indians to raise Cattle, Goats, Pigs, Stock, etc. for their own Benefit, or could they learn any Useful Trade?*

*Question 5. By what means in your opinion could the Indians be made more useful to the Colony, without being so great an expense as at present? (as cited in Menezes 1977: 283).*

Codd's letter encapsulates the sentiments during the years leading up to the unification of the colonies. The Amerindians, once hailed as vital to the establishment of Dutch settlements, were now an annoyance and the English wanted to reduce the State's expenditure vis-à-vis Amerindian rations and allowances.



As a direct result, Postholders were paid a paltry wage, while the Protectors were not even paid a salary. The former failed to protect the natives from English settlers and, in fact, exploited the Amerindians for personal gain. William Hillhouse, the Quarter Master General of the Amerindians, put forth trenchant criticisms of Postholder/Protector governance, citing numerous examples of corruption, abuse of power and negligence. It wasn't until 1833 that the Court of Policy established a special committee to investigate these allegations and as a result, an 1838 Ordinance was passed entitled *An Ordinance appointing Superintendents of the Rivers and Creeks of British Guiana*. Also referred to as the 'Creek Bill', the purview of this piece of legislation included land and resource-use by the natives on both Crown and private lands; the inauguration of the Superintendent of Rivers and Creeks (a role which supplanted the Protector of Indians); and the new duties of the Postholders- namely, a recorded journal of all those who visited the rivers and creeks (Bulkan 2008). Superintendents, of which there was one for each colony, possessed more power than the Protectors insofar as they monitored the Postholders and made quarterly visits to the Posts; allocated funds to the Amerindians; investigated breaches of the peace such as minor criminal matters like theft and quarrels between members of Amerindian communities; and reported to the Governor the condition of the Posts. More importantly, however, were the provisions pertaining to land and timber grants. The settlement and development of the hinterland was now a priority for the English, as the ordinance exemplified their expanding jurisdiction over land and resources. The issuance of permits and licenses which addressed the cultivation and extraction of resources were regulated by this ordinance. Amerindian rights pertaining to occupation, cultivation and woodcutting, on the other hand, were acknowledged,

protected and exempt from the provisions of the ordinance. According to the legislation, persons who wished to “*enter upon, reside upon, or build upon, or cultivate any land in the Colony belonging to the Crown*” had to obtain a license of occupancy from the colony’s Governor. In a related vein, persons who wished to engage in timber harvesting, again, had to obtain a license. The failure to comply with these regulations carried serious ramifications: the removal from the land by the Superintendent and the seizure of wood unlawfully cut, for instance (Bulkan 2008). In 1857, an amended version of the ‘Creek Bill’ was introduced, retaining much of the regulations in the previous versions, whilst bestowing the powers of seizure onto sub-registrars, who worked under the tutelage of the Superintendents.

Despite the Colony’s reduced expenditure for the Amerindians, *An Ordinance appointing Superintendents of the Rivers and Creeks of British Guiana*, like the aforesaid Articles and other legal instruments concerning the Colony’s natives, maintained the philosophies of conciliation and accommodation once espoused by the Dutch.

Sociopolitical changes led to a decline in such philosophies and emphasis was placed on educating and civilizing the Amerindians, so that they may become productive members of the colony. The visible distinction between Colonizer/Colonized was foregrounded by invisible distinctions between Christian/Heathen, lending credence to the alleged moral and cultural superiority of the former and the moral degeneracy and inferiority of the latter. The result, of course, was a concerted attempt to integrate the Amerindians into the realm of Christianity.

Missionaries played a vital role in undertaking such a task. In 1836, the Select Committee on Aboriginal Tribes was appointed by the British government and two years

later, Governor Henry Light's administration championed a new philosophy: the Christianization of the Amerindians. What had begun during the period of Dutch rule over Guiana accelerated under British Guiana. Under the tutelage of humanitarian and missionary societies such as the London Missionary Society, the Church Missionary Society, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Essequibo, officials in British Guiana embraced the 'call', sharing the light of the Gospel with the benighted and primitive Amerindians. Despite the unwavering reluctance on the part of the Amerindians to relinquish their customary beliefs and faith in their paimen, missions were erected across the colonies: the Bartica Mission, the Waraputa Mission, the Santa Rosa Mission, and the Demerara River Missions (Menezes 1979).

The fervor of the missionaries, however, was short lived, as Governor Light himself conceded that christianising the Amerindians was futile. The Combined Court agreed with such an outlook, arguing that the expenditure dedicated to the establishment of Missions could have been utilized for more fruitful endeavors. The burgeoning timber and gold industries along the Essequibo river, too, impeded the success of some of the Missions. For example, when wood-cutters travelled in droves to Bartica Grove, the Mission succumbed to the detrimental consequences of the exploitation and demoralization of the natives, forcing the Amerindians to retreat further into the colony's interior. Sweeping epidemics of smallpox, cholera and measles; the inability of the missionaries to adopt Amerindian dialects; the dilemma of securing funding for the maintenance of these schools; and the blatant refusal on the part of the Amerindians to convert to Christianity were also factors which militated against the success of some of the Missions of the colony (Menezes 1979).

The Dutch-inspired system of annual and triennial presents was abandoned in 1837; the Office of Postholder was merged with the Office of the Superintendent of Rivers and Creeks in 1843; and the Office of the Protectors of the Indians was completely abolished but subsequently reinstated by the Governor during the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. What is of importance during this period, however, was the transformation the Office of the Superintendent of Rivers and Creeks underwent (Bulkan 2008). By the 1860s, it was clear that the intent of English legislation had changed; the welfare of the Amerindians was peripheral to the provision and regulation of land and resource grants by the Superintendents. In 1861, *An Ordinance to make better provision for the care and superintendence of the rivers, creeks, crown lands and forests of the Colony*, was enacted, placing emphasis on Crown lands and forests. The legislation exemplified the English administration's continued interest in capitalizing on the lucrative resources of the colony. Pursuant to the provisions of the ordinance, the Governor was permitted to offer free grants of land to immigrants for cultivation; offer land grants at a fixed fee of \$10 per acre; and provide woodcutting licenses for a term of up to 5 years. Another amendment of this ordinance would be introduced in 1871. Under this amended legislation, the following was enacted:

*“Henceforth the Governor may from time to time, by publication in the Official Gazette, make such regulations as to him shall seem meet, defining the privileges to be enjoyed by the Aboriginal Indians, in relation to the Rivers, Creeks, Crown Lands, and Forests, of the Colony, and may in like manner cancel, alter, and amend any of such regulations”* (Ordinance 12 of 1871 s. 2)

The privileges to be enjoyed by the Amerindians were published in September of the same year. Here are a few: (i) Amerindians were allowed to cut timber, but only on unlicensed and ungranted land for personal use; timber cut for the purposes of re-sale were subject to further restrictions, (ii) if Amerindians wished to harvest timber for disposal, only trees that would yield timber squared of a size less than 12 inches were to be cut, (iii) Amerindians could not sell their timber or shingles to a party involved in the wood-cutting industry, (iv) Amerindians were permitted to cut and gather troolies; make shingles; burn charcoal; and collect soil, rocks, stones and other substances, but only on unlicensed and ungranted Crown lands, and (v) the Amerindians were, under no circumstances, permitted to dig and remove minerals (Bulkan 2008). Such ‘privileges’ were, undoubtedly, controversial, as it was unclear whether or not this was an exhaustive list of privileges. Scholars such as Bulkan (2008) have argued that this could not have been an exhaustive list of privileges, because to assume so would mean that other Amerindian activities would have been extinguished by mere implication, a departure from the ‘clear and plain’ intention test mentioned above. Moreover, the ‘privileges’ served to regulate, and restrict, Amerindian activity on these lands, subjecting the indigenous population to the expanding jurisdiction of the English.

In 1873, another amendment was introduced: *An Ordinance to make provision for the establishment of the Crown Lands Department, and for the care and superintendence of the Crown Lands, Forests, Rivers and Creeks of the Colony*. As its moniker suggests, the ordinance emphasized British Guiana’s forest resources. The ordinance also paved the way for the creation of the Crown Lands Department. This governmental body signaled a shift in the administration of land and resources, necessitating the establishment of the

following positions: Crown Surveyor, Assistant Crown Surveyor, Commissaries of Taxation and Special Magistrates. The officials filling these positions were charged with the tasks once shouldered by the now defunct Office of the Superintendent of Rivers and Creeks, exercising guardianship over Crown lands, forests, rivers and creeks of the colony, in conjunction with executing surveys prior to the issuance of grants and licenses in relation to land.

Further amendments were made in 1887, 1898 and 1903, but it is the 1887 version, and the *Indian Regulations*, which warrant attention, as they introduced comprehensive regulations over what the Amerindians were permitted to do. Here are some examples from the *Indian Regulations*: (i) Amerindians were allowed to occupy ungranted and unlicensed Crown lands, but only if they resided on these lands, (ii) Amerindians were permitted to clear ungranted forested lands for cultivation but were restricted to designated regions already licensed to a third party or to areas which were previously cleared and cultivated, (iii) Amerindians could cut, dig, and remove substances from ungranted and unlicensed Crown lands, but were restricted to only those resources required for constructing a dwelling house, (iv) Amerindians were permitted to continue cutting and gathering resources such as palm trees, posts, spars and hollow trees from ungranted and unlicensed Crown lands but had to obtain written permission from the Magistrate in that district, and (v) Amerindians could continue cutting timber on ungranted and unlicensed Crown lands for personal use but they had to, again, obtain written permission from the Magistrate, which was only valid for three months but could be renewed after that duration. Other restrictions included the fact that, under no circumstances, were the Amerindians allowed to cut bullet trees; timber was to be sold to

the government, or to private parties for personal use only; and only trees of a certain size were allowed to be cut. If these regulations were not followed, the Amerindians faced severe penalties: suspension and potential forfeiture of privileges- for example. Thus, such regulations, according to Bulkan (2008) did not extinguish Amerindian rights, but sought to preserve these privileges in relation to the resources of the land. Granted, the regulations were created with the intention of controlling how these resources were to be utilized by the indigenous populations and this often led to the infringement of the Amerindians' rights to resources on ungranted and unlicensed Crown lands.

Subsequent revisions of the ordinance took place in 1910, 1915 and 1919, serving as the antecedent of present-day Guyana's *State Lands Act*. Pursuant to the provisions of the colonial ordinance, the Governor could make grants of Crown land to the colony, grant leases, licenses of occupancy and permissions to occupy Crown land and forests. While resources such as timber and balata were the property of the grantee, all other minerals such as gold, silver, bauxite, precious stones, gems, etc. were reserved for the Crown. The 1919 ordinance featured various types of leases- namely, leases for agricultural ventures and leases for grazing purposes. Amerindian rights were protected pursuant to the regulations. Consider, for example, an extract from the 1919 legislation:

*“The Amerindians shall have the right at all times to enter upon any unenclosed or enclosed but otherwise unimproved part of the land leased for the purpose of seeking their subsistence therefrom in their accustomed manner without molestation but shall not have the right to disturb the lessee in the peaceable occupation and enjoyment of the land comprised in his lease”*

(Crown Land Regulations 1919: Reg 39)

During the final decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, new legislation covering Amerindian rights and privileges vis-à-vis resources and land were introduced, abandoning the accommodating ordinances of the past. Take, for example, the *Indian Regulations* of 1890, which conferred upon the natives limited privileges to using timber and mineral resources in their territories. What is more, the new legislation put forth legal definitions of who was recognized as an Amerindian. Those “*whose parents are both of pure Indian blood and belong to the Aboriginal tribes of this colony*” (*Indian Regulations 1890: 2(1)*) were recognized as the original inhabitants of the land. Female Amerindians, on the other hand, forfeited the privileges outlined in the regulations if they married or lived with non-Amerindian men. “Half-breeds”- that is, those individuals who had one Amerindian parent- had to register within 6 months after the Regulations were enacted, so that the Magistrates could compile a list of these individuals.

Another important feature of British sovereignty was the considerable influence the English had over the political structures of Amerindian communities. In 1896, the *Indians (Captains and Constables) Ordinance* was passed. This legislation enabled the Governor of the colonies to appoint ‘Captains’ (*Touchaus*) within Amerindian communities. Appointed members were expected to carry out the Governor’s bidding, fundamentally altering the dynamics of indigenous communities. This ordinance was followed by the *Aboriginal Indians Protection Ordinance* of 1902, which led to the demarcation of reservations in an attempt to protect the natives from the deleterious effects of the expanding mining, logging and myriad resource extractive operations scattered throughout the country’s interior and hinterlands. The result of a paternalist



philosophy, the *Aboriginal Indians Protection Ordinance* of 1902 served, albeit superficially, as protectionist legislation, protecting both the lands and the Amerindians occupying these areas. What is more, the Governor was charged with the task of designating areas as “Indian districts”, in addition to carving up “unoccupied Crown Land” as destinations for reservations.

Accompanying the passage of this ordinance was the establishment of ten reservations, but the communities did not receive formal recognition, as titles for these reserves were not issued to them. This ordinance also revived the Office of the Protector of the Indians, bestowing upon the Protectors, and the Deputy Protectors, the power to govern the reservations. Some of the powers entrusted to these officials included mediating conflicts between members of the reservations; initiating and monitoring civil and criminal matters; and forbidding Amerindian women from cohabiting with non-Amerindian men unless, of course, they were deserted by their Amerindian husbands. 6 years later, the *Aboriginal Indians (Intoxicating Liquors) Ordinance* was enacted, prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquor to the Amerindians. Concomitantly, any Amerindian found to be in a “state of intoxication” was liable to arrest and detention until sober (Menezes 1977; Bulkan 2008).

In 1910, the *Aboriginal Indians Protection Ordinance* of 1902 was repealed and replaced by a new ordinance, which retained the same title. While this piece of legislation maintained most of the powers outlined in its 1902 predecessor, the powers granted to the Governor expanded so that he could now appoint Protectors, Sub-Protectors Captains, constables and Superintendents to oversee the political affairs of the reservations. Some modifications were made to the previous ordinance: Governors retained the power to

demarcate areas as Indian districts, creating reservations; “unoccupied Crown Lands” were no longer used for the purposes of creating reservations; and formal proprietary rights were still not given to the Amerindian communities situated on these reservations.

Furthermore, the new ordinance entrusted extremely invasive powers on Governors insofar as he could: relocate Amerindians from one reservation to another, under the guise of protecting Amerindians from the detrimental effects of mining regimes; allow non-Amerindians onto the reservations; prohibit traditional Amerindian customs and rites thought to be detrimental to the welfare of the community; and allocate the monies earned by members of the reservation. The revived position of the Protector was also given sweeping powers under this ordinance, as they ensured that wages due to members of the reservation be paid to himself so that he may allocate the money accordingly. One controversial provision of the ordinance was the Protector’s purview with respect to the “care, protection and management” of property belonging to the Amerindians: the Protector could lawfully dispose of this property and could exercise power over the land without consent from the owner (Bulkan 2008).

The *Aboriginal Indians Protection Regulations* of 1911 followed the institutionalization of English control over the Amerindians and their lands, maintaining racial segregation. Under this ordinance, the Protectors regulated nearly all activity on the reservations; only Amerindians, female half-castes, missionaries and teachers lived on the reservations, while others had to gain permission from the Protectors in order to venture onto these demarcated lands. If the Protector did not approve of someone entering the reservation, an appeal could be made to the Governor, whose decision was final. The *Aboriginal Indians Protection Regulations* of 1911 further eroded the sovereignty of the

Amerindians, as the socio-cultural impact of these regulations on those residing on the reservations is well documented by Bulkan (2008: 246), who describes the provisions of the ordinance as an attempt to suppress indigenous customs, instituting “a long-term policy of forced assimilation”. According to the regulations, the Governor was empowered to prohibit “Pui-men” (community sorcerers) from living on the reservations, thus denying community members their right to practice indigenous ceremonies.

During the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, the *Amerindian Ordinance* was passed, perpetuating the paternalist ethos of its predecessors. Some notable changes were made, however. For instance, the term ‘Aboriginal Indian’ was replaced with ‘Amerindian’; Protectors of Indians were now designated as ‘Chief Officers’; and the system of reservations was supplanted with ‘districts, areas and villages’, continuing to deny formal proprietary rights to the Amerindians inhabiting these spaces. The creation of these ‘districts, areas and villages’ commenced what Logan Hennessy (2005) describes as mission-based settlements, a precursor to policies of “villagization” during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The foregrounding of ‘districts, areas and villages’ under British rule signaled the beginning of race-based policies, facilitating the crude consolidation of indigenous culture and the promotion of a broad Amerindian race. Such policies obfuscated ethnic and tribal relations to lands, so that now the Amerindians could not utilize any lands beyond the demarcated spaces allocated to them, rendering the diversity of Amerindian culture into seemingly intelligible, homogenous units. What is more, the English instituted structures of Amerindian representation (via the appointment of *Touchaus*) without reference to Indigenous governance, institutions and customary

norms- a legacy which exacerbates Amerindian struggles to address outstanding land claims to this day (Hennessy 2005).

Like the role of the Protector, the purview of the Chief Officer included: managing property belonging to the Amerindians; appointing Captains in the districts, areas and villages; conducting legal proceedings on behalf of the Amerindians; establishing village councils; and granting permission to individuals wishing to enter Amerindian districts, areas and villages. The Governor, like before, was given a supervisory role, overseeing the Chief Officer and their myriad tasks. The *Amerindian Ordinance* also gave rise to the positions of the “District Commissioner” and “Officer”- both of which worked alongside the Chief Officer. The most controversial component of the ordinance, undoubtedly, was the establishment of ‘districts, areas and villages’, all of which limited Amerindian self-governance. Granted, the ordinance encouraged the establishment of village councils and the appointment of Amerindian Captains, but the Chief Officers could revoke these appointments at any moment and it was the Governor who had the final word on the rules, taxes and judicial decisions of the districts, areas and villages. Like previous ordinances, the *Amerindian Ordinance* of 1951 institutionalized the Chief Officer’s supervisory authority over the Amerindians in the following manner: the allocation of monies from taxation; the acquisition and management of Amerindian land under the guise of “preservation”; and the determination of who among the community were real Amerindians. Bulkan (2008: 253) aptly observes that the *Amerindian Ordinance* served as a mechanism of control, as the “Amerindians had become subject to the dictates of a colonial overlord, in theory at least no longer able to live, work or travel in the territory as freely as they had done prior to contact”. The

institutional framework devised by the British would remain intact until the country gained independence in 1966.

### **The Forestry and Mining Sectors: Amerindian Rights and Crown Land**

The preceding section provides a comprehensive overview of the myriad ordinances drafted during the British era. Now, whether these ordinances were effective in achieving their stated objectives, however, is another matter of consideration. For example, prominent magistrate and surveyor, Vincent Roth (1941), observed that the provisions of *some* of the aforementioned ordinances were rarely enforced- namely, the ones concerning entry onto the reservations; the removal and relocation of Amerindians from one district to another; the employment of Amerindians; the payment of wages; and the sale of intoxicating liquor. This, he believed, was due to the government's inadequate staffing of Protectors and Postholders; the misapplication (and misinterpretation) of these pieces of legislation by the Protectors and Postholders; and, most importantly, the refusal on the part of the Amerindians to comply with such invasive and oppressive relations. Why, then, are these ordinances worthy of analysis and investigation for the purposes of this dissertation? The aforementioned pieces of legislation provide the socio-cultural context in which my critical discourse analysis takes place. What is more, these ordinances exemplify the attempted imposition of abyssal ideology upon the colony's native peoples. The '*subject*-ification' of the Amerindians- that is, the process of transforming these autonomous peoples into mere wards of the state- was a concomitant of the Santosian divide of social reality into two realms: "this side of the line" and "the other side of the line". But before I elaborate on the importance of abyssal thinking, and the cross-fertilization of CDA and the eco-crimes framework, it behooves us to explore

what rights the Amerindians possessed in relation to lands designated as Crown lands, especially with respect to the forestry and mining sectors. According to the doctrine of continuity, the moment the English acquired sovereignty over the colonies, the Crown acquired *radical* title to all land, obtaining beneficial interests in public lands. This meant that the pre-existing, indigenous customary interests, institutions and proprietary rights were protected, whilst “*waste lands*” and “public lands”, both of which were previously owned by the Dutch West India Company, were transferred to the Crown during the period of unification. What of the lands not subject to Amerindian rights of ownership, but nevertheless utilized by the native inhabitants for a multitude of purposes?

Bulkan (2008) asserts that the myriad Crown Lands Ordinances drafted during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, while never *extinguishing* the pre-existing rights of the country’s indigenous peoples, authorized the English to grant interests over public lands- some of which the Amerindians did not possess proprietary rights over, but used for various purposes for time immemorial. Might these rights to “*waste lands*” and “public lands” be threatened by third parties who availed themselves of the grants and licenses offered by the Crown? Reviewing a plethora of cases across the British empire, Bulkan (2008) avers that the Amerindians’ rights to these lands, for the majority, could not have been extinguished. This, he explains, is because the Crown ordinances enumerated in the previous section failed to specify what exactly constituted Crown lands; in other words, legislation was far too ambiguous to terminate the Amerindians’ pre-existing rights to areas that were subject to grants. What is more, as mentioned earlier, pursuant to the legislative scheme instituted in British Guiana, the Amerindians’ rights to such territories could only have been lawfully extinguished if (a) legal entities possessed the constitutional authority to

extinguish such rights and (b) if legislation featured a ‘clear and plain’ intention of extinguishment.

But this matter is further complicated, as the author reveals that by 1919, there were at least four types of interests which could be granted over land designated as ‘Crown lands’- some of which could, and could not, extinguish native rights: grants of up to 10 acres to small-scale cultivation; leases and licenses of occupancy for agricultural projects; permissions to occupy land for grazing; and leases and licenses regulating the extraction of natural resources. Consider, for example, grants covering small-scale cultivation: *absolute* grants of Crown land would, technically, have met the ‘clear and plain’ test for extinguishment of indigenous rights, but *absolute* grants were rare, as the majority of the private grants created only *limited* interests (fixed periods as in one to two years) in the land. The implications of such legislation translated into the *suspension* of Amerindian rights to use certain lands for the duration of the grants and leases; upon expiry of these grants and leases, Amerindian rights to use the lands would have been revived (Bulkan 2008). The same can be said of leases and licenses for agricultural projects, some of which clearly outlined specific conditions which were incompatible with Amerindian use of the same land. Once these grants expired, Amerindian rights would have been reinstated. Thus, the motif inherent in these grants over Crown lands is the infringement and extinguishment of Amerindian rights to land, contingent on the duration of licenses and leases.

With respect to other sectors under the control of the Crown, the English drafted specific legislation such as the *Forest Ordinance* in 1927, a corollary of the region’s booming timber industry. This piece of legislation empowered the Governor-in-Council

to designate forest reserves on any part of Crown land. Again, Amerindian rights were protected under the *Forest Ordinance*; in 1953, the ordinance was replaced by an updated version, which remained in force up until the 21<sup>st</sup> century. According to the new provisions: only grants of a leasehold nature were to be issued. It was an offence to be caught trespassing and unlawfully occupying Crown forests, but exceptions were made for travelers and those possessing claims of rights; finally, individuals were forbidden from cutting or removing forest resources such as trees, timber, plants, etc. The Amerindians, however, were exempt from these provisions and could not be prevented from invoking their traditional rights vis-à-vis Crown forests (Bulkan 2008).

The mining sector also garnered the attention of the English, resulting in a collection of legal provisions governing the extraction of minerals. In 1880, legislation entitled *An Ordinance to make provision for gold and silver mining* was enacted, empowering the Governor to grant licenses to mine for gold and silver on ungranted Crown lands. It was replaced seven years later by the *Mining Ordinance*, which presented detailed conditions for mining licenses and concessions. Of import was the provision that enabled the Governor to grant concessions and licenses over private lands- in other words, lands subject to Amerindian proprietary interests. As mentioned above, the establishment of districts and reservations were created with the intent of protecting Amerindians from the influx of settlers who availed themselves of the licenses and grants to engage the mining industry. Concomitantly, powers were conferred on the Governor to alter these districts and reservations, in order to accommodate expansive mining operations.

This was rectified, however, the same year when the *Gold Mining Regulations* was passed. It stated that only Crown lands were subject to mining claims. Furthermore,



it stated that “*All land occupied or used by the Aboriginal Indians and all land necessary for the quiet enjoyment by the Aboriginal Indians of any Indian settlement shall be deemed to be lawfully occupied by them*” (*Gold Mining Regulations*: reg.102). In subsequent legislation, the Amerindians’ traditional rights could not interfere with third party rights and, therefore, were suspended if they wished to mine on a commercial scale (Bulkan 2008). Now, whether or not these legal provisions were observed is an entirely different story. The disjuncture between legal theory and the reality of mining expeditions is captured in myriad reports of the social inequalities and environmental degradation associated with mining (Peberdy 1948; Colchester 1997). The evolution of legislation covering the mining sector reveals, for the most part, that the government recognized and sought to preserve the rights of the Amerindians to the use of minerals on these lands (Bulkan 2008).

What conclusions, then, can be drawn from the onslaught of legislation concerning Amerindians short of title on Crown lands? As can be gathered from a brief exploration of the ordinances drafted during British rule over the colony, the extinguishment of Amerindian rights over these lands occurred through the issuance of absolute grants, while the infringement of their rights occurred through limited grants. Bulkan (2008) provides a succinct summary of his findings with respect to Amerindian rights on ungranted Crown lands; to recapitulate, they are as follows: (i) Amerindians possessed rights of cultivation, but were restricted to areas where logging was not possible; (ii) Amerindians were permitted to cut, dig and remove substances from the land, but those resources could only be used for the erection of a dwelling; (iii) Amerindians had to seek permission to use certain resources, and those resources could

only be used for making crafts; and (iv) Amerindian rights to cut wood were governed by colonial officers, who regulated the purpose and duration of wood-cutting, but such restrictions did not apply to Crown forests, on account of separate legislation monitoring activity in this sector.

### **Abyssal Practice and the Production of Nonexistence**

How might we apply Santos' abyssal framework to English rule over the colony of British Guiana? The crux of abyssal thinking and ideology is the impossibility of co-presence; in other words, those who reside on "the other side of the line" are produced as nonexistent. How did this unfold during British rule? Let me provide three examples of how the nonexistence of the Amerindians was achieved. As early as 1836, the Select Committee on Aboriginal Tribes was appointed by the government to commence, under the tutelage of humanitarian and missionary societies such as the London Missionary Society, the Church Missionary Society, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the christianization of the Amerindian. Such a process was by no means an act of altruism on the part of the missionaries, as eloquently captured in Aimé Césaire's work *Discourse and Colonialism* (1972). In this piece of writing, Césaire states that any colonial activity is based on contempt for the native and that colonization equals "thingification". To perceive the original inhabitants of the colony as "things", then, confers a power on the colonizer to shape, and mold that "thing"- even to the point of nonexistence. And this is precisely what the English tried to do, by molding the Amerindians for a life of Christianity and Gospel, bringing the benefits of progress and civilization to the natives of the colony. It is the element of negation (Spurr 1993) which comprises a matrix of colonial ideology and *the naturalization of difference* (Santos

2006) which views the Amerindians (the Other) in terms of absence- that is, lacking in language, culture and intellect.

Secondly, the *Aboriginal Indians Protection Regulations* of 1911 permitted the the Governor to prohibit “Pui-men” (community sorcerers) from living on the reservations, thus denying community members their right to practice indigenous ceremonies. This provision in the ordinance encouraged the suppression of indigenous customs thought to be detrimental to the welfare of the Amerindians residing in these communities. Again, we have here a debasement (Spurr 1993) of Amerindian culture, in conjunction with the negation of traditional customs. This renders an ontological distinction between Colonizer/Colonized, facilitating *the naturalization of difference* between the two (Santos 2006). It is the impossibility of co-presence between these two entities which renders one liable to violent exclusion from conceptions of inclusion. The suppression and production of nonexistence of the Other serves to buttress notions of racial and cultural superiority of the colonizer, creating a social order based on alterity and the clear distinction between Us/Them.

And finally, the *Amerindian Ordinance* of the 1951 instituted a system of ‘districts, areas and villages’, but what these spaces accomplished was the obfuscation and negation of distinct tribes, and their relations to land. This legislation rendered the heterogeneous ethnicities- the splendid diversity of Amerindian cultures- into homogenous units for the purposes of governance and surveillance. The colonizer’s failure to recognize the distinct tribes of Amerindians rendered them “cultureless”, so to speak. In this sense, then, the native inhabitants’ histories, lifestyles, customs and culture, were erased and produced as nonexistent. The colonial authorities pursued policies of

boundary-making, reconfiguring villagers in relation to one another; in relation to other villages; and in relation to the colonial state (Hennessy 2005). Through the eyes of the colonizers, the simplistic distinction between European/Amerindian brought ‘clarity’ to the complex and diverse configuration of Amerindian peoples. All ethnicities, then, lying beyond this distinction were radically excluded from social reality. The *Amerindian Ordinance* not only produced the distinct tribes as nonexistent, but sought to render ethnic and tribal *relations* to land as nonexistent, literally producing new relations to land based simply on race. Therefore, tribes situated in these ‘districts, areas and villages’ were encouraged to use only these demarcated lands and resources, irrespective of their historical, traditional and customary uses of lands outside of these imposed, abyssal boundaries.

The three examples presented here adhere to Santos’ principle of the impossibility of co-presence between realms of social reality. Laws expanded British jurisdiction over the colonies, forcing the Amerindians to submit to these powers. Now that some examples of abyssal practice have been identified, let us now turn to examples of abyssal thinking via discourse. Invisible distinctions, or the dichotomous pairings of colonialism (Pennycook 2002), serve as the foundation of the visible distinctions- namely, the Us/Them, and Colonizer/Colonized binaries. What exactly are these invisible distinctions and dichotomous pairs to which Santos and Pennycook refer? The eco-crimes framework I posit in this dissertation enjoins green criminologists to understand the context in which cognitive injustice occurs and it is through an analysis of personal dispatches, journals and logs of British officials, triangulating these data with the

aforementioned ordinances and regulations, that we can piece together the anatomy of abyssal ideology and the invisible distinctions which foreground the visible ones.

### **Abyssal Ideology and Discourse**

Any post-colonial scholar worth their salt can speak to the centrality of racist language which denigrates the Other (Said 1978) and how the Other is located most fundamentally in language (Shapiro 1989), giving rise to the attendant Us/Them distinctions in the broader colonial project. Scholars such as Blaut (1993) and Spurr (1993) have also contributed to a vast body of work which uncovers the discursive dichotomies of Eurocentric diffusionism and the ‘rhetoric of empire’, respectively. Such dichotomies and distinctions are polarized opposites, which gained cultural currency and were transmitted throughout very powerful and influential social institutions on the colonial ground. In this section, I employ CDA to dig deeper into the discourses circulating during English rule over British Guiana, uncovering invisible dichotomies and distinctions. The Amerindians- the proverbial Other through the eyes of the English- were discursively produced as such, but underneath such a simplistic distinction (Us/Them and Colonizer/Colonized) lays a more complex division of social reality. CDA posits not only a tenable methodology in detecting how abyssal ideology was perpetuated during the period of British rule, but a theorization of how asymmetrical relations of power between the colonizer and colonized were maintained by various social structures.

Even before the founding of British Guiana, the British ruminated on how the Amerindians could be useful to the colony. Their knowledge of the vast interior was an asset which could not be denied, proving most valuable during their slave-hunting, ‘bush expeditions’. The socio-political landscape of the colonies, however, was undoubtedly

changing and such services would no longer be needed under British rule. What was needed, however, was an industrious people who could assist in the expansion of the colony. Consider the following dispatch by Governor Hugh Lyle Carmichael, dated January 18, 1813:

*“The Aborigines being a harmless and inoffensive people although indolent until famine forced them to hunt, it is very probable by a little encouragement and intercourse with well disposed Europeans they might gradually become extremely beneficial to the Colony at the same time improving their own situation and comforts without ostensibly encroaching upon their native liberties...*

*It has been observed by the Post-holders and white people near the borders that when paid in provisions, clothes or other articles they very cheerfully cut timber and clear the ground, but cannot be induced to till the earth”* (C.O. 111/15

Governor Hugh Lyle Carmichael to Earl of Bathurst)

The colony/nation ascendancy frame inheres in Governor Carmichael’s dispatch. The needs of the seemingly “*indolent*” natives are superseded by the colony’s expanding industry and in order to transform these “*harmless and inoffensive*” people into an industrious people, they must be exposed to the work ethic of the “*well disposed Europeans*” who will encourage them to engage certain industries, becoming “*extremely beneficial to the Colony at the same time improving their own situation and comforts*”.

Historical records have revealed that the Amerindians’ situation was hardly improved by

relinquishing their traditional customs and adopting habits of trade and commerce (Peberdy 1948; Colchester 1997; and Bulkan 2008). Thus, when Governor Carmichael states that the adoption of European ways will improve the situation and comforts of the Amerindians, he is really alluding to the benefit of the colony. The distinction between “*well disposed Europeans*” and “*indolent*” natives is an important one because it uncovers an ontological, invisible dichotomy and distinction: Industrious/Indolent. Pennycook (2002) explains that the cultural construction of the ‘indolent’ and ‘lazy native’ was an extremely important element of colonial capitalism; it justified conquest and, more importantly, the integration of native populations into colonial economies. In this extract, the Amerindians are portrayed as willing to abandon their cultural, subsistence-based practices, turning to “*provisions, clothes or other articles*” for services rendered- namely, cutting timber and clearing the ground. This representation of the Amerindians’ integration into the colonial economy, then, illuminates how English ‘industry’ can improve and advance this stagnant and lazy race. What is more, the Amerindians stand to gain many benefits through: “*a little encouragement and intercourse with well disposed Europeans*”.

The shifting socio-political terrains of British Guiana forced the country’s administration to question what role the Amerindians were poised to play in the colonies. Recall, the Combined Court and the planter class had always shown tremendous reluctance with respect to continuing the Dutch-inspired systems of presents and subsidies. The fervor of the abolitionists swept across the British Empire during the 1830s and there were discussions as to how the Amerindians could be made useful to the

colony, especially with respect to transforming them into an industrious people. Consider an assessment from one Dr. John Waddell, dated February 2, 1830:

*“The Natives or Indians have no writings on any subject, or of any kind and are perfectly unacquainted with the use of Letters, living in the lowest state of Barbarism; not at all improved since the settlement of the Whites in their vicinity. They are perfectly free and not at all subject to any kind of compulsory exertion or industry, and it would not be easy to induce them to submit to any regular instruction that did not accord with their indolent habits. They are therefore likely to remain in their present uncultivated state without any prospect of change”* (C.O. 111/69. Reports of Doctor D’Urban to Twiss).

Dr. Waddell’s report features both the deficit-oriented frame and the assimilation frame insofar as it purports to capture the indolence of the Amerindians in their current state. The lexicalization and hyperbole of the report is most telling, as it seeks to capture the most glaring deficits of the natives. Passages such as *“living in the lowest state of Barbarism”* and *“their indolent habits”* illuminate the debilitating characteristics which inhibit their growth and development in the colony. What is more, the use of metaphors such as *“they are therefore likely to remain in their present uncultivated state without any prospect of change”* lend credence to the philosophy of the time that the “cultivation” of the Amerindians is possible if the proper instruction and guidance is provided to them.

The assimilation frame, specifically, is captured in the following phrase: *“they are perfectly free and not at all subject to any kind of compulsory exertion or industry”*.



The implications of such a statement are that the natives *need* to be subject to some kind of compulsory exertion or industry if they are to overcome their state of barbarism and indolence. An important component of CDA is placing discourse in its proper socio-cultural context; thus, Dr. Waddell's report must be read as a clarion call to Governor D'Urban to integrate the Amerindians into a lucrative enterprise or industry, lest they languish in indolence. Visible distinctions are foregrounded by other, invisible dichotomies and distinctions: Human/Sub-human and, again, Industrious/Indolent, as the purported barbarism of the Amerindians can only be reformed through assimilation into a culturally superior tradition of European colonial capitalism. Such derogatory imagery of barbarism, furthermore, undergirds the cultural inferiority of native, subsistence economies, forcing them to attain enlightenment through direct participation in advanced and sophisticated colonial enterprises: agriculture, trade and commerce.

The pressing need to civilize the Amerindians is a common leitmotif in the discourses produced by various government officials during this period. Consider a passage from Governor Henry Light's memorandum on the state of the Indians, dated October 9, 1848:

*"The Indians' life has been of squalid infancy- a youth without instruction- a manhood of sloth and sensual gratification- an old age of misery and abandonment..."*

*Though I enforced as much as possible decent covering to be worn by Indians on the high ways and towns yet they still risk being arrested by the police, and from time to time enter the capital, naked, except a lap of linen round their waist- the women*

*with a mere petticoat- the body bare to the waist- the children naked  
except with a small fringe apron called Cuhii'*

(C.O.111/253).

Governor Light's assessment of the state of the Indians features a rather stinging criticism of the Amerindians' lifestyle. Like the preceding passage, there is evidence of the deficit-oriented frame, in conjunction with the invisible dichotomy and distinction between Civilized/Uncivilized, when he presents such a vivid description of the lifecycle of the natives: their youth is "*without instruction*", their manhood comprised of "*sloth and sensual gratification*", and their old age is one of "*misery and abandonment*". Light, furthermore, states that their entire life is one of "*squalid infancy*", reiterating his point that there is clearly something different about these peoples- something in total contradistinction to people like himself, who have tried tirelessly to provide such instruction. An example of such instruction is captured in the following statement where he stresses how much he has tried to enforce "*as much as possible decent covering to be worn by Indians*". The language employed by Light underscores the perverse morality, degeneracy and backwardness of the Amerindians; they are portrayed and represented as the very antithesis of European culture and values.

In conjunction with the deficit-oriented frame, the paternalism frame illuminates the asymmetric relations between the British and the Amerindians. As mentioned above, during British rule over Guiana, incessant disputes over the boundaries of the colonies, and its inhabitants, occurred between the British government and the Venezuelan government. The former sought to resolve these disputes by claiming that the Amerindians, and their land, were under British jurisdiction and that they required the

protection of Her Majesty from Brazilian slave-hunting expeditions. The following is a memoir of Robert Schomburgk. In this particular account, dated July 16, 1839, a case for the protection of the Amerindians is articulated:

*“If the Indians who inhabit these regions are to be rendered useful subjects, the uncertainty of our boundary claims the particular attention of her Britannic Majesty’s Government. They have frequently inquired from me where they might settle in order to come under British protection. But from the existing uncertainty, I have not been able to return them a decisive answer. Terrified by the threats of the Brazilians, and their commands not to attend to the instructions of the missionaries, they wandered among such haunts, as are only known to themselves, and the wild beasts of the forests, and the work of civilization, which began with such fine prospects, have been unfortunately checked”* (C.O. 111/164. Schomburgk’s Report enclosed in Light to Normanby).

Consider, also, the following memo from J. Stephen, dated October 18, 1841. In it, Stephen comments on the protection white settlers could afford natives living in their vicinity:

*“As to the relation between the Indians and the settlers with whom they live the question would seem to be whether it is possible to substitute anything better for it. As long as these people continue in their present savage and ignorant state and are exposed to be*

*destroyed by the members of their own tribe, it is not easy to see what better could befall the weak and helpless among them, than they should live in the Family of a settler and under his protection, even though he pays them no wages and will not let them quit his service at their pleasure’* (C.O. 111/180. British Guiana 1618 and 2220. Memo of J. Stephen to Mr. Hope).

Finally, the following dispatch from Governor Henry Light, dated July 14, 1842, stresses the importance of settling disputes over the boundaries of Guiana, and offering protection to the Amerindians:

*“At present Great Britain nor the Brazils can be much benefitted by any of the disputed territory- but as the progress of British Guiana in population and prosperity is much more likely to be in advance than in the Brazils, not one inch of territory should be yielded o plea of prior claim; the owners of soil, if there are any, are the Aborigines, who are notoriously oppressed by the Brazilians and will incur greater oppression if once it is supposed that they are abandoned by Great Britain, a fact that will be easily made credible by the withdrawal of the Troops, and the boastful preparations to drive the British from Pirard’* (C.O. 111/192 Light to Stanley).

What is evinced in these texts is the necessity of British intervention in the lives of the Amerindians. The paternalism frame operates on many levels in these texts, uncovering an extremely important invisible dichotomy and distinction: Adult/Child. Pennycook (2002) reveals that this discursive polarity was mapped onto and developed through the

process of colonialism, constructing colonized peoples as helpless children. Whether it is through elevating the savage to the ranks of civilized manhood, or taking the natives from a state of infancy to maturity (Arnold 1815), the invisible Adult/Child dichotomy foregrounds the visible Colonizer/Colonized distinction, conferring authority and power on the former. In Schomburgk's passage, the Amerindians require protection from various threats- in this example, the Brazilians. If the natives are to prove themselves as "*useful subjects*"; British protection is required, lest they spend the rest of their days languishing in despair. This point is strengthened when Schomburgk states that the Amerindians are "*terrified by the threats of the Brazilians*". The implication here, of course, is that the British can protect them from the slave-hunting Brazilians.

Similarly, in Stephen's memo, it is the author's fervent contention that if the Amerindians remain in their "*present savage and ignorant state*", they run the risk of being destroyed by the savagery of neighboring tribes. He proceeds by stating that if these natives are granted the opportunity to live among the white settlers, they will be afforded protection from their barbarism: "*it is not easy to see what better could befall the weak and helpless among them, than they should live in the Family of a settler and under his protection*".

In Governor Light's dispatch, phrases such as "*the owners of soil, if there are any, are the Aborigines, who are notoriously oppressed by the Brazilians*" reveal that the Amerindians are the true proprietors of the land. This, however, is purely strategic, as he follows such a statement by declaring that the Brazilians are subjecting them to tremendous suffering and that "*greater oppression*" will ensue if the Amerindians are "*abandoned by Great Britain*". Thus, the English are not only securing their holding over

the colonies, but serving as a benevolent force, protecting the natives from neighboring countries. The leitmotif in these extracts is the paternal care provided by Her Majesty. In these texts, the Amerindians are portrayed as helpless and passive wards of the state- their very welfare contingent on the benevolent English.

The notion of the British providing protection is coupled with the provision of guidance and instruction to the “ignorant” denizens of the forest. This motif is repeated throughout myriad journals, logs and reports during this period. An apotheosis of such guidance and instruction can be found in the discourses surrounding legal jurisdiction over the Amerindians. There was no formal code of law regulating the social relationships between Amerindian tribes; their customs stemmed from their indigenous religious doctrines- some of which permitted acts of retribution. If secular offences such as homicide, theft and adultery occurred within the community, personal justice was exercised (Menezes 1979). What is more, the Amerindians believed that their world was dominated by spirits – some of which were evil; if a community witnessed the death of one of its members, such suffering was attributed to evil forces and it was incumbent upon that unfortunate soul’s nearest kin to avenge her death.

In 1831, the British recorded the first murder case of an Arawak Amerindian called ‘Billy William’ and this incited a protracted debate regarding whether or not the English had legal jurisdiction over the natives and, most importantly, if the prosecution of a people with limited understanding of British jurisprudence was feasible (Menezes 1979). The following passage is extracted from the reports of Lord Goderich, the Secretary of the State for the colonies. Penned precisely one year after the ‘Billy William’

case, the report captures the outlook of the British towards the Amerindians and their customs of retribution:

*“The general question as to the exercise of the British Courts of a criminal jurisdiction over the Indian tribes though it involves some difficulties, admits, I think, upon the whole of little hesitation. Penal laws devised for a civilized community cannot of course be applied indiscriminately and in their entire extent to regulate the conduct of a people in a state of barbarism”*

(C.O. 112/16. Goderich to D’Urban: 1832).

Consider, too, the following article from British Guiana’s *Royal Gazette*, dated March 7, 1854, encapsulating the debate which unfolded within the British administration during the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century:

*“Chief Justice...The Court ought not...to meddle with the Indians. They had always just the same proceedings over and over, the plea and the jurisdiction, and the Court’s decision, etc. The best mode was to let those people fight their own battles. We had nothing to do with people living 400 miles up the country; they owed no obedience, and were not subject to our laws, and were living in the interior like monkeys and baboons. They would beat one another to death with clubs, for such was the customs of their tribes”*

(Minutes of the Combined Court in the Royal Gazette: 1854)

Both passages feature the deficit-oriented frame, enabling the identification of invisible distinctions: Civilized/Uncivilized and Rationality/Intellect vs.

Irrationality/Emotion/Instinct. The English represent themselves as bearers of reason, rationality and intellect, whilst discursively portraying the Amerindians as guided by animalistic instinct- in other words, incapable of reaching such a state of intellectual and moral development (Pennycook 2002). Divisions between Civilized/Uncivilized and Rationality/Intellect vs. Irrationality/Emotion/Instinct are captured in phrases such as: *“Penal laws devised for a civilized community cannot of course be applied indiscriminately”* and *“they owed no obedience, and were not subject to our laws, and were living in the interior like monkeys and baboons”*. Contrastive terms such as *“civilized community”*, followed by *“state of barbarism”* grant discursive currency to these invisible dichotomies and distinctions. In the latter, it becomes more explicit in the likening of the Amerindians to *“monkeys and baboons”*; serving to illuminate their intellectual and moral inferiority through the use of metaphor.

As mentioned in the previous section, the zeal of the missionaries swept through colonies during the early 1800s. The mandate of these men and women of God was simple: *“uplift, civilize, and bring the poor, benighted savages out of the darkness of their superstitious beliefs into the light of the Gospel”* (Menezes: 1979: 217). Thus, the Santosian, radical division of social reality is further exemplified by the reports of the men and women who set out into the interior to bring the word of God to the heathens. Consider this dispatch from Reverend J.H. Bernau, dated December 22, 1836:

*“Not only are their dwellings completely surrounded by bush and almost inaccessible to a stranger; but also their mind is so overgrown with superstition and indolence, that it would appear every vestige of conscience and consciousness of the*



*existence of a supreme good being were completely closed'*

(CW/08/11c. J.H. Bernau to D. Coates).

In this dispatch, the Amerindians, again, are slotted into invisible distinctions: Science/Sorcery, Sanity/Insanity and Discipline/Spontaneity. These pairings render ontological distinctions between the European and the Other (Singh 1996; Pennycook 2002). In the extract above, Reverend Bernau comments on the Amerindians' dwellings saying they are "*completely surrounded by bush*" and their minds "*overgrown with superstition and indolence*". The implications of such language is to demonstrate that these heathen souls require the instruction and guidance of the Christian missionaries, lest their "*conscience and consciousness*" of a benevolent Christian God remain closed in perpetuity. Recall, some Amerindian religious customs were prohibited through legislation. Thus, if we place the above extract in context, we identify how the paternalism frame was used as a peremptory call to the British administration, reminding the government that missionary work in the country's interior was, in fact, a worthwhile endeavor.

What becomes evident when reviewing the texts pertaining to the Christianization of the Amerindians is the irrefutable nexus between Christianity and civilization, a common feature of colonialism. Consider the following dispatch from Robert Schomburgk, dated October 21, 1841:

*"I am too well acquainted with the Indian character  
to expect a perfect reform in the adult Indians, and  
the Missionary has no doubt reaped a similar experience.  
The chief object is therefore, to inculcate in the minds*

*of the youth entrusted to his care, religious precepts, the benefits of industry, and civilization, and in this his labours are successful...Mr. Bernau's great plan is, to induce the Indian parents who live at any distance from the Mission, to send him their children when only four or five years of age; thus to alienate them from Indian life and manners, and, from their earliest youth, to point out to them the beneficial examples afforded by the Christian religion and Civilization"*  
(C.O. 111/180. Second Report of R. Schomburgk, Aug. 1841 enclosed in Light to Lord Stanley).

The assimilation frame, in conjunction with the invisible distinctions between Civilized/Uncivilized and Industrious/Indolent, are captured in this extract. Schomburgk clearly highlights the undeniable benefits of adopting the Christian religion- namely, "*industry, and civilization*". What is more, the missionaries' plans of inculcating the Amerindian youth with Christian virtues are hailed as progressive for both the colony and the natives, for it is through the alienation of the native children from "*Indian life and manners*" that they can avail themselves of the benefits "*afforded by the Christian religion*". The text also highlights the social engineering involved in bringing the Amerindians into a state of civilization and industriousness, forcing them to relinquish their inferior, uncivilized and subsistence based customs and practices.

Consider, also, the following report from Superintendent W.C.F. McClintock, dated September 30, 1852:

*“To Civilize the Indian is a task of great magnitude, it must be borne in mind that they are not only ignorant and uncivilized but superstitious to a fearful extent. There will therefore be great difficulties to overcome, yet Missionarys the best of civilizers will do the work provided industry be combined with education; by establishing a better system of agricultural industry among there might be reaped from these fertile Hills of the Interior Rice, corn, coffee, etc. and the Missionary who would direct them, being active, intelligent and zealous might after a while induce them to stock their abandoned fields with cattle, sheep, goats, etc.”*

(M.C.P. 26 Nov. 1852. Report of W.C.F. McClintock).

Like the previous texts concerning the purview of the missionaries, McClintock’s report features and intersection of multiple discursive frames. The deficit-oriented frame, for example, is captured in the first two lines of the text. McClintock explicitly states that the Indians are “*not only ignorant and uncivilized but superstitious to a fearful extent*”. The adjectives “*ignorant*”, “*uncivilized*” and “*superstitious*”, again, are used deliberately to underscore invisible distinctions: Rationality/Intellect vs. Irrationality/Emotion/Instinct and Civilized/Uncivilized (Pennycook 2002). Such binaries serve as the backdrop for British intervention in the lives of hapless ‘denizens’ and ‘benighted’ children of the forest. Enlightenment, rationality and culture, therefore, are brought to the Amerindians through the indefatigable efforts of the missionaries.

The assimilation frame also inheres in the text, as there is tremendous emphasis placed on the combining of industry with education: “*yet Missionarys the best of civilizers will do the work provided industry be combined with education*”. The assimilation frame uncovers, again, the Industrious/Indolent distinction through detailed descriptions of what the missionaries seek to accomplish: “*establishing a better system of agricultural industry*” and directing the Amerindians to “*stock their abandoned fields with cattle, sheep, goats, etc.*” These objectives, then, encapsulate the assimilation of the Amerindians into the colony’s thriving agricultural industry. As mentioned above, the Industrious/Indolent dichotomy was a crucial component of colonial rule, as it justified not only the appropriation of territory, but it perpetuated the negative and derogatory stereotype of native peoples being lazy if they did not participate in the colonial economy (Pennycook 2002).

The following report captures the consequences of withdrawal of missionaries from Amerindian communities. What is of import here is how the Amerindians were discursively (re)constructed by the missionaries and, most importantly, how the tireless efforts of the missionaries were presented to the British administration when those involved in missionary work received news that all grants from the Missionary Society would imminently cease. Consider the following report from Reverend W.H. Brett, dated February 3, 1862:

*“In this crisis, I learn from our good Bishop that all grants from your Venerable Society will cease in July next...*

*The Legislature neither can nor will do anything for them [Indians]; certainly not till the expiration of the Clergy Bill*

*in 1869. The Church's excellent organization here, the G.D.S. must of necessity have its hands so filled by the Asiatic heathen at its doors as to be able to do very little for the Aborigines. Altogether I shall sorrowfully expect to see Satan's empire among the Indians recover from its deep wound and again established in full and deadly vigour, if your nursing hand be withdrawn*". (E. 10. Missionary Reports. Rev. Mr. W.H. Brett to Rev. Mr. W. Bullock).

In this report, the deficit-oriented frame emphasizes, again, the valuable work conducted by the missionaries, and the consequences of their withdrawal from the settlements they established for the Amerindians. Both frames reveal the Civilized/Uncivilized, Cultured/Uncultured and Adult/Child dichotomies between the English and the Amerindians. For example, the deficit-oriented frame is captured in the hyperbole of the text: the Amerindian communities are likened to "*Satan's empire*", while the missionaries are captured in the metaphor of a "*nursing hand*", offering physical, and spiritual, protection to the Amerindians. The implication of the text is that the Amerindians will return to their state of uncivilized and uncultured barbarism without the moral and spiritual guidance of the missionaries.

Finally, I would like to present one more report which encapsulates the sentiments of those involved in spreading the word of God across the colonies: Reverend W.H. Brett's zeal for the Christianization of the Amerindians knew no bounds and this is clearly revealed in this dispatch, in which he stresses the need to establish more Indian Missions across Amerindian villages, dated November 26, 1869:

*“The Aboriginal races of that district desire nothing more earnestly than to be subject to her, [Great Britain] and under her protection and laws as in former years.*

*The withdrawal of our jurisdiction from land which no other State claims or can occupy is a great evil to the inhabitants, who must now either submit to the aggressions of men too lawless to live elsewhere, or defend themselves as they best may. In the interest of humanity, and to avoid more serious future evil, we hope and pray that some settlement may soon be made of the boundaries of this fine province’*

(Report of W.H. Brett on the Indian Missions at Cabacaburie, and Waramuri, Rivers Pomeroun and Moruca, 26 Nov. 1869)

The lexicalization of this report is noteworthy, for it relies upon the paternalism frame, uncovering the Adult/Child distinction. For example, Reverend Brett starts off by arguing that the Amerindians “*desire nothing more earnestly than to be subject to her, [Great Britain] and under her protection and laws as in former years*”. Brett proceeds by arguing that the “*withdrawal*” of English jurisdiction, which is presumably more sophisticated and efficient than Amerindian systems of governance, will lead to “*great evil*”. Brett, then, concludes his report by asserting that the protection of the Amerindians, via the establishment of Indian Missions, is in the “*interest of humanity*”, a rather convincing charge for incredulous members of the British administration. The paternalism frame and the Adult/Child distinction operate on many levels. On the one hand, the Amerindians are portrayed as stagnant and in a state of uncivilized infancy; it is

only through the protection and guidance of the (Adult) missionaries that they can be brought to a state of civilized maturity. On the other hand, like helpless children, the natives are seen as inferior beings in need of strict moral training and education to ensure their upward progression to maturity; this, again, can only be achieved through the benevolent missionaries (Nandy 1983). What is of most import in this extract is the emphasis placed on the protection of the Amerindians and how this is somehow linked to the *“interest of humanity”*. Pennycook (2002) argues that viewing colonized peoples as children and colonizers as adults set the stage for alternative versions of this narrative- one of which was the founding of new nations of Englishmen and Christians. Here, then, we see how childlike innocence can be reformed so as to serve the better interests of humanity- in this case, the spread of Christianity.

Near the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the passage of legislation such as the *Indian Regulations* of 1890, it was clear that the Amerindians were placed in a position of political subordination to the expanding powers of the English. Once considered trusted allies of the British, they were now viewed as an obstacle to empire-building. Consider the comments of one John Dalgliesh-Paterson, a member of one of the oldest settler families in British Guiana:

*“I simply look upon the obliteration of the Indian as inevitable, in short, a realization of Darwin’s theory of survival of the fittest. At the same time I think it would be well to preserve a few Indians By reservations, etc., as is done in America, just as a curiosity for future generations”* (Dalgliesh-Paterson, cited in James 2003: 2)

Featured in the comments of Paterson is the deficit-oriented frame and an invisible dichotomy: Racial Superiority/Racial Inferiority. Paterson's remarks are clearly premised upon social Darwinism, and the concomitant division of races. In this distinction, the Amerindians are clearly portrayed as diametrically inferior, or even underhumanized, compared to the English: their "*obliteration*" is purportedly "*inevitable*". Their racial inferiority, moreover, piques the curiosity of Paterson and he suggests preserving a few to document their progression through Darwinian theories of survival and adaptation.

The aforementioned extracts from various reports, journals and dispatches feature a common theme: abyssal ideology and an intricate system of visible and invisible distinctions. The visible ones encompass the universal, yet somewhat banal, Us/Them and Colonizer/Colonized distinctions, but if we employ CDA as a methodology for reviewing discourse, we can uncover the invisible distinctions and dichotomies, what Pennycook (2002) refers to as the "constructs of colonialism". Such abyssal thinking constitutes the cognitive injustices I aim to integrate into the eco-crimes framework, understanding how, in Santos' words, the invisible distinctions are created through the division of social reality. The cognitive injustice of depriving the Amerindians of their humanity, whilst relegating them to the "other side of the line", creates the conditions for the naturalization and exaggeration of the Other and, most importantly, the impossibility of co-presence between these two realms.

### **The Negotiation and Contestation of Discursive Power: Amerindian Resistance**

What can be culled from this cursory review of British rule over the colony, and the extracts presented in the preceding section, is a rather confused and complex colonial "fantasy". The English employed various ordinances as a means of identifying who "they"



were. This was vital to the abyssal and colonial project of colonizing and dominating unfamiliar terrains, and the peoples inhabiting these spaces. The settlers' identities, then, were consolidated by their attempt to impose this colonial and abyssal "fantasy" on the Amerindians. Yes, the historical documents reveal that the doctrine of continuity sought to preserve the rights of the Amerindians, but what unfolded on the colonial ground was a complex configuration of practices which did not extinguish the natives' rights per se, but nevertheless introduced a social reality in which the Amerindians experienced social dislocation and economic and political marginalization. This social reality was created by the British. They attempted to bring order and "clarity" in their micropolitical encounters with the natives, but were confronted with tremendous "complexity". An elucidation of abyssal thinking, furthermore, becomes much more nuanced when we investigate the evidence of the fragments of Amerindian resistance to the imposition of abyssal ideology. For all intents and purposes, abyssal thinking/practice was a colonial fantasy: this goal of achieving "clarity" and "order" in the colony never truly materialized because abyssal thought- especially its principle pertaining to the impossibility of co-presence between "this side of the line" and the "other side of the line"- was challenged by the natives of the land. Let us consider the fragments of resistance captured in the following discourses below.

Relying upon the personal logs, journals and dispatches of British officials, we can piece together the fragments of Amerindian resistance to alien laws and ordinances which sought to denude them of their humanity. As early as the 1830s, when the Combined Court and the Court of Policy were expressing their reluctance to continue the Dutch-inspired system of annual and triennial presents, the Amerindians contested and

negotiated their roles in the Colony. Consider the following letter penned by Reverend J.T. Hynes, dated July 10, 1834:

*“Sir, I feel it a duty to communicate without delay to your Excellency what I have just learned from a person who has been recently up the River Demerara of the feelings of the Indians in that quarter towards the authorities and white population of the colony. He describes them as being greatly incensed and expressing strong resentment on account of the discontinuance of the annual presents to them (1831) and had heard some of the most intelligent and influential among them declare, that in case the negroes revolt, that they (the Indians) will assist them. The whites, they say, have done them no service; the country is theirs, they have their own laws, and wish not the whites to govern them”*

(M.C.P., 11 July 1834).

This text is important because it troubles the taken-for-granted assumptions regarding the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. This letter reveals that the Amerindians, just as they had done during Dutch occupation of Guiana, resisted the policies of the English. Specifically, Reverend J.T. Hynes states that the Amerindians are *“greatly incensed and expressing strong resentment on account of the discontinuance of the annual presents to them”* and that he heard that *“in case the negroes revolt, that they (the Indians) will assist them”*. This demonstrates that the Amerindians were a potential threat to the colony if they did not get what they thought was rightfully theirs. What is

more, they articulate that the whites *have done them no service; the country is theirs, they have their own laws, and wish not the whites to govern them*?. Such evidence of resistance to English colonization stands in complete contradistinction to the accounts above from various missionaries- Reverend Brett, for instance- who fervently believed that the heathen natives wanted moral and spiritual instruction and guidance from the European settlers.

The next piece of writing is an editorial from the Royal Gazette, dated January 20, 1855. In it, the author recounts a rather unpleasant interaction between a tribe of Amerindians and the Governor, during which the Amerindians demonstrate anger over the encroachment of their lands:

*“Within last week the city was visited by a tribe of Indians very rarely seen within the bounds of civilization...*

*These people come from remote districts of the Pomeroon on a special mission to the Governor, and, however, indifferent they may be to civilization and its products, their journey shows that they know something about meum and tuum, and are not to be cheated out of what they consider their rights without at least urging them. Their territory, it appears, has been invaded by the white man in search of gold and they apply to the British Government through the Governor that it should be kept inviolate. Their chief, who is very much superior to the ordinary run of Indians, is also anxious that there should be some degree of organization among them,*

*and this, as report states has been readily conceded, he having been invested by the Governor with a staff of office...*

(C.O. 116/12. Editorial of *The Royal Gazette*).

This text is vital to demonstrating the Amerindians' negotiation and contestation of power. Unlike the previous dispatches presented in this chapter, this article from the country's *Royal Gazette* identifies the Amerindians not as the passive and backwards denizens of the country's interior, but as an eloquent and wise people, especially when the author writes: "*their journey shows that they know something about meum and tuum, and are not to be cheated out of what they consider their rights without at least urging them*". *Meum* and *tuum* is Latin for "what is mine" and "what is thine", respectively, and if one is unable to distinguish between the two, he is considered a thief. Thus, this text challenges the myriad dispatches and reports which discursively (re)constructed the Amerindians as an ignorant people, incapable of grasping the principles of English jurisprudence. The author proceeds by writing that the Amerindians, incensed by the mining of gold on their lands, have applied "*to the British Government through the Governor that it should be kept inviolate*". This proves not only that the Amerindians contested the appropriation of their lands by "*the white man*", but that they are more than capable of navigating through the colony's administrative and political terrain, employing the various mechanisms at their disposal to protect their rights.

Finally, the author comments on one particular Amerindian, stating "*Their chief, who is very much superior to the ordinary run of Indians, is also anxious that there should be some degree of organization among them*". Again, in total contradistinction to the negative, discursive portrayals of the Amerindians as a vacuous and barbaric people,

this passage reveals that they are capable of “organizing” on their own to seek out justice for the wrongs committed against them.

Resistance to the White man’s alien culture is also captured in the futile attempts on the part of missionaries to inculcate the savage and superstitious minds of the Amerindians with Christian virtues. Consider the following report by Governor Henry Light, dated October 9, 1848:

*“...it was interesting to see these children of the woods, led to church in their own country, docile, and clean, neatly dressed- and when in Church joining audibly in the responses of our liturgy- thus far- and in the habitual attendance of decently clothed adults of both sexes at Divine Service- everything satisfactory appears on the surface: but it has been remarked that after a certain attendance of the children- they are taken away by the parents, they throw off their clothing and resume the habits and occupations of their fathers and forefathers...*

*Frequent attempts have been made to improve and instruct the Indian. Missions have been formed- missionaries and teachers provided. Partial success has been obtained so far as reading and writing – but the unsettled habits of the Indian have invariably defeated the object proposed’*

(C.O. 111/253. Governor H. Light’s Report on the State of the Indians).

Light's report is important because it captures the daily obstacles experienced by the missionaries scattered across the country. Attempts of civilizing these benighted peoples appear utterly futile, as he observes the Amerindian children *"throw off their clothing and resume the habits and occupations of their fathers and forefathers"*. He also concludes that the *"unsettled habits of the Indian have invariably defeated the object proposed"*. This clearly challenges, once again, the widely shared belief among the missionaries that the Amerindians welcomed Christian virtues, relying upon such moral and religious guidance to attain the zenith of civilization. What is more, it proves that the missionaries' attempt at socially engineering the Amerindians was no easy feat, evoking resistance on their part.

The last example of the contestation and negotiation of power by the Amerindians for review is a speech delivered by the Amerindian Chief, Kanimapoo. Representing the Accoiwous tribe, Chief Kanimapoo's petition to J. Jenkins Esqre, dated August 29, 1870, addresses the injustices committed against his people:

*"Sir,*

*Having heard that you are in this Colony representing Societies In England who take the part of all oppressed people, I humbly address you, on my part and the part of my tribe, we being unable to speak English, and speak for ourselves. For years past, in fact since the British Government have had possession of this Colony, we have been allowed to cut timber of any size, and have always brought the same to Georgetown and sold it, and have never been interfered with,*

*but latterly we have been much oppressed, and a short time back we cut a lot of large timber, went to a great deal of labor, and hauled the same a long way to the shipping place, when it was seized upon Mr. J. G. Wight – Revenue Officer, and we were thus deprived of our hard earnings – the case has been tried by Mr. Stipendiary Justice Cox, and he has decided that the timber has been legally seized, and consequently we have lost it period. We petition the Governor but he said “he could not interfere” – We have been told that there is no ordinance in existence prohibiting or cutting timber of a certain size, we were never told not to cut it, except sometime back our late worthy Magistrate G. W. des Voeux, Esquire, mentioned that we were instructed to cut timber not larger than 11 x 11 inches – You must excuse my stating that Mr. Wight and Mr. Cox pull with each other, the one seizes the timber, the other condemns it, and a third friend buys it in, for little or nothing, and the three divide, or benefit, by our hard labor, and why? Because we are poor ignorant Indians. We therefore humbly beg that you will take our part as Indians, and aborigines of this Colony, as you so nobly done for the Natives of India, and inquire into our case, and find out for us, if we can legally be deprived of this timber... We humbly beg you will take our case into your consideration, and find out for us if we are legally deprived*

*of our timber, and if the British Government will not mete out  
to us, fair and impartial justice. We are poor uneducated  
Indians and throw ourselves on your protection and advice'*

(MSS. British Empire S22 G38. Anti-Slavery Papers. Petition of  
Kanimapoo, 29 Aug. 1870. Rhodes Library, Oxford).

Chief Kanimapoo's heartfelt petition is a superlative text, revealing not only the contestation and negotiation of power, but the manner in which the Amerindians appropriated the abyssal thinking of the English, working within the confines of the systems imposed upon them, challenging, yet subsuming discursive power. In the above text, the leader of the Accoiwous tribe exhorts Esqre to hear this case of injustice. Kanimapoo's use of language in the letter is both deliberate and calculated, as he recognizes how to navigate through the legal channels at his disposal. He is more than cognizant of the injustice that has been committed against his people, claiming that "*For years past, in fact since the British Government have had possession of this Colony, we have been allowed to cut timber of any size, and have always brought the same to Georgetown and sold it, and have never been interfered with*". He provides examples of how the administration is pregnant with corrupted practices: "*you must excuse my stating that Mr. Wight and Mr. Cox pull with each other, the one seizes the timber, the other condemns it, and a third friend buys it in, for little or nothing, and the three divide, or benefit*". What is most noteworthy, however, is how the speaker uses the "language" of the colonizer to articulate his point. On more than one occasion, he refers to himself and his tribe as "*ignorant Indians*" or "*poor uneducated Indians*" who require the advice and protection of Esqre.



This, according to constitutive criminologists, constitutes the complex interrelationships between social structures, human agents and socio-cultural contexts, leading to processes of *replacement discourse*- in other words, the dual process of dismantling hegemonic structures of meaning, whilst replacing these with new conceptions, words and phrases, which serve as alternative meanings, subverting the prevailing status quo. In this example, Chief Kanimapoo seeks justice for the deprivation of the earnings and the confiscation of the felled timber. In order to present his case, he invokes the discourses of the colonizer (the Self), in an attempt to dismantle the hegemonic structures and meanings of the British administration, whilst replacing these with new conceptions: “*ignorant Indians*” or “*poor uneducated Indians*”. These conceptions, once used by the English to express their revulsion of the Amerindians, are now used by Chief Kanimapoo to exhort Esqre to defend the Accoiwous tribe’s right to cut and sell timber.

The examples above reveal how the Amerindians squared off against the principles of abyssal ideology: they clearly refused to be integrated into the visible and invisible distinctions created by the colonizers, instead reasserting their presence. Thus, the visible Us/Them and Colonizer/Colonized distinctions, in tandem with the invisible distinctions and dichotomies which foreground the former, were troubled and a new configuration of power emerged. Important parallels can be drawn, then, between *replacement discourse* (Henry and Milovanovic 1996), Foucauldian resistance and Santosian post-abyssal thinking. It bears emphasizing that once the voices of the Amerindians were recorded, the relationship between the colonizer and colonized became all the more complex and dynamic, revealing the dialectical nature of discursive power.

## **The Antecedents of Contemporary Conservation in Guyana**

When the country gained independence during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the government's new regime inherited the social structures which entrenched abyssal thinking during the colonial period. This inheritance perpetuated asymmetric relations of power between the State and the Amerindians, especially over control of the country's land and resources. Legislation such as *An Ordinance appointing Superintendents of the Rivers and Creeks of British Guiana*; the *Indian Regulations* of 1890; and the *Aboriginal Indians Protection Ordinance* of 1910 exemplify the manner in which certain frameworks were established, and justified, under abyssal ideology- some of which remain couched in the discourses of conservation in present-day Guyana. For example, *An Ordinance appointing Superintendents of the Rivers and Creeks of British Guiana* addressed land and resource-use by the natives, permitting the Amerindians to engage in certain activities on both public and private lands; the *Indian Regulations* of 1890, too, conferred upon the natives limited privileges to using timber and mineral resources in their territories; and finally, the *Aboriginal Indians Protection Ordinance* of 1910 outlined the duties of the Protector- some of which included overseeing the "care, protection and management" of property belonging to the Amerindians. The Protector, under the provisions of this ordinance, for example, could lawfully dispose of this property and could exercise power over the land without consent of the owner in the name of preservation. Might such laws, which clearly feature a strand of abyssal ideology and the impossibility of co-presence between Us/Them, serve as the legal and cultural antecedents of the ideological structures governing contemporary conservation practices? An ethos of paternalism, undergirded by invisible distinctions such

Adult/Child; Progress/Stagnation and Science/Sorcery (Blaut 1993) inhere in contemporary discourses of conservation. The cultural fixity and the essentialization of the Amerindians as a people diametrically inferior to Western culture began with an abyssal ideology couched in the rhetoric of ordinances and laws enacted during the colonial era. More importantly, how does the resistance to such abyssal thinking play out in the arena of global conservation? These are issues to which I turn in following chapters. The next chapter, in particular, will chart the colony's journey to independence and the perpetuation of abyssal thought.

## **Chapter Six**

### **The Independence of Guyana and the Perpetuation of Abyssal Ideology**

During the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, promises of political independence from colonial rule swept through the vast lands of a country that had been under direct rule of European forces for approximately four centuries. If the colonial era was characterized by incessant and fundamental economic, political, social and cultural transformations affecting the country's indigenous peoples, the post-colonial era was no different. While the visible distinction between Us/Them was inherited by the newly independent state, the Colonizer/Colonized distinction dissolved, only to be replaced by another: Coastlander/Amerindian. Such visible distinctions, as will be revealed later on in this chapter, pitted the predominantly Indo- and Afro-Guyanese population against the Amerindians, especially with respect to access to land and certain resources. What is more, these visible distinctions were buttressed by a plethora of invisible distinctions.

Immediately following the country's independence in 1966, the nation adopted what has been referred to as an unusual mode of socialism, eventually adopting policies of liberalization, and serving as an apotheosis of free market capitalism. Logan Hennessy's (2005) identification of the country's political-economic organization during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is very useful in sketching the dynamic relationship between the state and the Amerindians. The former continued a legacy of abyssal practice which sought to situate the country's original inhabitants in a position of political, economic and cultural subordination. The following phases will be explored in this chapter: the country's post-colonial Independence and the regime of Co-operative Socialism (1966-1985); and post-Socialism, liberalization and 'reformed' democracy

(1986-2004). Note, the final phase could very well extend up to the present, but such an analysis is beyond the scope of this project. I have decided to confine my exploration from 1986-2004, the same year that Conservation International established the country's first community-owned conservation area.

The purpose of this chapter, then, is fourfold. I begin with an analysis of the “Amerindian experience” during the former colony's transition into a Co-operative Republic, followed by its evolution into post-Socialism, liberalization and ‘reformed’ democracy under the reign of the PNC and PPP. I proceed by providing evidence of abyssal practice by documenting how the production of nonexistence was exercised by the state, rendering the Amerindians vulnerable to the political whims of the PNC- especially through what I believe to be two of the most important pieces of legislation affecting the country's indigenous population: the *Amerindian Act* of 1976 and the *Mining Act* of 1989. Next, I demonstrate instances of abyssal thinking by conducting a critical discourse analysis of government documents, reports and speeches delivered by Burnham during his career as Prime Minister. Finally, I end the chapter by providing examples of Amerindian resistance to both post-colonial and neoliberal ideology and abyssal thinking and practice, demonstrating how indigenous voices aimed to dismantle and deconstruct the abyssal ideological foundations of Guyana's social institutions.

### **Amerindians At The Dawn of A New Nation**

Guyana became an independent nation and joined the Commonwealth on May 26, 1966. Alastair Pennycook's “constructs of colonialism” were replaced by new discourses of the Self and the Other, engendering a series of dichotomous pairs which differentiated the new rulers of the country from the Amerindians. Guyana was a new nation burning

with desire to exercise its political independence and national self-sufficiency, at all costs; Burnham's dictatorial rule over the country is evidence of this. But how were the rights of the Amerindians enhanced, or curtailed, during the country's transition from post-colonial Independence to post-socialism, liberalization and 'reformed' democracy? More importantly, would the colonial endowments and legacies of abyssal thinking continue to shape Amerindian-state relations? Visible distinctions between Us/Them and Coastlander/Amerindian were supported by invisible distinctions (many of which will be explored in a later section), and the colonial endowments from the past- namely, ordinances and laws- were revised by the new ruling elite in order to perpetuate the political and economic subordination of the Amerindians. Governmental organs and legislation, therefore, can be viewed as "abyssal machinery", aiding the process of differentiation between the coastlanders and indigenous people, facilitating the production of nonexistence of the latter. In this section, I pay particular attention to what I believe to be two of the most important pieces of legislation drafted during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: The *Amerindian Act* of 1976 and the *Mining Act* of 1989.

In the late 1950s, the Amerindians comprised a mere 4 percent of the national population. This, however, did not prevent them from being heard in the political sphere: they voted in the national elections of 1957, 1961 and 1964. Pierre (1993) notes that the natives were afraid of what might happen to their outstanding land claims under the rule of the Afro-Guyanese, given the PNC's grand development plans in the country's hinterlands. The colony's transition to independence brought with it an inverted racial hierarchy, placing Amerindians at the bottom (Williams 1991). Burnham's development

plans were merely the beginning of the Amerindians' political and cultural subordination- especially their rights vis-à-vis land and resources.

Strategically avoiding political dominance by the socialist platforms of the Indo- and Afro-Guyanese, the Amerindians rallied under the leadership of Parliamentarian Stephen Campbell, the first Arawak man to hold a position in Parliament. An anti-communist, Campbell, an integrationist, aligned himself with the UF, displaying strong opposition to the PPP. For him, the Amerindians were better off lending their political support to the capitalists, as this, he believed, would lead to the improvement of health facilities, vocational training and other educational measures for his people (Pierre 1993). National alliances among all Amerindian peoples were fostered under the leadership of Campbell. His fight for the basic civil rights of the Amerindians led to suggestions that outstanding land claims be resolved by mechanisms such as government ministries and commissions (Hennessy 2005). He served as the president of the first Amerindian organization, the Amerindian Association of Guyana (AAG).

Not long thereafter, Campbell spearheaded a movement revolving around the protection of Amerindian rights and acknowledgment of their political affairs- namely, outstanding land claims. The result of his indefatigable efforts was the creation of a joint British-Guyanese Amerindian Lands Commission, created in 1965. Bear in mind, up until this time, the only legislation which addressed the rights of the indigenous population was the paternalist, and discriminatory, *Amerindian Act* of 1951. Some might argue that the only reason this commission was established was because the PPP, PNC and UF needed to maintain status as legitimate parties, in order to prove during the 1965 Independence Conference that the country could demonstrate internal governance.

Hennessy (2005), for example, refers to the Amerindian Lands Commission as an “olive branch” to indigenous peoples, emphasizing that Campbell’s support of the UF- and the nation’s independence- was highly contingent on promoting Amerindian rights. Thus, suffice to say, the political and distinctive status of the country’s indigenous peoples were simply not addressed in any meaningful manner at this juncture.

The Amerindian Lands Commission Ordinance was enacted on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1966.

The ordinance explicitly stated that:

“Amerindians should be granted legal ownership or rights of occupancy over areas and reservations or parts thereof where any tribe or community of Amerindians is now ordinarily resident or settled and other legal rights, such as rights of passage, in respect of any other lands where they now by tradition or custom de facto enjoy freedoms and permissions corresponding to rights of that nature” (Amerindian Lands Commission Ordinance 1966: 59:03).

As a result, an official investigative body, the Amerindian Lands Commission (ALC), was created to assist the government of Guyana with resolving the issue of Amerindian land rights. The ALC was a British-Guyanese institution- an informal conditionality requirement of the Crown’s release of the colony. Amerindians provided testimonies to the commission, forcing the government to finally award land titles to the country’s myriad indigenous communities. The ALC embarked on a thorough investigation of outstanding land claims, resulting in robust inventories of land; consultations with Amerindian Captains (*Touchaus*); the creation of village boundaries; the evaluation of



current Amerindian populations; and an exploration of the need for future growth and expansion (ALC 1969).

At first blush, the creation of the ALC appears to be a laudable effort on the part of the government to settle, once and for all, indigenous claims to land. Hennessy (2005), however, outlines two key problematics surrounding the commission's investigation. First, the new government merely replicated the colonial regime's race-based policies, rendering the ethnic diversity of the Amerindians into a simplified homogenous "Amerindian race". While Amerindians were grouped in the commission's report by their tribal identities, encompassing their eco-territorial niche, the government continued to ignore such tribal affiliations, instead deferring to what Hennessy refers to as village-based political representation, or "villagization". Second, although the Amerindians and ALC agreed that the provision of titles should reflect collective requests of various tribes to mutually shared lands, Amerindian-Amerindian relations were fundamentally exacerbated, as village leaders made requests for land which enclosed multiple villages, resulting in certain village boundaries extending up to the edges of neighboring villages.

Three years after gaining independence, the new government received the comprehensive report of the ALC. According to their investigation, approximately 24,000 square miles would be granted to 128 Amerindian communities, along with mineral rights up to a depth of 50 feet in areas held in freehold by them, as well as benefit sharing between non-Amerindians (ALC 1969). This was somewhat surprising for those Amerindians involved in the commission's investigation, because they had requested that 43,000 square miles of land be granted to them. The commission's recommendations were almost half of what the Amerindians sought and these matters would not be

addressed until 1976 through amendment of the *Amerindian Act* of 1951. Under this piece of legislation, and subsequent amendments, sixty-two villages and two districts were identified and named in the government's Schedule; district, area and village councils became designated corporate bodies, which meant that they could hold title in the lands within their boundaries; freehold titles were granted to the communities identified under the Act; and the aforementioned mineral rights were ignored. After more than a decade since the ALC was established, 4,500 square miles of land were issued to the Amerindian peoples in 1976 (APA 1999; GOG 2000; Bulkan 2008).

The late 1960s was a tumultuous time for the social fabric of Guyana. As mentioned in the preceding section, the ethno-political rivalry between the Indo- and Afro-Guyanese was heightening and the Amerindians in the Northwest and Rupununi, utterly disillusioned with the results of the ALC, turned their attention to Venezuela, who revived boundary disputes along the Essequibo lands. Venezuela had funded a conference for the Amerindians and the creation of the Amerindian-based political party, the Guyana National Party (GNP), was the result of such an alliance (Sanders 1987). The GNP, however, failed to register for the 1968 elections, on account of the aforementioned demagogic tactics of Burnham. The Amerindians' political voice was silenced and the population was forced to accept the 4,500 square miles recommended by the government.

Growing alliances between the Amerindians, the Venezuelans, and the wealthy ranchers of the Rupununi, culminated in a severe threat to the national security and territorial integrity of Guyana- what historians refer to as the Rupunini Uprising. Burnham's response was swift and carefully calculated, calling upon the Guyana Defense

Force to suppress the rebellion (Whitehead 2002). It was patently clear that Burnham's administration could no longer ignore the Amerindians' political voices, and Burnham held publicized consultations with various Amerindian Captains in Georgetown and Lethem not long thereafter. Hennessy (2005) argues that the impacts of the rebellion were positive, insofar as they forced the government to reconsider its approach to handling the issue of outstanding land claims; it also produced negative impacts, turning certain Amerindian communities into targets of racial discrimination at the hands of the predominantly Afro-Guyanese police force. Such discrimination, albeit displayed through acts of military and police aggression, was also evinced through exploitative development policies under Burnham's reign. The uprising, moreover, entrenched both visible distinctions (Us/Them) and invisible distinctions (Patriot/Traitor), establishing abyssal lines between the majority of Guyanese society and those involved in the attempted secession. In a later section, I review how such invisible distinctions were created through Burnham's speeches to the Amerindian population.

The Amerindians were unquestionably affected by the social and environmental transformations accompanying Burnham's socialist-oriented government during the 1970s. As mentioned in the foregoing chapters, the Prime Minister's political and economic mandate was rather comprehensive and the Amerindians bore the brunt of such ambitions via the incorporation of their interior lands into Burnham's co-operative agricultural development schemes (Hennessy 2005). The cultivation of Guyana's natural resources was shouldered by select Amerindian communities- many of which were faced with top-down agricultural projects. Burnham's development plans identified in the previous sections were viewed as social engineering initiatives, training and developing

the Amerindians so they may be integrated into the rest of Guyanese society (Jack 1970). Hennessy (2005) asserts that such development programs were mere tools to bring the Amerindians under the ideology of the PNC, as the development of the interior would serve the benefits of the coastlanders and the coastal economy. Concomitantly, Burnham's "self-help" schemes of the 1970s were implemented across the country's interior, with the GMC coordinating the procurement of the technology required for these economic ventures. The results were somewhat fruitful: in 1971, for instance, the cultivation of crops such as cabbages and tomatoes soared, yielding a total of 594,712 pounds of produce (Hennessy 2005). Burnham's government and the GMC, however, had bit off more than they could chew, as it were. The coordination and tremendous costs to transport these food items to markets were not anticipated by the GMC and some of these crops never even reached the market and simply rotted in the valleys- a rude awakening for those Amerindians who had labored indefatigably in their villages.

Consider, for instance, the utter failure of one "self-help" initiative experienced by the Patamona in Kato village, an Amerindian tribe located in Potaro-Siparuni (Region 8). Burnham's plans were supposed to improve the livelihood of this community, training them in surplus production. Technical experts, in conjunction with seeds, fertilizers, chemicals and machinery were granted to the Patamona, in hopes that they would lead in the transformation of Guyana's food supply, serving as a source of agricultural exports to Georgetown. The government went so far with their socialist-inspired campaign that they implemented a new system of social identity among the villagers, adding the title "Comrade" before the name of each member of Kato village (Hennessy 2005). Despite the supply of resources and Burnham's socialist ideology, however, the initiative faltered,

resulting in pre-harvest problems, a poor availability of labor during harvesting, and challenges transporting the produce during the post-production phase. Suffice to say, then, the co-operative agricultural development schemes were an embarrassment of riches for Burnham's administration. They also wreaked havoc on participating Amerindian communities, affecting long-standing systems of land tenure, forest regeneration, species distribution, the hydrology of landscapes, and these communities' food security (Hennessy 2005). As mentioned in the preceding chapters, black markets emerged throughout the country and the interior featured a preponderance of illegal activity. Burnham's predominantly Afro-Guyanese police force participated in this activity, whilst abusing and intimidating the Amerindian communities inhabiting these areas.

The failed attempts of nation-wide 'self-sufficiency' via agricultural projects were attributed to the "backwards" and "unenlightened" indigenous population, again, establishing abyssal distinctions between the coastlanders and the Amerindians. It mattered not that Burnham's administration and the GMC did not possess the institutional capacity to transport and ship these harvested crops to their respective markets; the Amerindians were the perfect scapegoats. Hennessy (2005: 71) observes:

"Socially, the language of failure and blame that passed from the lips of metropolitan authorities merely reiterated the sentiments of superiority of other Guyanese over Amerindians. The government was likewise awakened to the severe constraints of infrastructure shortages and 'backward' Amerindians on interior development".

During the mid 1970s, the government of Guyana could not afford to ignore the trenchant voices of the indigenous population. The Rupununi rebellion a few years earlier was a reminder of a potential secession of Guyanese territory to neighboring Venezuela. It was during this decade that the *Amerindian Act* of 1976 garnered the attention of local activists.

### *The Amerindian Act of 1976*

The *Amerindian Act* of 1976 was an amendment of the 1951 Act. Based on previous laws drafted during British occupation of the country, the provisions of the legislation perpetuated a tradition of paternalism and discrimination vis-à-vis Amerindian rights to resources and land (APA 1998). Before an explication of how abyssal ideology is captured, and enforced, through the *Amerindian Act* of 1976, it behooves us to review some of the key provisions of the Act. My analysis will be confined to those sections I deem relevant for the purposes of this project.

The legislation was comprised of nine parts, each of which addressed: governance over Amerindian Districts, Areas and Villages; the registration of Amerindians; the protection of property and guidelines for the initiation of legal proceedings on behalf of Amerindians; the appointment of Captains; the structure of local government (ie. District, Area and Village Councils); the establishment, and utilization, of the Amerindian Purposes Fund; the employment of Amerindians; prohibitions against the supply of intoxicating liquor to the Amerindians; and miscellaneous provisions covering the power of the Chief Officer to exempt Amerindians from the act, or the power of the Minister to restrict the operation and extent of the act- for example.

It becomes patently clear how the regulations therein replicated the paternalism of the colonial period. Throughout the Act, we find manifestations of both dichotomous pairings and visible (and invisible) distinctions. The crux of the legislation, therefore, is the inevitable denial of co-presence between Us/Them and Coastlanders/Amerindians. Consider, for example, section 5 of the Act, which addresses the restrictions on entry into Districts, Areas and Villages. It reads:

*(1) No person other than an Amerindian shall enter or remain within any District, Area or Village or any Amerindian settlement or encampment without lawful excuse or without the permission in writing of the Chief Officer.*

*(2) Any person aggrieved by the refusal of the Chief Officer to grant such permission may appeal to the Minister, whose Decision shall be final.*

The sweeping powers of the Minister are of import here. Section 5 confers immense powers on the acting Minister, authorizing him to lift restrictions on entry into Amerindian land- a most convenient provision for the state, considering Burnham's *Second Development Plan* (1972-1976).

Section 8 also reveals the tremendous political powers of the Minister in relation to the registration of the Amerindians. The section reads:

*(1) Every Amerindian who has attained the age of twelve years shall be registered by the assistant registration Officer appointed for that part of Guyana in which he resides.*

*(2) Any person whose application for registration as an Amerindian is refused or who is aggrieved by the registration of any other person as an Amerindian, may appeal to the Chief Officer, and any person as aforesaid who is dissatisfied with the decision of the Chief Officer may appeal to the Minister whose decision shall be final.*

Here, again, we have the powers of the Minister overriding the Chief Officer on matters pertaining to the registration of Amerindians. This section is extremely important, for the registration of individuals as “Amerindians” confers certain rights and privileges on these individuals. Applications which are refused prohibit that particular individual from residing in Districts, Areas and Villages, and from using the resources on those lands— even though they may have had tribal and ancestral ties to such lands long before the dawn of colonization. Sections 10 and 11 address the failure to produce a certificate of registration within a reasonable time and the consequences therein, respectively. Section 11, for example, reads:

*Any Amerindian who, without reasonable excuse-*

- (a) lends or gives his certificate to any other Amerindian; or*
- (b) is found in possession of the certificate of any other Amerindian*

*is liable on summary conviction to a fine of three thousand two hundred and fifty dollars.*



Section 12 perpetuates the legacy of paternalism by denuding the Amerindians of their autonomy within the designated Districts, Areas and Villages. The sections state:

- (1) The Chief Officer shall undertake the care, protection and management of the property of the Amerindians, and may-*
- (a) take possession of, retain, sell or dispose of the property of an Amerindian;*
- (b) in his own name sue for, recover or receive money or other property due to or belonging to an Amerindian, or other property due to or belonging to an Amerindian, or damages for any conversion of or injury to such property;*
- (c) exercise in the name of an Amerindian any power which the Amerindian may exercise for his own benefit;*
- (d) in the name and on behalf of an Amerindian appoint any person to act as an attorney or agent of an Amerindian for any purpose connected with his property;*
- Provided that the powers conferred by this section shall not be exercised by the Chief Officer without the consent of the Amerindian, except in so far as may be necessary for the preservation of his property.*

Such interventions unto indigenous autonomy constitute a continuity of abyssal ideology from colonial rule. The subtext of the text, as it were, is that the Amerindians are

incapable of exercising governance and control over their lands and must defer to the Chief Officer under such circumstances. Further, the section enables the Chief Officer to take possession of Amerindian land; retain the land; and, most importantly, sell or dispose of the property. The Chief Officer is expected to gain the consent of the Amerindians, but may act alone as long as his actions “*may be necessary for the preservation of his property*”. This places immense discretionary power on the shoulders of the acting Officer, as he can pursue any of the aforementioned measures so long as he can prove that they were necessary for the preservation of Amerindian property. Again, such measures must be put into context: Burnham’s ambitious plans for the country’s transition to self-reliance and development served as the impetus behind such paternalist and discriminatory conditions- namely, the provisions concerning the “*care, protection and management of the property of the Amerindians*”. While no definition of “*care, protection and management*” is presented, the provision is an arbitrary one at best and can be used in a manner which marginalizes the rights of the Amerindians.

In a related vein, section 20(A) continues the legacy of marginalization inherited from the colonial era by withholding title to certain resources and land which the Amerindians enjoyed long before the colonies capitulated to the British. For example, the section reads:

*(2) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this Act,  
no title (including any rights of management or  
control, other than those as may be conferred by  
rules or regulations made under this Act) to-  
(a) rivers and all lands sixty-six feet landwards from*

- the mean-low water mark;*
- (b) minerals or mining rights in or over any land;*
- (c) land which is in use immediately prior to the coming into operation of this section for the landing or take off of aircraft or which may hereafter be duly designated by the competent authority as land for the purpose;*
- (d) buildings and installations (including the land whereon they are situate within such boundaries as have been demarcated or otherwise established immediately prior to the coming into operation of this section, by usage or otherwise in relation to such buildings or installations) being the property of the State, shall be deemed to have been transferred to, Or vested in a Council.*

Section 20A(4) confers tremendous powers on the Minister, again, enabling him to revoke or modify titles under the guise of “public interest” and “public safety or order”:

- It shall be deemed a condition of every title or interest in land to which subsection (1) applies that-*
- (a) such title or interest may be revoked or modified by the Minister upon notice served on the Council and published in the Gazette where he is satisfied that the land or any portion thereof should be repossessed by*

*the State in the public interest to, save in the circumstances mentioned in paragraphs (b), (c) and (d), the payment of compensation to the respective Amerindian Community determined in accordance with the provisions of the Acquisition of Lands for Public Purposes Act or to the giving to that Community of land to the value of that repossessed;*

*(b) such titles or interests may be modified or revoked by the Minister upon notice to the respective Council for the purposes of enabling the resumption of occupation by the State of such land or portion thereof as is situated within a distance of ten miles from any of the international boundaries of Guyana, where the Minister is satisfied that such occupation is necessary in the interest of defence, public safety or order;*

*(d) such title or interest is liable to forfeiture by the Minister upon notice published to that effect in the Gazette where he is satisfied that members of the Amerindian Community on whose behalf that title or interest is held under this Act have shown themselves by act or speech to be disloyal or disaffected towards the State or have done any voluntary act which is incompatible with their loyalty to the State.*

Section 20A, undoubtedly, dovetails with Burnham's dictatorial propensities as leader of the country. The rights to rivers, minerals and other resources, held by the Amerindians long before the dawn of colonialism, for example, are denied and peripheral to the needs of the government. This section entrusts the management and control over the land to the Minister, allowing him to revoke and modify titles and interests in land in the name of "public interest" and "public safety or order". The glaringly obvious question here is whose interest and whose "order" is being maintained through the powers of the Minister? Finally, something must be said of the rhetoric used in section 22(4d) which allows the Minister to seize titled land where he is satisfied that members of the Amerindian community show themselves by act or speech to be disloyal to the state. This subsection was undoubtedly a result of the 1969 Rupununi Rebellion and mounting fears that the Amerindians would form an alliance with Venezuela, laying bare the invisible distinction between Patriot/Traitor.

Stinging criticisms of this piece of legislation ensued during the 1970s. While the Act did feature an addendum listing 70 villages (which were recognized as legitimate and awarded titles), 48 other villages did not receive titles (APA 1998; APA 1999a; Menezes 1977). What is more, critics of the *Amerindian Act* argued that it adhered to the paternalist and race-based rights and restrictions by: establishing a framework for determining who/what qualified as an Amerindian and an Amerindian village; setting out guidelines for the governance of property and village titles, in conjunction with the appointment of *Touchaus*, the employment of Amerindians and the regulation of liquor in Amerindian communities; and, most importantly, adhering to a colonial and legal tradition of conferring sweeping powers in the hands of government officials such as the

Minister (GOG 1976; Bulkan 2008). Finally, the Act's process of "villagization" was subject to scrutiny because it crudely consolidated the ethno-cultural diversity of the indigenous peoples and delineated boundaries based exclusively on race (Hennessy 2005). This led to imminent conflicts among village units insofar as titled communities could avail themselves of the resources in their demarcated village, but could not exercise rights to their tribal or ethnic territories outside of their villages. What is more, the Act served as a boundary marker, delineating state and non-state lands, giving the government ample opportunity to appropriate land in-between the designated villages, again, disrupting indigenous communities' rights to tribal and ethnic territories.

But what of the abyssal dimensions of the *Amerindian Act*? Santos' system of visible and invisible distinctions is certainly exemplified through the legislation: the visible distinctions, Us/Them, Coastlanders/Amerindians, rest upon invisible distinctions that the new government inherited from the colonial regime- namely, the Adult/ Child dichotomy. New, invisible distinctions were also created by Burnham and his political party: Patriot/Traitor, Loyalty/Insurgency, Socialist/Capitalist, etc. Sections 5, 8, 11, 12 and 20A, for example, present the Adult/Child dichotomy. The Amerindians are treated like mere wards of the state- children to be instructed and punished for the most minor of infractions. They possessed no autonomy and control over who can enter or remain on their lands; they had no legal recourse when their applications for registration were denied; they were subject to fines and other penalties if they lent or provided another Amerindian with their certificate; their lands were subject to forfeiture by the Minister, who sought to exercise care, protection and management of their property; and they lost tribal and ancestral rights to rivers, minerals and other resources. The Patriot/Traitor and

Loyalty/Insurgency dichotomies, on the other hand, are captured in section 24(4d), which draws a distinction between the patriotic Minister who determines which traitorous and renegade members of the Amerindian community are demonstrating disloyal acts towards the state; the consequence, of course, is the forfeiture of their land. These examples highlight the cognitive injustice associated with abyssal ideology: Amerindians were stripped of their tribal and ethnic identities- their very humanity, and discursively (re)presented as unregenerately “child-like”, “passive”, “disloyal”, “traitorous”, etc. Their very bodies were re-inscribed with characteristics which situated them on the “other side of the line”- diametrically opposed to those on “this side of the line”. This system of visible and invisible distinctions used by the state reinforced its position of dominance.

With the inevitable dissolution of the PNC’s socialist ideology during the 1980s, Guyana succumbed to new international economic influences, and the Amerindians, again, bore the brunt of structural adjustment policies and the proliferation of extractive industries. South America’s “Gold Boom” (Hennessy 2005) encouraged international mining in the Amazon Basin and the Guiana Shield. Guyana, which boasted geological prospects of gold deposits, attracted a preponderance of small-scale and large-scale mining (Herman 2002). The social and environmental consequences of such mining initiatives have been recorded by scholars such as Forte (1998); Forte and Melville (1989); APA et al. (2000); Fox and Danns (1993); Roopnaraine (1996); Colchester (1997); Colchester et al. (2002); Thomas (1989); Williams (1989); and Isaacs (1989)- all of which take heed of the ecological devastation which occurred under these extractive regimes.

### *The Mining Act of 1989*

*The Mining Act* of 1989 is an extremely important piece of legislation because its passage runs parallel with the IMF and World Bank's loan packages of structural adjustment and the Guyanese government's adoption of the ERP referred to in chapter One. The legislation, and its amended version in 1992, features state jurisdiction over small, medium, and large-scale mining operations. While it stipulates that permits granted to individuals for small-scale mining must be partially owned by Guyanese nationals, permits governing medium and large-scale mining activities were created with the express purpose of attracting foreign investment (Hennessy 2005).

Guyana was caught in between the proverbial rock and a hard place, as it sought financial aid through the IMF and World Bank's structural adjustment policies and the liberalization of its economy. Small, medium and large-scale mining encroached on titled Amerindian lands. Concomitantly, the legislation, while purporting to protect the rights of the Amerindians, also limited their involvement in the governance over prospective areas to be mined (Bulkan 2008).

Certain sections of the legislation are of import for the purposes of this chapter—namely, part 13 entitled *Special Provisions Relating to Amerindians*. Section 110 reads:

*“Except during the period when a member of any Amerindian community (hereinafter referred to as Amerindian) is the holder of a licence or permit under this Act, (during which period the privileges he had immediately before the commencement of this Act shall stand suspended in respect of any matter to which the licence or permit related), the provisions of this Act shall not,*



*save as otherwise provided herein, be deemed to affect the privileges that any Amerindian as such had immediately before the commencement of this Act in relation to prospecting, mining or quarrying for any mineral*

*(2) Any Amerindian shall exercise any privilege referred to in subsection (1) in the manner provided in the Regulations and subject to the provisions thereof”.*

Section 111 addresses the occupation of land by Amerindians:

*“For the purposes of this Act, all land occupied or used by Amerindian communities and all land necessary for the quiet enjoyment by the Amerindians of any Amerindian settlements, shall be deemed to be lawfully occupied by them”.*

Section 112 protects the rights of third-party miners:

*“It shall not be lawful for any Amerindian to take any mineral from any land which is subject to a licence or permit under this Act, and any mineral found in the possession of an Amerindian, and which is not proved to have been lawfully obtained by him, shall be forfeited to the State”.*

Section 113 regulates the disposal of minerals and stones obtained by the Amerindians:

*Where any Amerindian who is not the holder of a mining licence, claim licence or special mining permit under this Act obtains and desires to sell any valuable mineral or precious stone, it shall be sold by the Commission on his behalf and the*

*proceeds shall be paid to such Amerindian*

*(2) It shall not be lawful for any person to obtain, receive or purchase any valuable mineral or precious stone from an Amerindian directly, and all valuable minerals or precious stones so obtained, received or purchased shall be forfeited to the State”.*

Finally, section 114 governs the forfeiture of valuable minerals and stones procured by Amerindians:

*Where it appears that any person has made use of any Amerindian to obtain any valuable mineral or precious stone in contravention of or in defraud of the provisions of this Act, the valuable mineral or precious stone so obtained shall be forfeited to the State.*

*(2) Any valuable mineral or precious stone forfeited to the State shall be applied by the Minister for the benefit of the Amerindian referred to in subsection (1) or otherwise as the Minister directs”.*

The *Mining Act* outlines the duties of the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) and the Minister of Mines. As can be seen in the above extracts, certain provisions were made to protect Amerindian communities from mining operations. Consider, for instance, section 111, which ensures that land occupied or used by the Amerindians, and land necessary for the “*quiet enjoyment*” by Amerindian settlements, is considered lawfully occupied by them. Scholars such as Hennessy (2005) point to a more nuanced interpretation of section 112 insofar as non-titled villages could use the section

to argue that the issuance of mining permits near their land would impinge on their rights to the “*quiet enjoyment*” of the lands.

What exactly were the implications of the provisions of the *Mining Act*? First of all, section 111 only applied to small-scale mining, pursuant to Form 5C of the accompanying Mining Regulations. But even in the case of small-scale mining, the act amounts to nothing more than high-sounding rhetoric with respect to the protection of Amerindian rights. Investigations conducted by Colchester et al. (2002) reveal the Government’s tremendously ambiguous interpretation of this provision, as mining claims have been recognized in lands both used and occupied by Amerindians. This is, undoubtedly, due to the fact that the GGMC relies upon boundaries of Amerindian land titles pursuant to the 1976 and 1991 Schedules of the *Amerindian Act* and sketch maps held by the Department of Lands and Surveys, respectively. The reliance upon such maps is highly problematic because, as explained above through the perpetuation of “villagization” schemes, tribal and ethnic relations to land have been distorted and areas historically used by many indigenous communities have been vulnerable to the GGMC’s issuance of small-scale mining permits (Colchester et al. 2002).

With respect to medium-scale mining, Form 5B of the Mining Regulations, prohibits medium-scale operations on land "held under title," including titled Amerindian lands, but the Amerindians continue to face the deleterious effects of mining because titles issued under section 22(2A) of the *Amerindian Act* excludes rivers and river banks up to sixty-six feet landwards from the mean low water mark, leaving unfettered discretion to the GGMC to issue permits within titled areas. Finally, large-scale mining operations are not subject to any restrictions pursuant to the *Mining Act*, meaning both

untitled and titled Amerindian land can succumb to third-party mining operations, leaving no legal recourse available to indigenous communities (Colchester et al. 2002).

Like the *Amerindian Act* of 1976, the *Mining Act* features an elaborate system of visible and invisible distinctions, which advance the state's control over coveted resources. The Us/Them and Coastlander/Amerindian distinctions rest upon invisible dichotomies: Domination/Subordination and Commercial/Subsistence. Granted, the act features provisions for the protection of Amerindian land from mining initiatives, but simultaneously subordinates their rights to mine for minerals- rights which have been enjoyed long before their land was colonized. Further, in cases of large-scale mining, the *Mining Act* renders their rights to protection nonexistent insofar as commercial, large-scale mining initiatives take precedence over the preservation of Amerindian lands. Thus, the impossibility of co-presence between Coastlanders and Amerindians, and commercial and subsistence, is captured through the legislation, rendering the rights of the Amerindians peripheral (or even nonexistent for that matter) to the needs of the expanding state.

In response to the utterly ambiguous provisions of the *Mining Act* and the misapplication of certain sections, Amerindians and local activist groups have voiced vehement opposition to the GGMC's authority over the issuance of mining grants and permits. In 1997, the Government enacted an administrative policy on mining. It read as follows:

“There have been criticisms of the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) entering into agreements for mineral prospecting and other developments over Amerindian lands

without reference to the Amerindians living there. Government has decided that recognised Amerindian lands would stand exempted from any survey, prospecting or mineral agreements *unless the agreement of the Captain and Council for the proposal is obtained by the GGMC in writing*. While upholding the law that subsurface rights are vested in the State, government is of the view that the search for and development of mineral deposits on Amerindian lands is desirable since it can contribute to rapid growth and development of Amerindians and Amerindian communities. Government recognises too the many potential negative impacts and the need to arrange to minimize if not avoid them altogether” (Government of Guyana 1997:12).

While the administrative policy serves as a laudable effort on the part of the government to mitigate the impacts of mining, Colchester et al. (2002) argue that it has been ignored on many occasions. According to the researchers, even after the enactment of the 1997 policy, “It was a normal practice by the mines officer to allow miners to operate in closed or disputed areas for a 10% cut of the gold production” (Colchester et al. 2002: 17). The surveying of land for prospective mining operations is, at present, still mired in controversy because companies often obtain approval and permission from a village Captain, without the authority of village councils, questioning the political representation of these villages.

The final decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought with it the adoption of neoliberalism and structural adjustment by the PPP-Civic administration and the concomitant

proliferation of extractive industries across the country's interior, resulting in: land and water pollution; habitat destruction; loss of wildlife; destruction of farmland; siltation of rivers; an increase in deaths, injuries and sicknesses caused by mining; the loss of traditional occupations and breakdowns in communal structures (Colchester et al. 2002). The government promised to preserve the rights of indigenous communities by awarding more titles; in 1991, for example, 10 communities located in the Upper Mazaruni received titles, pursuant to the country's *State Lands Act*, bringing the number of titled communities to seventy-four, with approximately 6,000 square miles of land held under Amerindian control. In contrast to those issued under the *Amerindian Act* of 1976, though, these titles were deficient in the sense that they were not accompanied by legislation governing substantive and procedural issues (APA et al. 2000). 1991 also marked the year that the Guyana Human Rights Association brought Amerindian rights to the fore, resulting in the creation of the Amerindian People's Association (APA). Such an institution was necessary at this juncture, because the issuance of these titles was a mere fraction of the tribal lands these communities held previously; moreover, these titles did little in the preservation of Amerindian rights due to the rapid growth and development in the mining and gold sectors (Colchester 2002).

The influx of Guyanese coastlanders and Brazilian *garimpeiros* in the interior during the 1990s led to a modern-day gold rush, resulting in grave ecological degradation in the villages inhabited by myriad Amerindian groups. Also, large exploration agreements were finalized with Vanessa Ventures Ltd. and Migrate Mining Ltd., resulting in the enclosure of Amerindian villages. Such ecological invasion spelled disaster for certain communities, as evidenced in the Omai disaster of 1995. Mechanized

mineral extraction continued at an unprecedented rate, transforming the lands and cultures of various Amerindian communities. The effects of these industries included: increases in cases of malaria; loss of land through displacement; forced migration; deforestation; soil erosion; chemical contamination; a loss of water quality and declining fish stocks; and cultural degradation through the growth of social inequalities and divisions within Amerindian communities, and a deepening dependency on a cash economy (Hennessy 2005).

After taking office, Jagan encouraged the GGMC to continue granting concessions to transnational mining companies in the Upper Mazaruni, resulting in concessions to Migrate Mining Limited of South Africa; Vanessa Ventures Ltd. of Canada; Golden Star Resources of Denver; and Xamuteba of Brazil (APA et al. 2000). Entering the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Amerindians of Guyana, while playing an active role in the constitutional reform initiatives of 2000, still bore the brunt of the socio-environmental impacts of foreign aid and the activity of extractive industries. Their participation in the reform process led to extensive meetings between Amerindian groups and the government of Guyana, culminating in a resolution which attempted to bring the country in line with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The reform initiative, however, did little to enhance the rights of the country's indigenous population. For example, in 1999, 74 communities received title to only 6000 square miles of land (APA 1999), but some advances were made during the country's constitutional reforms in 2002- particularly, the consultative processes between local activist groups and the Amerindians. Such consultations sought

to revise the antiquated provisions enacted during British occupation- most of which were featured in both the *Amerindian Act* of 1951 and 1976. As a result of comprehensive recommendations from various local and foreign experts, a draft Bill was created and sent to Parliament's Select Committee, serving as the legal framework for the overhaul of the existing *Amerindian Act*; the establishment of an Executive Programme which granted formal land titles to previously unrecognized Amerindian communities; the issuance of land extensions to existing communities; and, most importantly, the creation of the *Amerindian Act* of 2006 and its revisions with respect to issues of governance, land ownership and resource-use rights (Bulkan 2008).

Despite such laudable accomplishments in the political sphere, the World Bank and IMF, in 2004, revealed that 80 percent of the Amerindian population was living below the poverty line, and that they were among the poorest members of the Western hemisphere. The Amerindians' lack of title over land claims and their political marginalization has been exacerbated by what Jean La Rose refers to as "imperialistic international conservation", an issue to which I refer in the next chapter.

### **Abyssal Practice and the Production of Nonexistence**

In the previous chapter, we explored how the colonial administration sought to render certain components of the Amerindians' lives nonexistent. This element of abyssal practice was emulated by the new state's pathologies of power (Ahmad 1981) and its production of nonexistence. The Amerindians were viewed as belonging on the "other side of the line" - ceasing to exist in any relevant or comprehensible way and it is this impossibility of co-presence between both realms of social reality which results in this invisibility and non-dialectical absence (Santos 2006). While I have explored how both



the *Amerindian Act* of 1976 and *Mining Act* of 1989 exemplify Santos' system of visible and invisible distinctions, I would now like to provide examples of how the state of nonexistence is produced through abyssal machinery.

Let us consider the Amerindian Lands Commission (ALC), for a moment. As mentioned above, the ALC was created during the 1965 Independence Conference; its purview included investigating and demarcating Amerindian land during the country's transition to independence, in conjunction with identifying the nature of rights to be conferred upon various tribes and communities. The entity's first public meeting was held in 1967; funded by the state, the ALC summoned witnesses and produced books and documents and made 31 tours to Amerindian areas. What is most fascinating about the ALC's determination of Amerindian rights to land is the manner in which it came to its conclusions: enlisting in the services of archaeologists, anthropologists, agronomists and some of the Amerindians themselves, the commission presented recommendations for land but these recommendations were based on subsistence agriculture and commercial agriculture- the latter constituting a misguided assumption that future generations of Amerindians would integrate into the national economy. Bulkan (2008) argues that the ALC's recommendations with respect to commercial agriculture ignored the spiritual and sacred relationships between communities and their land. Recall, while claims made by Amerindians totaled 43, 000 square miles, the ALC argued that these claims were "excessive" and "unduly large and disadvantageous to proper management and control" (GOG 1969). Concomitantly, the commission's recommendations were whittled down to 24, 000 square miles and, then, to a mere 4,500 square miles in 1976. If we apply Santos' abyssal framework here, we begin to understand how the production of nonexistence

occurred during the country's transition to independence, for the claims made by Amerindians, in conjunction with their tribal and ethnic ties to these lands, were 'invisibilized' (Adese 2012) and rendered nonexistent through the eyes of the ALC. What is more, when titles were awarded in 1976, some communities such as the Barama River Caribs of the North, the Wai Wai in the South and the Arekuna and Akawaio tribes in the Upper Mazaruni region were omitted from the Schedule of Villages and Districts- meaning, these communities' rights to land remained unrecognized by the government of Guyana. Why, then, were these communities excluded from receiving titles? Bulkan (2008) avers that plans for natural resource exploitation accounted for these omissions, again, placing the needs and interests of the state above that of the country's indigenous peoples.

What is of import here is the manner in which the ALC situated the Amerindians into Santos' abyssal framework; visible distinctions between Us/Them and Coastlanders/Amerindians were supported by myriad invisible distinctions which divided social reality into two realms. The Amerindians, and their claims, were produced as nonexistent due to the principle of the impossibility of co-presence between the social realities inhabited by both coastlanders and themselves. Their claims to land (which initially totaled 43, 000 square miles) were produced as nonexistent because such claims were, for all intents and purposes, considered "excessive" according to the ALC. The government of Guyana, therefore, refused to accept the possibility of co-presence between these social realities. Amerindian customs, traditional uses, and spiritual connections to land were simply interpreted as not 'existing' in any relevant or "comprehensible way of being" (Santos 2006) by the government of Guyana. The

colonial cognitive injustices were replicated by denying the Amerindians their humanity and their rights to interact with their social world in meaningful ways. We see this, again, in the preceding section's analysis of the *Amerindian Act* and the *Mining Act* – both of which continue a tradition of rendering the indigenous communities' ties to land and resources nonexistent, discursively (re)constructing the Amerindians as passive children, incapable of governing their resources and lands. In the next chapter, we will explore further how such abyssal machinery was appropriated by international conservation regimes at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in order to enact abyssal lines in conservation initiatives.

### **Abyssal Ideology and Discourse**

At this juncture, it is safe to state that the Amerindians, and their unresolved land claims, were peripheral under Prime Minister's Burnham's rule. A cursory exploration of the "Amerindian experience" during the eras of Co-operative Socialism; post-Socialism, liberalization and 'reformed' democracy is highly contextual, evincing that in their myriad attempts to create a new Guyana, the leaders of the nation pushed political agendas they deemed necessary for the country's growth, economic development and self-sufficiency. Such laudable attempts, however, created governance gaps, as the Amerindians, as mentioned in the foregoing section, were recorded being among the poorest members of the Western hemisphere, subject to myriad human rights violations and forms of victimization (Hennessy 2005).

The country's crime-facilitative culture, then, enabled certain actors to commit the gravest social and environmental injustices against the indigenous population: police harassment and intimidation within Amerindians communities; the refusal to grant titles

to communities who utilized the lands since time immemorial; and ecological degradation of indigenous lands due to a plethora of initiatives under various political administrations. Green criminologists, then, can invoke an eco-crimes framework when addressing such injustices, drawing apposite parallels between social inequality and the destruction of the environment. But what of the socio-cognitive, and abyssal, dimensions of these injustices? What role does discourse play in the political subordination and economic marginalization of the Amerindians? It is at this juncture that a critical discourse analysis of a robust dataset, spanning almost forty years, is presented. CDA allows us to uncover the invisible distinctions upholding the visible ones, aiding in an understanding of how abyssal ideology was perpetuated during the post-independence era. It is the discursive (re)construction of the Amerindians which is of import in this section.

The preceding sections of this chapter serve as the socio-political context in which the following discourses were created, illuminating how important the discursive (re)construction of the indigenous population was to the agenda of nation-building. Such (re)constructions not only endorsed the impossibility of co-presence between the Amerindians and the rest of Guyanese society but legitimized and, most importantly, justified their political subordination and economic marginalization through the eyes of the leaders of the new nation. Visible distinctions between Us/Them and Coastlanders/Amerindians are supported by a collection of invisible distinctions. Let us begin with extracts from Prime Minister Burnham's speeches to Amerindian leaders during conferences from 28 February to 8 March, 1969:

*I would like you to understand, as leaders of your people,  
that you have a most important role to play and a great task*

*to perform. You must not come here as beggars seeking favours. You must come here with the conviction that you are full-fledged Guyanese citizens who, working together with other Guyanese citizens, can develop the resources of this country for the benefit of all of us.*

*There are some who, for their own personal and material motives, would like to separate you from the rest of the community, pretending to be your friends but, in fact, lining you up for greater exploitation on their own behalf.*

*This must cease* (as cited in Burnham 1970: 138).

What immediately becomes clear in the first part of this extract is the colony/nation ascendancy frame. The visible distinction between Coastlanders/Amerindians is supported by an invisible distinction between Socialist/Capitalist. Recall, the Amerindians, at the dawn of independence, aligned themselves with the UF, a capitalist political party led by Peter d'Aguiar. Under the leadership of Stephen Campbell, the Amerindians sought the benefits of a capitalist country- namely, improvements of health facilities, vocational training and other educational measures. Burnham, on the other hand, spoke indefatigably of the "evils of the capitalist system". He tried to convince the people of Guyana that his unique brand of socialism was the panacea for the former colony. It is the lexical devices employed by Burnham which warrant further analysis.

He invokes the metaphor of "*beggars seeking favours*". Such a metaphor, undoubtedly, serves as a social commentary of capitalism in the West, and the

Amerindians' alliance to the UF. Burnham took heed of what he referred to in another speech as the "inhuman treatment" of African Americans in the United States. In fact, during a speech entitled "A New Era for our Amerindian Brothers", he drew myriad distinctions between the capitalist United States and his vision for creating a strong nation. Suffice to say, then, the association of "*beggars*" with a capitalist country is both deliberate and well-executed. He proceeds by promoting his socialist ideals by stating: "*you are full-fledged Guyanese citizens who, working together with other Guyanese citizens, can develop the resources of this country for the benefit of all of us*". So, in contradistinction to being "*beggars*" in a capitalist society, the Amerindians can opt to work cooperatively with the coastlanders under Burnham's political doctrine of Co-operative Socialism and his self-help" initiatives.

Ironically, at the time Burnham was delivering this speech, the ALC tendered their report to the government, recommending that 24,000 square miles of land be granted to 128 Amerindian communities- almost half of what the Amerindians had requested during the ALC's investigation. Thus, in many respects, the Amerindians attending this conference were "*beggars*" asking for more land from Burnham's PNC. Instead, they were presented with Burnham's ambitions of developing the country's resources- an issue which clearly took precedence over the indigenous population's unresolved land claims. Burnham's clever use of terms like "*full-fledged Guyanese citizens*" and "*benefit of all of us*" are strategically used to convince the Amerindians that the ALC's recommendations should be welcomed by the indigenous peoples, and that attention should be redirected towards the country's economic development. The following section of Burnham's speech features the paternalism frame insofar as the

Prime Minister discursively (re)constructs the indigenous peoples as naïve wards of the state- incapable of distinguishing between friend or foe: *“there are some who, for their own personal and material motives, would like to separate you from the rest of the community, pretending to be your friends”*. Such a peremptory warning uncovers an invisible distinction between Adult/Child. Like impressionable children, then, the Amerindians are presented as a population in dire need of guidance and direction from a benevolent leader during this pivotal juncture of nation-building.

Consider, also, this extract from another speech by Burnham during the 1969 conference. The Prime Minister’s plans to transform the country into a self-sufficient nation required the assimilation of the Amerindians. This following extract reveals how Burnham sought to transform the interior into a lucrative landscape:

*Let me say that your government, through the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, will give every assistance, advice and training so that the farming and development of these lands will bring you profitable returns.*

*In referring to the development of your lands, I include your right, with proper licenses, to win from the bowels of our earth precious stones and metals; and government will see that the results of your toil are not stolen from you for little or nothing by those who, under one guise or another, in the interior of our country seek to rob you.*

*You, as captains, you, as leaders, of your communities I know  
carry important responsibilities; and it to you that government  
looks, not only for full cooperation, but also for responsible and  
patriotic leadership* (as cited in Burnham 1970: 139)

Invisible distinctions between Commercial/Subsistence and Patriot/Traitor are presented here. Burnham's address to the Amerindians tries to convince them to relinquish subsistence agriculture, adopting, instead, commercial agriculture. This is evident where he states that his government is willing to: "*give every assistance, advice and training so that this farming and development of these lands will bring you profitable returns*" so that indigenous communities may "*win from the bowels of our earth precious stones and metals*". This, then, serves as an explicit attempt to encourage the assimilation of the Amerindians into the Co-operative Socialist agenda. The "*assistance, advice and training*" offered by the government, furthermore, seeks to force the abandonment of "unprofitable", subsistence agriculture and the adoption of "profitable", commercial agriculture. Finally, Burnham closes his speech with saying that "*government looks, not only for full cooperation, but also for responsible and patriotic leadership*". The invisible distinction between Patriot/Traitor is peppered throughout Burnham's speeches during his rule over Guyana. It serves as a common motif in the discourses produced during this period, and a reminder of the Rupununi rebellion. Those who ignore the country's patriotic ideals are dubbed traitors and enemies of the state. We will uncover more examples of this invisible distinction in subsequent speeches.



The attempt to integrate the Amerindians into the Co-operative socialist agenda is even more explicit in the following extract. In this text, commercial and economic agriculture, again, is highly contingent on the assimilation of the Amerindians:

*"Well, one thing we have got to learn in this world today is that if we are to be able to get some of the things which we need, we have got to produce not only for ourselves, but must also produce a surplus, which we can sell or exchange, for the things which we want and which we ourselves do not produce. That, basically, is the difference between subsistence agriculture and economic agriculture.*

*Subsistence agriculture means that you grow enough for yourself to eat and therefore you are without the surplus to get things which you do not produce yourself. But economic agriculture means that you not only grow for yourself to eat, but you also grow enough to sell to others, so that you can get money to buy other things which you need, so that you can cease being beggars, you can cease asking for favors. If you do not grow enough to sell to get the surplus to buy clothes, you'll have forever to be begging for cast-off clothes"*

(as cited in Burnham 1970: 142).

This text, like the preceding one, features the assimilation frame, along with

an invisible distinction between Commercial/Subsistence. Burnham tries to persuade the Amerindians to supplant subsistence activities with market-oriented activities- namely, export-oriented agriculture. The use of metaphorical devices in the extract reveals how Burnham perceives the Amerindians' traditional, subsistence farming techniques.

Amerindian practices- and lifestyles, for that matter- are subject to derision: *"you can cease being beggars, you can cease asking for favors"*. He proceeds: *If you do not grow enough to sell to get the surplus to buy clothes, you'll have forever to be begging for cast-off clothes*. The metaphor of "begging" is revisited here, coupled with the notion of wearing "cast-off clothes". These lexical devices are used to encourage the Amerindians to follow the Co-operative agenda, lest they continue leading lives of squalor.

As mentioned previously, Burnham was aware of the mistreatment of African Americans in the United States. He promised that their fate would never befall the indigenous people of Guyana. Consider the following speech from the 1969 conference:

*"In places like the Southern States of America you will find a large number of societies and organizations established for helping the Negroes but yet at the same time the Negroes there are discriminated against and have the most inhuman treatment perhaps in the world meted out to them. It is not your government's intention to permit a similar situation here and to make a mere plague of Amerindian development and Amerindian welfare separating them from the rest of the community and treating them like second-class citizens"* (as cited in Burnham 1970: 140).

It is quite evident from this speech that Burnham has a different fate planned for the Amerindians of Guyana. The comparison to the “*Negroes*” of the United States is both deliberate and clever, vowing that his government would never mistreat the indigenous peoples in such a fashion. He goes so far as to say that the Amerindians would never be treated like “*second-class citizens*” in the sense that their political rights would be protected under the rule of the PNC. The irony here, of course, is that Burnham is trying to dismantle the abyssal distinctions between US/Them and Coastlander/Amerindian by stating that the PNC does not wish to separate the Amerindians from the rest of the community. This, in Santosian terms, suggests that the radical division of social reality is abandoned and the Amerindians are invited over to “this side of the line”. The invitation, however, is contingent upon certain conditions: complete and utter loyalty to the state. Near the end of the conference, Burnham shares his thoughts on the Rupununi rebellion which occurred the same year:

*“And it is good for you, too, to let the world know that you have nothing in common with those traitors, who started the uprising in the Rupununi and now, like the cowards they are, seeking and enjoying the safe asylum of Brazil and Venezuela. It is good that the rest of the community knows that you are loyal citizens of Guyana. And it is good that a warning be given to those who would want to make excuses for those traitors who have defiled our country and have lost every right to enjoy anything which Guyana produces”*

(as cited in Burnham 1970: 144)

This extract, in complete contrast to the hollow promises presented in the previous speech, evinces the rather strong stance Burnham takes against those who supported the “cowardly traitors” during the rebellion. The colony/nation ascendancy frame can be used here to uncover invisible distinctions- namely, Patriot/Traitor and Loyalty/Disloyalty. Abyssal lines are drawn between the ‘disloyal traitors’ and the rest of the country. Those who participated in the attempted insurrection stand to face draconian consequences for their actions: *“excuses for those traitors who have defiled our country an have lost every right to enjoy anything which Guyana produces”*. Burnham’s statements here, undoubtedly, influenced the publication and enforcement of section 20A(4) of the *Amerindian Act* of 1976, especially the provision concerning forfeiture of titles if members of an Amerindian community display acts of “disloyalty”.

As adverted to in the preceding sections, the early 1970s marked the beginning of Burnham’s ambitious plans for enacting state-run agricultural projects like those which unfolded in Kato village. Consider a memo from one C. Swan, a local administrator who expressed that those villagers who did not participate in the co-operative scheme would be blacklisted and could no longer avail themselves of government services:

*“The entire area to be cleared is 68 plots, or 17 acres, and it should be done on a cooperative basis. Households were given responsibility to deal with these plots. Failing to do so, they will be excluded from the scheme, and will not be able to share in the benefits that the scheme will provide. Any household or head of family unit who refuses to work and is eventually excluded from the scheme will be classed as a*

*non-productive villager and will not be granted any form of assistance from the village council or the department in any agricultural activity he may undertake in the area*

(KAS 1973a).

Like Burnham's preceding speech regarding the consequences of traitorous acts among the indigenous communities, this memo also presents the latent threat of withholding resources and services from the Amerindians. The colony/nation ascendancy frame and assimilation frame reveal (a) that it is the development objectives of the republic which take precedence over the needs of the villagers- most of whom, according to Hennessy (2005), were already involved in sustainable and efficient agricultural projects long before Burnham hatched his "self help" initiatives and (b) the government's desire to integrate the Amerindians into their socialist agenda. What is more, Amerindian customary farming practices are viewed as inferior and incompatible with Burnham's top-down, co-operative program. In this memo, therefore, we detect the invisible distinctions between Productive Villagers/Non-Productive Villagers and, most importantly, the consequences of not adhering to the socialist agricultural projects: *Any household or head of family unit who refuses to work and is eventually excluded from the scheme will be classed as a non-productive villager and will not be granted any form of assistance from the village*". Those classed as non-productive villagers were threatened with being cut off from government services, serving as a glaring reminder of the asymmetric power relations between the Coastlanders/Amerindians.

That same year, a report by the Interior Development Department read:

*"Those of us with some exposure in endeavoring to change*

*people from their traditional habits, will appreciate the difficulties posed, the persistence needed, to attain success. Interior Development Department took up the challenge and oriented people in the hinterland away from producing the basics of cassava, plantain, eddoes, etc.” (GOG 1973)*

A few years earlier, the Principal Agricultural Officer, one Mr. Ragnauth, wrote: “*Amerindians cannot be described as true farmers and it would take some considerable time to get them to adopt changes new techniques and new crops*” (KAS 1968a). While scholars such as Hennessy (2005) maintain that such reports evinced the PNC’s views of the indigenous peoples as culturally inferior and unenlightened, there is more to such discursive pronouncements. Couched in these words is the deficit-oriented frame, which engenders invisible distinctions between Superior/Inferior, Progressive/Backward and Developed/Undeveloped. The former extract contains key lexical devices such as: “*traditional habits*”, “*difficulties posed*” and “*the persistence needed*” – all of which serve as reminders that the indigenous tribes are ‘essentialized’. They are incapable of innovating agricultural practices without assistance from government programs and agents, especially in the latter example where Mr. Ragnauth avers that the Amerindians “*cannot be described as true farmers*”. The impossibility of co-presence between the co-operative and the indigenous tribes is captured in these texts: the Amerindians’ way of life cannot exist in tandem with the ambitions of the co-operative. Their practices are marginalized and denigrated by the government, and they are encouraged to assimilate.

As can be seen in the above examples, patriotism and loyalty from the Amerindian community secured the protection of their rights under the PNC. I maintain, however, that abyssal lines drawn between Patriot/Traitor and Loyalty/Disloyalty were merely a justification to withhold titles from the Amerindians. If we review another extract from a meeting from 1976, we bear witness to Burnham's opinion regarding the provision of title to the indigenous population:

*"Let's be realistic. All of us have to live here, and it would be a joke if 40, 000 of the population of over 700,000 were to get more than half of the land space"* (as cited in Williams 1976: 17)

Lexical devices such as: "*Let's be realistic*" and "*it would be a joke...*" discursively construct the issue of Amerindian land claims in facetious terms. The *Amerindian Act* was revised the same year and controversy ensued over how much land was allotted to the Amerindians. The indigenous population, undoubtedly, felt they were entitled to more and Burnham's response here clearly prioritizes the interests of the coastlanders, undergirding the visible distinction between Us/Them. As such, the text features the colony/nation ascendancy frame. It also reveals that invisible distinctions demarcating Patriot/Traitor and Loyalty/Disloyalty were completely ideological. In other words, whether or not the indigenous population demonstrated patriotism and loyalty towards the state, the PNC was not prepared to give them titles to the lands they sought. Finally, this extract explicitly exemplifies the impossibility of co-presence between Coastlanders/Amerindians, as the latter's claims to land (43,000 square miles) will not even be entertained by Burnham and, thus, are manufactured as nonexistent.

What can be gathered from the aforementioned texts is a matrix of abyssal thinking. Through the use of lexical and metaphorical devices, CDA aids our investigation of Santos' elaborate system of visible and invisible distinctions. Whether the Amerindians were portrayed as "beggars", "insurgents", "traitors" and "non-productive villagers", they were consigned to "the other side of the line"- diametrically opposed to those on "this side of the line" through the radical division of social reality into two realms of existence. Through abyssal machinery such as the ALC, the *Amerindian Act* and *Mining Act*, the state reinforced its identity in the Dominant/Subordinate dichotomy, exercising power over the Amerindian nation. Through such an imposition of abyssal ideology, concomitantly, the impossibility of co-presence between the two realms was entrenched through both practice and discourse, but was steadfastly challenged by the Amerindians, as will be demonstrated in the following section.

### **The Negotiation and Contestation of Discursive Power: Amerindian Resistance**

The preceding section captures abyssal ideology through various texts. Like the colonial administration during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the PNC, during their rule over the country, perpetuated cognitive injustices against the Amerindians: they were perceived as the Other and their sub-humanity prevented them from making a difference in their social world. This was achieved by the creation of abyssal machinery which (a) facilitated the production of nonexistence of Amerindian systems of governance, customs and practices, (b) advanced impossibility of co-presence between the coastlanders and the indigenous peoples of the country and (c) discursively (re)constructed the Amerindians as



either unpatriotic traitors of Guyana; unproductive members of the co-operative; and backwards farmers incapable of innovation and progress.

As the title of this section suggests, the Amerindians exercised steadfast resistance against Burnham and his PNC's misrepresentations of who they were and what role they were poised to play during the post-independent era. Capturing such resistance, however, is no easy feat- especially through ethnographic research. Jeanette Forte (1990) speaks to this very issue in her publication: *The Case Of The "Barama River Caribs of Guyana Restudied"*. The dearth of comparative research about Guyana's indigenous population during the period of post-independence is, according to the author, attributed to Burnham's dictatorial powers and the "impossibility of obtaining official permission to conduct field research among the Guyanese Amerindians" (Forte 1990: 203). Near the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, the economic liberalization of Guyana's interior and the influx of international loggers and mining companies strengthened Amerindian resistance against the PNC and PPP's complicity in the proliferation of extractive regimes scattered throughout Amerindian territory. Such resistance was manifested through the establishment of Amerindian organizations, which varied from community-scale constituencies, to regional "Area" councils and three pan-national organizations: The Guyana Organization of Indigenous peoples (GOIP), The Amerindian Peoples Association (APA) and The Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana (TAAMOG). The remainder of this chapter, therefore, offers what Santos (2006) refers to as "an alternative thinking of alternatives"- an alternative vision of Amerindian identity which challenges their alleged backwardness, disloyalty and cultural inferiority. In what follows,

I piece together examples of Amerindian resistance against the government of Guyana's discriminatory discourses and policies from both primary and secondary datasets.

Amerindian resistance to the PNC's rule over the newly independent nation of Guyana can be documented as early as the 1960s. Recall, the indigenous population rallied under the leadership of Stephen Campbell and his support for the UF. The ethno-political rivalry between the PPP and PNC produced detrimental effects on certain Amerindian communities. For example, orchestrated strikes led by Burnham's PNC during the years leading up to the country's political independence shut down Georgetown's sugar plantations. Amerindian communities- most of which were dependent on commercial items- suffered from the looming threat of starvation (Hennessy 2005). Such events led the Amerindians to believe that if either the Indo or Afro-Guyanese ruled the country, their political voice would be silenced. The same year the ALC completed its highly anticipated investigation into the land claims of the indigenous population, an attempted secession of the Rupununi to Venezuela unfolded.

According to Nádia Farage (2003), the motive for the uprising was land: the PNC government was preparing to renew leases of land for the ranchers in the Rupununi. Two wealthy families of ranchers (the descendants of the Harts of America and the Melvilles from Scotland) convinced the Amerindians of the Rupununi savannas that their rights to land were threatened by the ascendancy of the PNC. Supplying the Wapishana community with guns and equipment, the ranchers prepared for an act of insurgency. On January 2, 1969, the ranchers and Wapishana Amerindians descended upon the town of Lethem, located in the Rupununi region. The insurrectionists, armed with bazookas and automatic weapons, took hostages at Annai and Good Hope Station, spraying bullets

indiscriminately at the Lethem Police Station (Sanders 1987). While the insurgents seized hostages and awaited reinforcements from Venezuela, Burnham dispatched the Guyana Defence Force, bringing the rebellion to an end. The leaders of the uprising went into exile in Venezuela and some 300 Wapishana Amerindians swam across the Tacutu River and sought refuge in the scattered villages along the Brazilian border (Farage 2003).

Official discourse surrounding the event constructed those participating Amerindians as “*rats in the Rupununi*”; there was a call to “*unmask the traitors*” involved in this shameful act of disloyalty against the nation (Guyana Graphic January 6-7, 1969). Such discursive constructions were, however, resisted and re-configured by both the ranchers and Amerindians. Valerie Hart, a defeated United Force candidate in the 1968 elections, challenged the official discourse concerning the uprising, claiming that it was not an act of insurgency, but rather a “*bid for freedom*”. Documenting the construction of Wapishana social memory about the Rupununi uprising, Farage (2003) explores how Amerindian resistance was discursively produced. In one poignant interview with a member of the Wapishana living in Brazil, it is revealed that the Amerindians’ complicity in the 1969 uprising was a form of resistance against Burnham and his regime’s rule over the country- especially his ambitions regarding the country’s self-sufficiency and nationalization. Consider, for instance, one interviewee’s succinct reason for participating in the act of insurgency: “*we came for the salt*”, which according to Farage (2003:116) serves as “an oblique way of saying they fled from the extreme shortage of goods while in Rupununi”. The Amerindians, under the dictatorial rule of Burnham, suffered from acute shortages of food; they were also persecuted for their political allegiance to the UF. In another interview, John, a resident of Jacamim village, recounts:

*“The blacks won the elections; the Melvilles did not accept the results. That is why they crossed the river. The Melvilles had given guns to the Wapishana in order to kill the blacks. They killed five soldiers”* (as cited in Farage 2003: 116).

While Farage describes this recollection as brief and somewhat detached, the account, I contend, takes ownership for the uprising, placing the Amerindians in the center of the attempted secession, piecing together fragments of resistance against the PNC government. Amid Burnham’s claims that the event was the direct result of cowardly traitors who shamefully fled to neighbouring countries, John’s reconstruction of the uprising challenges this, revealing that the Wapishana involved in the rebellion were conscious of the corruption and dictatorial propensities of the PNC and, most importantly, played an active role in bringing its rule to an end.

Another fascinating exploration of Amerindian resistance to the PNC’s policies of development and liberalization of the interior is Neil Whitehead’s (2002) work entitled *Dark Shamans: Kanaimá And the Poetics of Violent Death*. Derived from spiritual beliefs in supernatural powers, *kanaimá*, it is maintained, is an ancient spirit-force invoked by shamans to conduct ritual killings and mutilation (Whitehead 2002; Torres 1989). The term *kanaimá*, is used to identify both the supernatural force and the practitioners who call upon it in order to conduct these methodical killings. Whitehead argues that *kanaimá* serves as an expression of autonomy and a form of ‘hypertraditionalism’ among tribes such as the Patamona people, especially in the face of development projects in the county’s interior. Embarking on an ethnographic and historical investigation of the indigenous custom, Whitehead reveals that during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century,

*kanaimá* has been invoked in mining camps, affirming Amerindian identity against the state, whilst serving as a form of ethno-cultural resistance to development (Whitehead 2002). The author explains:

“*Kanaimá* is thus assimilated to a more radical notion of Amerindian identity, becoming a general mindset, and everything is attributed to *kanaimá* activity, since this itself becomes proof of the persistence of a distinctly traditional Amerindian way of life. Ironically, the existence of the mining frontier, it is felt, has given the *kanaimás* a new and vastly enlarged scope for their activities, even as “*kanaimá*” itself is suspected to be less authentic than it once was”

(Whitehead 2002: 186).

The practice of *kanaimá*, while serving as a distinct feature of Amerindian identity and tradition, is also directly linked to the preponderance of extractive regimes scattered throughout Guyana’s interior. The custom must, perforce, be situated in context- namely, the PNC’s grand development plans of the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Entering the 1990s, the Amerindian population started to mobilize, laying the groundwork for a political movement and strategy vis-à-vis the post-colonial state and neoliberal ideology. The Amerindian Peoples Association, for example, was created in the 1990s, serving as a response to the IMF and World Bank’s reformed economic policies. Consider this speech to the Amerindian Peoples Association by one Bishop Randolph George, dated April 11, 1991:

*“Decisions are being taken with regard to our forests, rivers*

*natural resources which will change the way of life of our Amerindian communities forever... We are therefore at a cross-roads... We can choose the path of making fast profits at the cost of destroying both the environment and Amerindian communities, or alternatively, we can take the path of using our resources in caring and renewable ways, ways which recognize that vigorous Amerindian communities are the best form of conservation”* (as cited in Colchester 1997: 1).

In many ways, this speech encapsulates the raison d’être of the APA. The speech features acknowledgment among the Amerindian communities that neoliberal reforms have changed the socio-ecological and cultural landscape of their lands and, most importantly, that the Amerindians must reclaim ownership and governance of their lands if they are to survive the neoliberal onslaught: *“we can choose the path of making fast profits at the cost of destroying both the environment and Amerindian communities, or alternatively, we can take the path of using our resources in caring and renewable ways”*.

Consider, also, this speech by Salome Henry, an Amerindian spokesperson, during a conference in Guyana in 1994:

*“Mining is causing concern to residents of the communities. Water is contaminated when dredges are in operation. Residents are unable to get fish for domestic purposes and for aquarium trading. The use of mercury by miners is dangerous to all residents who depend on the river for water for all purposes, including drinking. In their greed for gold,*

*miners pay no attention to the damage they cause. Fallen trees and the creation of new sands banks- the results of their mining activities- block the rivers causing travel in boats to be impossible. Both rivers and forests support the life of our people. Man knows when nature dies, he too will die” (as cited in Forte 1994: 69).*

This extract is especially important because it presents indigenous epistemologies regarding the holistic and syncretic relationship between humans and nature: *“both rivers and forests support the life of our people. Man knows when nature dies, he too will die”*. Such a relationship is fractured under neoliberal reforms and the liberalization of Amerindian territory, and this is patently clear through Henry’s lament over the mining operations unfolding throughout the hinterlands. The discourse also draws explicit links between ecological degradation and social inequality: *“water is contaminated when dredges are in operation. “Residents are unable to get fish for domestic purposes and for aquarium trading”*.

In a related vein, consider this speech by Wilfred Williams, an Amerindian of Campbelltown during a 1994 conference:

*“Mining which is the cause of the encroachment [on our lands] should be seriously looked into. The use of heavy duty machinery, eg missiles and land dredges, are causing environmental damage from as far as Eagle Mountain to as far as the mouth of Mahdia Creek. Though we also also live by mining, we are not in favour of these Machines because of the environmental damage that they cause. The mining is also encouraging the peddling of drugs, for example,*

*cocaine and ganja, which I believe are causing our young people to be led astray and this is detrimental to our society. I hope the government will also address this problem urgently”*  
(as cited in Forte 1994: 36).

Again, Williams’ diatribe against the government’s exploitation of the country’s resource base serves as a clarion call for resistance against unsustainable mining and its effects on the social fabric of Amerindian societies. Interestingly, he presents a critique of modernization and transnational mining operations, stating “*though we also also live by mining, we are not in favour of these machines because of the environmental damage that they cause*”. He proceeds by exploring how modern, industrial mining changes the social dynamics in Amerindian villages, commenting on “*the peddling of drugs, for example, cocaine and ganja*”. Finally, Williams speaks to the inevitable collapse of traditional societies when he mentions young people being led astray from Amerindian villages and how this is “*detrimental to our society*”. Such connections, again, are extremely important for an eco-crimes framework because they illuminate the nexus between environmental destruction and social inequality.

Resistance against post-colonial policies and neoliberal ideology forces Amerindian communities to reclaim their lands and destinies as a sovereign people. Consider this inspiring speech delivered by a member of the Patamona community Kopinang:

*“We, the Amerindians, are the original people of this country and as such we feel that we should have full rights to the ownership of our lands. Full rights where minerals (gold*



*and diamonds) are concerned...Also to own the water rights and to claim full rights for our children”*

(as cited in Forte 1994: 222).

The claim that “*we, the Amerindians, are the original people of this country*” positions the Amerindians at the forefront of a struggle to assert their political rights amid waves of neoliberal reform. But Amerindian resistance is multifaceted insofar as the indigenous peoples are fighting against illegal mining, logging and, most importantly, unsettled land claims which denude them of their rights to minerals and basic necessities such as water.

Resistance against the neoliberal juggernaut during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is a worthwhile investigation, but there is also the struggle to exercise post-abysal thinking, addressing some of the cognitive injustices associated with environmental and social inequality. Piecing together fragments from various interviews with Amerindians during the final decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, I am able to present examples of post-abysal thinking via discourse. Judaman Seecoomar’s work entitled *Contributions towards the resolution of conflict in Guyana* (2002) is of inestimable value for such an endeavor. In his attempt to uncover the roots of ethnic insecurity and the interminable conflict between the Indo- and Afro-Guyanese, he includes interviews with various Amerindian community members across the country, hoping to gain a different perspective on the matter. What is of import in these texts is the Amerindians’ responses to questions concerning race relations in Guyana; local politics; untitled land claims; community development; and global affairs. The extracts, furthermore, challenge the negative portrayals of the country’s indigenous peoples, affording them the opportunity

to resist the imposition of abyssal ideology. Consider the first interview during which an Amerindian interviewee is asked to share their thoughts about the social problems which exist on the Coastland. Here is what this respondent says:

*“I don ’t ’ know much about the problems between the East Indians and the Africans on the Coast. But from the Amerindian side, problems have been caused because the education which they get on the Coast about the Amerindian way of life is all out-dated. Yet they continue to use the same old history books. So they still believe that the Amerindians are wild in the bush, when they are not. Amerindians are civilized as anyone else. They live as comfortably as anyone else. So when we come to Georgetown, they look down on us as being far below their level. So the problem to me is about up-to-date, on the spot education about the Amerindians”*

(Int., No., 32, 19/03/97, as cited in Seecoomar 2002: 138).

While the respondent concedes to not knowing much about the social problems on the coast, the interviewee does share some insightful words on the relationship between the Amerindians and the rest of Guyanese society, attributing negative stereotypes about the indigenous population to *“the education which they get on the Coast”*. This is an extremely important remark because it demonstrates that the respondent is fully aware that the epistemological and ontological distinctions between the classic Us/Them dichotomy is not a natural function of the hierarchal order of races in Guyana; instead, it is a cultural product inherited from the colonial regime. The respondent proceeds by

saying that the history taught on the Coast is “*out-dated*” and that “*they continue to use the same old history books. So they still believe that the Amerindians are wild in the bush, when they are not*”.

According to Santos’ framework, the division of social reality is premised upon the radical exclusion of those “the accepted conception of inclusion considers to be its other” (Santos 2006: 4). The Amerindians, perforce, are excluded through this system of visible and invisible distinctions and cannot exist in the same realm of the coastlanders. The “civilization” of the coastlanders, then, is contingent upon the “uncivilized” state of the Amerindians, making the former culturally superior to the latter under abyssal ideology. However, the respondent attacks this very notion by stating: “*Amerindians are civilized as anyone else. They live as comfortably as anyone else*”. If, in fact, the Amerindians are just as civilized as the coastlanders, the impossibility of co-presence principle must be dismantled by what Santos (2006) refers to as post-abyssal thinking, opening a social space for the coexistence between coastlanders and Amerindians.

In another interview, an Amerindian is questioned about how Guyanese can remove some of the causes for discontent and tension? The respondent answers:

*“First of all I would like to go along with the socialization school which argues that feelings of prejudice, xenophobia and racism are essentially feelings about thought. Therefore, people can be taught not to have these fears and in that sense I support the education drive: a large scale public education drive starting in the schools and ending in the communities. It is a slow process, a lengthy process, an expensive process, but I think it would be*

*the one that would bear the most fruit in the long run.*

*To teach people that there is no reason to fear difference;*

*to teach people that it is possible to live quality lives in harmony.*

*To teach people that we have more to gain by reciprocity and*

*respect for others. So I think that a large scale education project*

*could be the plank on which we build”*

(Int., No., 36, 21/03/97 as cited in Seecoomar 2002: 143).

Again, this extract, like the preceding one, aims to deconstruct abyssal ideology penetrating the visible and invisible distinctions. The Amerindians' occupation near the bottom of the racial hierarchy of post-independent Guyana is interpreted as a function of "thought"- specifically, "*feelings of prejudice, xenophobia and racism*". In contradistinction to some preordained and natural stratification of Guyanese society, then, the respondent believes that the lack of education is the source of people's fears and mistrust of each other. Santos' logic of social classification- *the naturalization of difference*- is also beset here. Recall, such a classification of populations aims to naturalize social hierarchies, ordering the social world, and its inhabitants, in relations of domination. Those situated at the top of this hierarchy classify themselves as superior and actively produce a state of nonexistence by designating those on the bottom of the hierarchy as inferior. The respondent recognizes this dynamic in Guyanese society, stating that education is the key to teaching people "*that there is no reason to fear difference*". Finally, the coexistence between both realms of social reality is encapsulated when the respondent speaks about bringing the people together through educational

reforms: *“to teach people that it is possible to live quality lives in harmony; to teach people that we have more to gain by reciprocity and Respect for others.*

The final extract I wish to present in this section is derived from the same interview. When asked about how education for a multicultural society would take place at the school level, the respondent explains:

*“There is the whole idea of multicultural education and then going a bit further anti-racist education. It is between these two frameworks that I think we can find our approach. We will have to re-educate our children about the origins of man. Take away the European, middle-class stereotypes which seem to dominate the world of learning. Guyanese students must be introduced to the fact that their ancestors have made important contributions to the world. The whole curriculum must deal with the question of race and must give students a sense of pride in who they are”*

(Int., No., 36, 21/03/97 as cited in Seecoomar 2002: 145.).

I have reserved this interview for last because I believe it succinctly captures the crux of Santos' abyssal framework and the manner in which abyssal ideology has been entrenched in the country's social, economic, political and cultural institutions for the past four centuries. The respondent, again, addresses the issue of education and its centrality to dismantling abyssal machinery and structures. Most importantly, though, is the identification of how *“European stereotypes”* of the Amerindian people have relegated them to a position of perpetual subordination. The respondent intimates that these stereotypes have rendered the contributions of other Guyanese nonexistent, denying

such people their right to participate, or to make a difference, in their social worlds. It is the cognitive injustice of viewing these individuals as sub-humans, devoid of the capacity to lead meaningful lives, that the respondent recognizes a major obstacle in Guyanese society. The solution, then, is deconstructing the abyssal legacies penetrating so many of the country's institutions, and education, according to the interviewee, is a starting point.

The analysis above serves as an example of- to borrow Santos' phrase- "an alternative thinking of alternatives". I interpret this to mean an alternative vision of Amerindian identity, which challenges their alleged backwardness, disloyalty and cultural inferiority. As such, the aforesaid extracts challenge the "passivity" of the indigenous population, demonstrating their agency by mobilizing resources and galvanizing neighbouring Amerindian districts to resist the economic exploitation and political marginalization at the hands of both the PNC and PPP. The Amerindians challenge the cognitive injustice associated with the radical division of social reality into two distinct realms and, most importantly, the impossibility of co-presence between these two realms through acts of rebellion; the establishment of political organizations such as GOIP, the APA and TAAMOG; and social commentaries on Guyana's education system. They refused to be relegated to the "other side of the line", opting instead to coexist with those on "this side of the line". These examples, therefore, demonstrate how power is diffuse and in constant flux, affording ample opportunity for negotiation and resistance.

### **Abyssal Machinery and the Antecedents of Neoliberal Conservation**

The dawn of a new period for the former English colony commenced following the country's independence in 1966. Certain cultural dichotomies from the era of colonialism dissolved, only to be replaced by new ones by the predominantly Indo- and

Afro-Guyanese population yearning to shed the yoke of imperialism. On the other hand, some of the colonial legacies of abyssal thought and practice remained during the post-independence period through what I refer to as abyssal machinery- namely, the ALC, *Amerindian Act* of 1976 and *Mining Act* of 1989. These mechanisms perpetuated the abyssal ideology of Amerindian inferiority. CDA aids our investigation of the invisible distinctions supporting the visible ones through discourse, begging the question: how might the aforementioned abyssal machinery serve as a framework and foundation for conservation initiatives in the country? As I have documented in the above sections, certain legislation such as the *Amerindian Act* explicitly conferred sweeping powers on certain actors to undertake the care, protection and management of Amerindian land. This very paternal notion of exercising responsibility for the indigenous peoples' land presents misguided and discriminatory assumptions concerning the Amerindians' ability to oversee their own affairs. What is more, it places the Amerindians in a position where they are constantly deferring to a higher authority regarding the management of their resources. Such abyssal ideology was appropriated by global conservation regimes, as will be further explored the next chapter.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **The Abyssal Dimensions of Conservation**

This chapter serves as a final instalment in a comparative and critical analysis of the discursive representation of Guyana's indigenous population. Analyzing how both the government of Guyana and Conservation International utilize textual and linguistic resources available to them, I reveal that representations of the Amerindians conform to a legacy of abyssal ideology and cognitive injustice, reinforcing their civilizational and cultural inferiority. Global conservationists exercise geographic domination through the imposition of hegemonic and neocolonial modes of conservation. The reliance on market-oriented, fortress style, and command and control management of land displaces and alienates both indigenous and local communities from resources they have used since time immemorial. Situating conservation within both an abyssal and eco-crimes framework forces students of green criminology to ruminate on how cognitive injustice is linked to social and environmental injustice, shaping the contours of asymmetrical power relationships between certain global, hemispheric actors and indigenous communities.

As mentioned in earlier chapters, the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) between Conservation International, the government of Guyana and the Wai Wai of the Konashen District encourages vistas of inquiry for green criminologists, advancing the social legalist perspective. Specifically, my exploration of the discourses surrounding the creation of Guyana's very first community-owned conservation area (C.O.C.A.) seeks to unmask the abyssal dimensions of conservation efforts and the interminable struggle among indigenous communities to resist the radical division of social reality. Most importantly, I document the shift towards post-abyssal thinking vis-à-vis management



and governance of land and resources. Couched within the rhetoric of Conservation International's institutional discourses is a visible distinction: Market-Oriented Conservation/Indigenous Conservation. Such a distinction, however, is buttressed by a collection of invisible distinctions: Modern/Customary, Formalized Knowledge/Folk Knowledge, Stakeholders/Rights-Holders, Unilinear and Commodified/Fractal and Recursive Environments and Positivistic/Cosmographic.

I begin this chapter by presenting a brief, and succinct, literature review on the problematics of conservation; I proceed with an analysis of international-led conservation initiatives in Guyana, reviewing the ramifications of these projects. I then turn to the manner in which the Wai Wai, and their rights to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) were rendered nonexistent; moving along, I explore the creation of the country's first community-owned conservation area and its abyssal dimensions, invoking CDA in order to critically analyze Conservation International's institutional discourses surrounding the implementation of the project. Finally, I conclude the chapter with examples of Amerindian resistance against abyssal ideology, capturing how the Wai Wai, and other indigenous groups, advance post-abyssal thinking in the field of international-led conservation.

### **Conservation for Whom?**

Research on the social impacts of conservation initiatives in Guyana is still in its infancy; there is, nevertheless, a robust literature on conservation-induced displacement across the globe (Brockington et al., 2005; Sanderson et al. 2002; Igoe 2010; Duffy 2003; Agrawal and Redford 2006; Ferguson 2006; Garland 2008). From consumption pressures, which accelerate the decline of flora and fauna, to the failure of conservation projects to

alleviate poverty, eradicate disease and promote social equity (Sanderson et al. 2002), many scholars argue that conservation, like development, is inherently spatial and that the conservation of ecosystems implies the governance of human interaction with landscapes (Agrawal and Redford, 2006). The proliferation of protected areas and conservation efforts has been subject to strident criticisms- many of which view biodiversity conservation as a project of neoliberal capitalism, responsible for the commodification of nature and the ‘spectacular accumulation’ of landscapes and exotic peoples (Igoe 2010; Duffy 2003; Ferguson 2006).

The asymmetrical power relations inherent in conservation projects have been critiqued, leading scholars to the conclusion that international organizations cannot impose transboundary cooperation along/across the boundaries of protected areas, but must encourage and foster “day-to-day involvement and efforts of those on the local level” (Zbicz 2003: 22). There is a fund of knowledge addressing the participation of indigenous peoples in decentralized, environmental governance. Consider, for instance, the typologies of indigenous involvement proffered by Hill et al. (2012). The authors aver that the synthesis of Indigenous Ecological Knowledge (IEK) and western science promotes cultural diversity in the management of social-ecological system sustainability. Conducting a comparative analysis of 21 Australian case studies, the researchers reveal that indigenous engagement in environmental management runs the gamut from natural resource management (Roughley and Williams 2007); native title agreement (Hill 2006, Agius et al. 2007); Indigenous and co-managed protected areas (Muller 2003, Nursey-Bray and Rist 2009, Ross et al. 2009); and endangered species initiatives (Nursey-Bray 2009).

Most importantly, however, Hill et al. (2009) employ an analytical framework with several categories in order to classify indigenous participation in environmental governance: (1) power-sharing, incorporating decision-making and control, rules definition, resource cultural values and property rights; (2) participation, incorporating participatory processes and functions, organizations engaged and coordination; and (3) intercultural purpose, incorporating purposes of environmental management of projects or programs, and indigenous development and capacity building. Using these disparate dimensions of engagement, the authors present a succinct typology: Indigenous-governed collaborations (IGs), which are the result of indigenous initiatives, bringing indigenous peoples together to focus on common environmental issues and policy agendas; Indigenous-driven co-governance (ICoG), which serves as a response to government initiatives; Agency-driven co-governance (ACoG), an attempt to situate power within organizations, whilst recognizing and delineating indigenous rights through native title or recognition of Aboriginal joint management of protected areas; and Agency Governance (AG), which tend to regard indigenous peoples as stakeholders, instead of a group with a distinct political status within the state (Hill et al. 2012).

Other means of testing and measuring the levels of collaboration between the state and indigenous peoples have been thoroughly documented, and situated along a continuum of cooperation when discussing environmental management (Zbicz 1999; Hamilton et al. 1996; Griffin et al. 1999; Singh 1999). Zbicz (2003), for example, proffers hierarchal levels of transboundary cooperation:

Level 0 *No Cooperation*

Level 1 *Communication*- Some information sharing.

Level 2 *Consultation*- Notification of actions, emergencies.

Level 3 *Collaboration*- Frequent communication and meetings. Active cooperation on multiple activities.

Level 4 *Coordination of Planning*- Regular meetings. Coordinated actions.

Level 5 *Full Cooperation*- Fully integrated, ecosystem-based planning, cooperation on management. Joint decision-making committee.

Despite such examples of indigenous engagement in decentralized approaches to environmental management, there is a robust literature addressing the problematics of contemporary conservation models. Drawing upon the conservation work of the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), Igoe (2010) suggests that the representation of conservation in the media facilitates transformations of landscapes consistent with a ‘conservationist mode of production’ (Garland 2008) in which conservation lays claims to ‘natural capital’, securing resources for interventions which maintain dominant worldviews. Such worldviews entail the idea that people residing in conservation landscapes can easily transition from land-based livelihoods to market-based ones. This logic legitimizes massive conservation efforts worldwide (Adamson 2006; West and Carrier 2004). While Igoe (2010) comments on the media productions of conservation interventions, asserting that such presentations elide the socio-economic complexities of the displacement and impoverishment of people, Brockington (2003:25) laments that current and future conflicts over protected areas contain a “myriad of marginalizations and inequalities enforced on smaller and smaller scales”. A survey of numerous biodiversity conservation projects by Agrawal and Redford (2006) demonstrates that conservation does not accomplish its main objective- that is, the alleviation of poverty in remote areas across

the globe; in reality, conservation projects are responsible for the displacement of millions of people (Geisler 2003).

Exploring the relationships between conservation, human rights and development, Brockington et al. (2005) suggest that international conservation NGOs neglect the needs of local peoples by introducing legislation as a means of making the use of resources in protected areas illegal; this, the authors argue, creates millions of environmental refugees. What has also been a field of burning interest among scholars is the manner in which conservation affects non-indigenous groups (Nelson and Hossack 2003; Chapin 2004); non-indigenous groups such as campesino communities, for instance, are just as impoverished by displacement-induced conservation (Brockington et al. 2005). The politics of conservation, Agrawal and Redford (2006) suggest, are shrouded in mystery; there is a lack of systematic data regarding what transpires in 'protected areas', leading to questions of how management objectives of conservation efforts are implemented. What is more, there is a glaring absence of data regarding the social impacts of displacement and what role the government of certain countries is poised to play in addressing the rights of those who have been evicted from their territories (Agrawal and Redford 2009). Despite such gaps in the literature, numerous studies have recorded some of the consequences of conservation-led displacement: impoverishment, social disarticulation, political disempowerment and losses to livelihoods and agricultural incomes, (Ghimire & Pimbert 1997; Adams and Hutton 2007; McLean & Straede 2003; Rao et al. 2002).

## **Conservation in the Land of Many Waters**

While I am particularly interested in the creation of Guyana's first community-owned conservation area, it behooves us to take a quick look at other conservation initiatives in the country and the abyssal dimensions of those efforts. Global hemispheric actors have shown a growing interest in conservation in Guyana; bilateral aid has come from the European Union, Canada and the United States. The World Bank, as part of its conditionalities for further aid packages, has sought to establish a National Protected Areas System (NPAS). While some studies have demonstrated that national protected areas have slower deforestation rates than indigenous reservations (on account of legally national PAs being not being affected by colonization waves like their indigenous counterparts) scholars, activists and regional and national communities highlight the other side of the conservation coin- what some scholars refer to as an "imperialistic international conservation push", (Hennessy 2005); "Biopiracy" (Shiva 1997); "Environmental Intervention" (Schroeder 1997), "Radical American Environmentalism" (Guhu 1987), and "Green Capitalism" (Adams 1990 and McAfee 1999). It is the Western ideology of conservation which causes ecological and social transformations among some indigenous communities, reconfiguring socio-ecological landscapes and interspecies relationships. Before I explore the abyssal dimensions of Guyana's first community-owned conservation area, let us take a brief look at some other conservation efforts in the country.

The government of Guyana's proposed establishment of the Guyana Protected Area System (GPAS) was an initiative funded by the World Bank's Global Environment Facility (GEF). The proposal sought to expand Guyana's only National Park, the Kaieteur

National Park (KNP). Created in 1929 to preserve the region's fauna and flora, the National Park is located in the Potaro-Siparuni Region of Guyana and encloses what has been affectionately referred to as the crown jewel of the country's ecotourism industry: the 741-foot Kaieteur Falls (Hennessy 2005). Near the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the government of Guyana, in an attempt to fulfill "Green Conditionality" agreements with international lending agencies, expanded the size of the park, demarcating its boundaries all the way up to the village of Chenapau. Concomitantly, the Amerindians of Chenapau experienced social dislocation, as they were excluded from living in, or using, the park lands. Viewing the expansion of KNP, and the inevitable exclusion of the Amerindians from the area, as an act of land theft, the residents of Chenapau enlisted in the services of domestic lawyers and the APA, and successfully persuaded the World Bank to cease funding for the KNP project. Residents of Chenapau litigated in *Melville v. National Parks Commission, Kaieteur National Park Board* (APA 2000), challenging the constitutionality of the expansion of KNP. At the forefront of the motion was the exclusion of Amerindian rights to engage in traditional rights, privileges and freedoms; the protection of indigenous communities from deprivation of property; protection against racial discrimination; and resource use rights (Hennessy 2005).

The case marked a watershed for Guyana's indigenous community, as it forced the government to amend its laws surrounding the use of parklands and resources. The motion also galvanized the rest of the Amerindian population of Guyana into action. Questions such as "conservation for whom and for what?" have been posited by organizations such as the APA, the GOIP and TAAMOG. The crux of their position, then, is that the Guyana government and international community fail to consider the needs,

and rights, of Amerindian communities when engaging in conservation efforts and that the only way such efforts will be successful is if they recognize indigenous land and resource rights first (Hennessy 2005). Not long thereafter, the GPAS was revisited by global actors such as Conservation International and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). Boasting rhetoric of inclusiveness and participation of Guyana's indigenous communities', the conservation arrangement is still replete with institutional flaws: there is no legislation within the GPAS architecture to protect the rights of the Amerindians, nor is there a framework ensuring their participation during consultations (La Rose 2004).

Another important conservation project is the Iwokrama Forest initiative. During a Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in 1989, the government of Guyana assigned 360 000 hectares of its rainforest to the international community. The initiative dictated that half of the rainforest would be managed as a wilderness preserve for the study of biodiversity, and the other half would be harvested sustainably (Maud 2003). The rainforests near the edge of the North Rupununi were included in this laudable effort, putting the country on the map with respect to global leadership in rainforest conservation. At the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, the Iwokrama protected area and conservation program was introduced to the world, boasting research on the country's flora and fauna, income-generation, and collaborative partnerships with indigenous communities (Chung Tiam Fook 2011). The overall objective of the programme was clear: an exploration of "how conservation could be reconciled with the sustainable use of the forest as an economically productive enterprise" (Maud 2003: 478). The initiative's goal of forestry conservation is not only for local communities but the global



community, embodying the principles of the 1992 Rio Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on Climate Change.

Funding for the initiative's operational plan came first from within the Commonwealth; the UK contributed \$5.2 million for sustainable human development and senior institutional support, and Australia and Canada contributed \$140 000 for its senior staff and \$100 000 for intellectual property rights and benefit-sharing, respectively. As the initiative started to gain traction, Iwokrama received more funding from the European Commission, the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, so on and so forth. The operational plan, which drew upon initial funding of approximately \$8.2 million during the first donors' Round Table in 1998, sketched five priorities which have been succinctly summarized by Humphrey Maud (2003):

1. *Sustainable forest management*, with an emphasis on information-gathering on the Iwokrama forest and on the socioeconomic characteristics of the local communities and their traditional use of forest resources.
2. *Conservation and use of biodiversity*, which encompassed detailed inventories and a comprehensive design and operational management of approximately 189 000 hectares of wilderness preserve.
3. *Human development*, with a focus on participatory planning for the governance over the two areas and training and environmental education at the local, national and regional levels.

4. *Forestry research*, which supported the preparation of protocols for protecting intellectual property rights to support benefit-sharing among local communities, stakeholders and members of the private sector
5. *Information and communication*, ensuring that local communities were privy to the Iwokrama Centre's, and its collaborators', international database featuring biophysical and socioeconomic data.

A laudable effort among the indigenous peoples of Guyana and members of the global community, the conservation initiative has suffered from what Maud (2003) refers to as an "acute financing crisis". As early as 2002, during a Donors' Round Table in London, England, it was revealed that both short- and long-term funding for the initiative's Director General was in jeopardy; the programme was restructured and the staff and current expenditure was cut by half. By the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Iwokrama International Centre needed: (1) to secure core funding, preferably through an endowment trust fund, in order to guarantee a sustainable future for Iwokrama, (2) to secure shorter-term funding for the implementation of its programme and the contracting of staff and (3) outline the sustainable commercial use of its forests.

Asides from the structural limitations of the programme, Sydney Allicock (2003) documents the authoritative and somewhat exclusionary dimensions of collaborative, conservation efforts. His research, for example, presents evidence of the government of Guyana and the Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development (IIC) failing to engage in satisfactory consultation with the indigenous communities of the North Rupununi and not providing enough information to the Guyanese people regarding the delineation of proposed protected areas and of its

conservation aims. The sustainability of the IIC has been jeopardized and destabilized due to the North Rupununi's slow integration into the non-indigenous world (Kingsbury 2003). Invoking a multi-ethnic, feminist and transdisciplinary framework, Chung Tiam Fook (2011) has authored a compelling dissertation on the collaboration between the North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB) and the IIC, asserting that such partnerships offer ample opportunity for *entanglement, agency, resiliency and adaptation, creolization and syncretism, collaboration and transformation*. What such partnerships do, therefore, is re-conceptualize conservation as strategies for indigenous survival and transformation through syncretic possibilities and processes for collaboration and, most importantly, the revitalization of customary institutions. In other words, indigenous communities utilize global conservation initiatives as vehicles for advancing their own cultural self-determination (Chung Tiam Fook 2011). This is eloquently captured in Chung Tiam Fook's work, especially through her exploration of the power imbalances inherent in conservation efforts. Analyzing the colonial and dominant discourses within neoliberal conservation models in North Rupununi, Chung Tiam Fook reveals how seemingly collaborative approaches to conservation can re-inscribe inequitable power relations, marginalizing indigenous populations. Consider, for instance, her revelation that conservation agencies inculcate a sense of dependency among certain indigenous communities. Chung Tiam Fook (2011: 175) observes:

“there is evidence that external institutions have engendered some level of dependency within the communities in terms of the belief of some villagers that unless external institutions and experts provide workshops and funding

for community-based projects, villagers are themselves  
unable to progress with their conservation and development  
priorities”

Ruminating on the social injustices of conservation- namely, the displacement of indigenous peoples from their lands, and the creation of protected areas without indigenous communities’ free, prior and informed consent- the author argues that social justice, perforce, must be a central feature of collaborative and community-led forms of environmental conservation. Social justice ensures: “the inclusion of indigenous peoples’ political, social and environmental rights and agencies within the conservation domain; greater social equality and dignity between and amongst indigenous and conservation actors; and democratic collaborative and local governance structures” (Chung Tiam Fook 2011). Chung Tiam Fook, moreover, asserts that conservation policy makers, scientists and researchers often obfuscate the centrality of the rights of indigenous communities when engaged in collaborative conservation arrangements, opting instead to view these individuals as “stakeholders”. This is a mistake because indigenous communities have a *sui generis* connection to the land and resources subject to conservation initiatives. Instead, indigenous communities should be viewed as “rights-holders” because they, unlike government, conservation organizations and industry, do not have the same historical, cultural and political relationship to the land.

The extension of rights to local communities if they demonstrate that they are ‘compliant conservationists’ - that is, complying to the standards and agendas of external conservation authorities- also raises serious questions about social justice and collaborative conservation arrangements (Tiam Chung Fook 2011). Scholars such as

Smith and Wishnie (2000) contend that the imposition of such conditions on marginalized communities is simply unjust. The integration of social justice into conservation models and frameworks is a field of burning interest among academics, but what of cognitive justice? I mentioned above the pressing tension between visible distinctions such as Market-Oriented Conservation/Indigenous Conservation and how these visible distinctions are foregrounded by invisible distinctions which discursively produce the Amerindians of Guyana as civilizationally inferior. Through this system, and subsystem, of distinctions, indigenous epistemologies are undermined, invalidated and marginalized by neoliberal, positivistic and command-and-control models of conservation.

Consider, for example, Guyana's track record in the global conservation and environmental development arena: the Iwokrama Forest Initiative (1992); the Fisheries Management Plan (1996); the National Strategy for the conservation of Biological Diversity (1997); the National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) (1997); the National Mangrove Management Action Plan (2001); the Guyana Marine Turtle Conservation Strategy (2004); the Draft Arapaima Management Plan (2002); the Strategic National Forestry Action Plan (2002-6); and the Low Carbon Development Strategy (ongoing). All of these initiatives feature abyssal lines and a radical division of social reality wherein business frameworks and profit motives are placed on "this side of the line", while indigenous conceptions of conservation are relegated to the "other side of the line"-prevented from co-existing in any meaningful way with the former. The adherence to "free-market conservation" illumines visible distinctions, but is also foregrounded by

invisible distinctions between Customary/Modern, Formalized Knowledge/Folk Knowledge and Stakeholders/Rights-Holders.

The remainder of this chapter focuses on the abyssal dimensions of conservation in Guyana, demonstrating that from the dawn of colonialism up until the 21<sup>st</sup> century, an abyssal ideology has been imposed upon the Amerindians, casting ontological and epistemological assumptions concerning their purported “backwardness” and cultural “inferiority”. The environmental NGO, Conservation International, holds a rather controversial status in Guyana, on account of its “conservation as business” (Chapin 2004) model; its ties to corporate supporters such as Exxon, McDonalds and Starbucks (Choudry 2003); and its contentious interventions within indigenous territories, which have been coined as forms of “bioprospecting”.

Countries such as Guyana, Papua New Guinea, Mexico and Costa Rica have claimed that CI, under the guise of conservation and sustainable development, have not upheld principles of transparency and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) when dealing with these local communities. CI has overstepped indigenous intellectual property rights and has failed to fulfill its benefit-sharing conditions, doing nothing to mitigate the harmful effects of extractive industries and corporate interests among indigenous communities (Chung Tiam Fook 2011). Amid damning allegations that CI serves as an apotheosis of “industrial conservation”, the NGO maintains that it supports the preservation and revitalization of indigenous practices.

Before I embark on a critical analysis of Conservation International’s discourses surrounding the C.O.C.A., it behooves me to delineate an important distinction between “community-based” and “community-led” conservation. Tiam Chung Fook (2011)

presents an informative and thoughtful comparison of what she refers to as the “specific conceptual terrains” of each term, arguing that the difference between them is not simply semantic. Instead, community-based approaches to conservation are institutionally directed by conservation organizations. This concentration of power in the hands of external actors, then, works to the detriment of indigenous communities, curtailing levels of self-determination, leadership and agency. Community-based approaches co-opt the resources and epistemologies of indigenous and local communities via Western-based participatory frameworks, instead of laying the groundwork for encouraging local governance. McMurphree (2001) succinctly summarizes the tensions of “community-based”, stating that it embodies “conservation *with* the people” as opposed to “conservation *by* the people”.

“Community-led conservation”, on the other hand, places more emphasis on fostering the leadership and agency of indigenous communities. Chung Tiam Fook (2011: 343) points out, furthermore, that this approach to conservation encourages participation among indigenous communities “throughout the whole project or management cycle, rather than at selected entry points as is often the case within collaborative or community-based approaches”. Most importantly, community-led configurations encourage alternative environmental governance structures and institutions; the integration of cultural landscapes and cultural integrity within conservation frameworks; and “rights-based” conservation, which places an emphasis on indigenous land and resources, social justice and local human development objectives (Chung Tiam Fook 2011).

What the extant literature on conservation does not accomplish, however, is the identification of the abyssal dimensions of conservation and how the cognitive injustice

of consigning indigenous epistemologies to the “other side of the line” are linked to social and environmental injustice. My analysis of Conservation International’s discourses surrounding the creation of Guyana’s C.O.C.A. dovetails with Tom Bartlett’s (2005) critical analysis of Guyana’s revised Amerindian Act and the North Rupununi District Development Board Constitution. His research uncovers ideologies framing the dynamic between the state and the NRDDDB. For instance, Bartlett suggests that mainstream conservation discourses represent underdeveloped nations as having to emulate the same development trajectory of the global North, whilst “Othering” the Amerindians as essentialized, static subjects, incapable of protecting and preserving their culture and resources. What is more, such discourses promote a unifying nationalistic myth which purports to confer autonomy upon the Amerindians, but actually facilitates state-led appropriation of indigenous resources.

### **Guyana’s Community-Owned Conservation Area**

The Konashen community-owned conservation area is the first of its kind in Guyana. It is located within the Konashen Indigenous District in the deep southern region of Guyana (1°11 to 2°2’N and 58°18 to 59°39’W). It is revered as one of the last intact and pristine forested areas in the country, encompassing the watershed of the Essequibo River and the tributaries of the Kassikaityu, Kamoia, Sipu and Chodikar rivers. The region also boasts awe-inspiring mountains: the Wassarai, Yashore, Kamoia, and Kaiawakua with elevations reaching approximately 1200 meters above the sea level (Alonso et al. 2008). The untouched pristine landscape is attributed to the area’s low population density (about 0.032 humans/km<sup>2</sup>). The village of Masakenari is located within the Konashen C.O.C.A. This village is inhabited by the Wai Wai. No more than 250 people reside in



the village; they rely upon the area for their sustenance, utilizing the resources at their disposal. At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Smithsonian Institution identified nearly 2,700 species of plants (239 distinct families) from the area (Alonso et al. 2008).

The Wai Wai recognized that their traditional way of life was being threatened by the expansion of mining, logging and wildlife trade, especially along the country's border with Brazil. With mounting fears that the utilization of the region's resources were not being used sustainably, the Wai Wai, upon receiving formal title to their lands in 2004, demonstrated interest in collaborating with Conservation International to embark on an expansive inventory of the region's natural resources, in conjunction with the development of community-based regulations and the implementation of systems of governance. The Government of Guyana, Conservation International-Guyana (CIG) and the Wai Wai signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) outlining a plan for the sustainable use of the Konashen's biological resources. Here are the terms of the MOC, as cited in a Rapid Assessment Program by Alonso et al. (2008: 13):

- to jointly evaluate the ongoing resource needs of the Wai Wai and the impact of traditional land uses on biodiversity and ecosystems.
- to jointly conduct surveys and other activities necessary to collect data for an adequate evaluation.
- to work together to increase local, national and global awareness of the importance of biodiversity and ecosystems on the Wai Wai land.
- to jointly develop land-use practices that satisfy Wai Wai

needs while also preserving ecosystems and biodiversity.

- to develop an appropriate strategy for managing resource use and for identifying and addressing threats to the integrity of the area.
- to identify and formulate income-generating projects and potential sources of funding of the same.
- to work together to establish the Wai Wai lands as a Wai Wai owned and managed conservation area for future recognition and incorporation by the national protected area system.
- to work together to identify and secure adequate funds to finance the implementation of this collaborative process
- to regularly collaborate to update the GOG, through the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, regarding the implementation of the process, in order to benefit from its insight and contribution

The C.O.C.A. plays a vital role in the creation of a southern biodiversity corridor along the Essequibo River which links it to the North Rupununi Wetlands, the Kanuku Mountains Protected Area, the Iwokrama Rainforest Reserve and the Kaieteur National Park. Such an endeavor dovetails with Conservation International's long-term vision of linking the Southern Guyana corridor with other protected areas, establishing a mega-Guyana Shield Tropical Wilderness Corridor (Alonso et al. 2008).

Like all other indigenous groups in Guyana, however, the Wai Wai do not own subsurface rights, but do have exclusive rights to the forest resources (Sose 2008). The partnership between the Wai Wai and CIG is unprecedented with respect to conservation projects across the globe, marking significant material and social changes in the

relationship between the Wai Wai and the global community. Improvements in radio communication, electricity, and water distribution have resulted in the relationship between global, conservation actors and Guyana's Wai Wai. Moreover, this partnership has inspired other partnerships with organizations such as Canada Fund and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), both of which have contributed to economic enterprise development. While the Wai Wai have embraced the efforts of CIG, authors Laura Mentore (2011) and Catherine Vaughan Howard (2001) both intimate that this indigenous group views its community as being situated at "the center of an expansive and ever-transforming cosmos wrought with dangerous but desirable forms of alterity" (Mentore 2011: 31). Socio-ecological changes to the Konashen district as a result of the partnership between CIG and the Wai Wai include the push towards eco-tourism as a viable conservation-based enterprise, with a particular focus on research and education-based activities (Alonso et al. 2008). CIG has made it very clear that the only way the conservation initiative will succeed is if the Wai Wai have their human and technical capacity developed by way of training, research and the formation of more partnerships with other conservation institutions.

Similar to that of Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS), which serves as one example of the Payment for Environmental Services (PES) schemes unfolding in the country, the Konashen District's C.O.C.A. also features a taken-for-granted assumption: that one, all-encompassing knowledge system can capture the meaning and value of conservation efforts. Also, there is a wide-spread belief that during consultations between NGOs, governments and indigenous peoples, the only intellectual work that really needs to be done is of a translational nature (Mentore 2011; Errington

and Gewertz 2001; Zerner 2003; West 2005). Take, for instance, anthropologist Paige West's (2005, 2006) work with the Gimi in the Eastern Highlands of Papua New Guinea. The author avers that conservation is responsible for the "gentrification of culture" (Errington and Gewertz 2001; West 2005) insofar as it is assumed that local knowledge can be subsumed into Western conservation models of the environment as "resources to be used" and "knowledge to be acted upon" (West 2005; Ellis and West 2004).

This process of translating, and assimilating, local knowledge into Western, scientific epistemologies which divide culture and nature is at odds with the Amerindians' undivided relationship between nature and culture; their heterogeneous and diverse cosmographies; and their holistic relationships with the ethnosphere (Little 2001; Lefebvre 1991; Smith 1990). What is more, phrases such as "capacity building" connote that the various projects, technologies and conservation models used by international conservation actors can "build up" indigenous communities' "capacity" to know and relate to their own environment (Mentore 2011). The underlying prejudice here, of course, is that local communities are culturally inferior to these global conservation actors, and that they must be elevated to a more modern, cultural understanding of conservation. Questions regarding certain conservation initiatives' ability to universally translate indigenous epistemologies to international conservation actors, overseas investors, government representatives, etc. can be raised with a critical eye, illuminating how international institutions cannot effectively translate indigenous "ways of knowing".

Laura Mentore's (2011) anecdote regarding the translation assumptions held by Conservation International-Guyana (CIG) during consultations with several Wai Wai and Wapishana communities is instructive. The author recounts the struggle of a local Wai

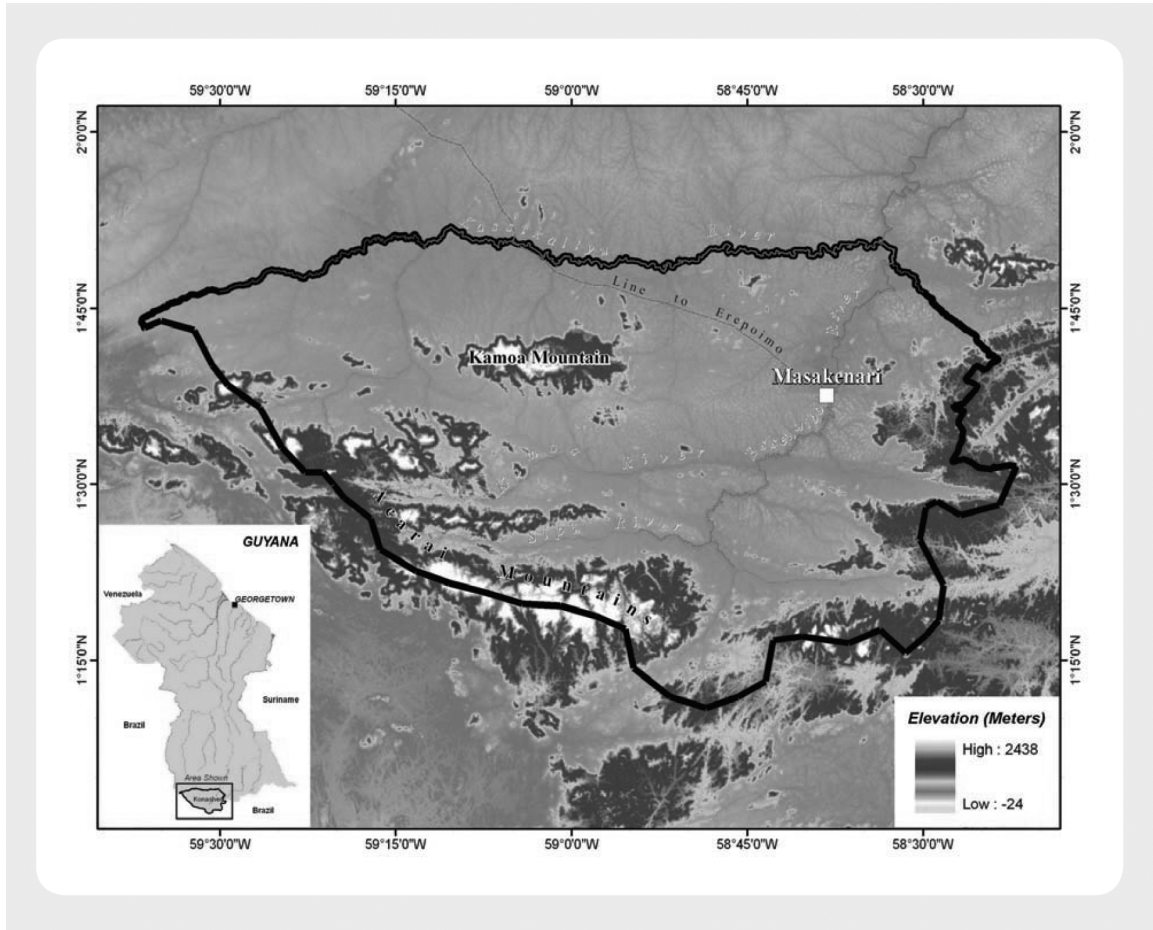
Wai translator attempting to translate the term “protected area” in the Wai Wai language, and being pressured by the staff to find the closest possible translation so that the consultations could continue. The translator, after stating the term “protected area” was simply beyond Wai Wai translation, opted for the word *wokpo* (which, refers to lines of fallen timber that are arranged between adjacent gardens belonging to different households). Mentore (2011:25) proceeds by documenting the epistemological tensions between CIG and local communities:

“In their final report, the consultation team cites such acts of translation as examples of their compliance with the ethical protocols of the NGO, and the fact that these communities did not reach a consensus ultimately was attributed to internal socio-political fictions rather than anything to do with the consultation process itself”.

The inability of CIG to translate the term “protected area”, then, raises questions regarding the politics of knowledge and what Santos refers to as the impossibility of co-presence between two distinct, polarized social realities. This tension also speaks to the production of nonexistence insofar as Wai Wai conceptions of “protection” (*wokpo*) were produced as nonexistent during consultations with CIG. When Western conservationists do, in fact, acknowledge indigenous cosmologies, it is usually on a very superficial level, exercising a form of reductionism which illumines Euro-American interactions with the “Other” through their scientific epistemologies (Mentore 2011). Furthermore, there remain fundamental cosmographic and cosmological differences between the unilinear

and commodified environments conceptualized in Western conservation models and the fractal, recursive and mediated environments in Wai Wai discourse.

**Map 3: Konashen Community-Owned Conservation Area (Map Source: Conservation International Rapid Assessment Program 2011)**



## **Abyssal Practice and the Production of Nonexistence**

In the previous chapters, I addressed how both colonial and post-independence political regimes exemplified Santos' abyssal framework- namely, the delineation of those belonging to "this side of the line" and those relegated to "the other side of the line" and, most importantly, the impossibility of co-presence between these two realms. I proffered evidence of how the Amerindians were produced as nonexistent through abyssal machinery such as the Select Committee on Aboriginal Tribes; the *Aboriginal Indians Protection Regulations* of 1911; the *Amerindian Ordinance* of 1951; and the Amerindian Lands Commission. In this chapter, my research on the purported collaborative process between the Amerindians and external conservation actors demonstrates that Amerindian rights to Free, Prior and Informed consent (FPIC) were not always upheld, and that negotiations between these two parties were oftentimes shrouded in mystery, despite the legal mechanisms put in place to ensure their participation in projects unfolding on their customary lands.

In this section, I review articles from the local newspaper *The Guyana Chronicle*, exploring how the Amerindians' rights to FPIC were rendered nonexistent by various organizations. In 2010, the paper featured an article entitled "APA Draws More Fire On LCDS Claims"; in this publication, the APA went on record stating that public consultations between Touchaus and members of the Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC) on the LCDS were highly undemocratic, pointing out that these consultations were merely "cosmetic". In another article entitled "APA Not Working In The Interests Of Amerindians", the APA itself was accused of infringing on the Amerindians' rights to FPIC by holding training workshops which deviated from



traditional and community-based decision making customs and procedures. For instance, the decisions made by Touchaus and village councilors during these APA-led workshops were considered null and void because they contravened section 34, (1) and (2) of the Amerindian Act of 2006, which clearly states that:

- (1) Except as delegated to a Village Council under this Act, the collective rights and powers of a Village are exercised by the Village.*
- (2) All decisions required to be made by a Village under this Act shall be made in a Village general meeting*

The decisions made during these workshops failed to uphold the interests of the village members, ignoring their concerns regarding the implementation of LCDS initiatives. The Touchaus also contravened section 22(1) of the Amerindian Act which reads:

*“A Touchau shall-*

- (a) represent the interests of the Village at all times;*
- (b) carry out his duties with honesty and integrity;*
- (c) chair all meetings of the Village Council and ensure that all matters concerning the Village are adequately addressed;*
- (d) participate on behalf of the Village in the National Toshaos Council;*
- (e) on behalf of the Village Council, and subject to the rules of the meeting, attend and participate at meetings;*
- (f) provide the Village general meeting with a report of every meeting which he attends on their behalf;*
- (g) provide the Minister with a copy of the residency rules made*

*under section 14;*

*(h) provide the Minister with a copy of the annual accounts prepared*

*by the Village Council; and*

*(i) report to the Minister on matters which affect the Village.*

Clearly, then, the acting Touchaus did not represent the interests of the villages, instead aligning themselves with the APA, whilst keeping their deliberations regarding the LCDS shrouded in secrecy. Mounting fears that the APA has been co-opted by global conservation actors and institutions have been documented by activists such as Eric Phillips (2010) and Janette Bulkan (2010), both of whom have joined the growing chorus accusing Conservation International of disrespecting indigenous communities by failing to consult with them over the future of their forests.

Decisions about how indigenous forests will be used to serve the global community touch upon the abyssal dimensions of conservation and an ideology which entrenches the impossibility of co-presence between two distinct social realities. In the example above, the APA-led workshops featured a hidden agenda insofar as decisions on how to administer the LCDS within Amerindian villages were left to a select number of Touchaus and village members. This represents one distinct social reality, while the other Amerindians who were not invited to the workshops (presumably because their opinions about LCDS were diametrically opposed to the opinions of the Touchaus and village members present during the workshops) represent another social reality. The production of nonexistence, then, unfolds as the opinions of the majority of Amerindian villagers are rendered nonexistent- that is, excluded from local and national discussions about how Guyana's forests should be transformed into carbon sinks for the global community and

how conservation projects should be directed within Amerindian communities. The importance here, of course, is the impossibility of co-presence. These clandestine workshops led by the APA represent the systematic exclusion of Guyana's indigenous peoples from discussions revolving around their lands- a violation of the principles of FPIC.

### **Abyssal Ideology and Discourse**

Critical discourse analysis explores the manner in which power and language intersect, perpetuating asymmetrical power relations. When exploring the discourses of an institution such as Conservation International, it behooves analysts to adopt Dennis Mumby and Robin Clair's (1997) approach to examining organizational discourse. The authors maintain that all organizations are discursive sites which enable the production, maintenance and reproduction of domination via ideology. Other organizational communication scholars speak to the link between communication and power, illustrating how the interests of the powerful inhere through communicative structures of these institutions (Mumby 1996; Deetz 1990; Opatow 1991; Hayward and Boeker 1998 and Markham 1996). What is especially fascinating about these works is the contention that organizational discourse presents a particular social structuring of semiotic *difference*. These *differences* become legitimized as 'natural' or 'common sense', sustaining and replicating relations of domination (Forgacs 1988; Fairclough 1992; Laclau and Mouffe 1985). It bears emphasizing, however, that hegemony will always be challenged and contested to some degree because social orders are not closed, rigid systems, but open systems where resistance and struggle shape the dialectical nature of competing discursive regimes (Fairclough 2000).

Before we explore the discourses surrounding the initiative in the Konashen district, let us perform a critical analysis of Conservation International's discourses surrounding other conservation projects, gaining a deeper understanding of how abyssal ideology is produced and maintained through this organization. Consider this brief description of tourism in the Rupununi, which relies on what Valene Smith (1996) refers to as the four Hs of tourism (heritage, history, habitat and handicraft):

*“The Rupununi already has a good base of excellent birding, nature and culture tourism experiences, but to attract the special interest traveler segment...work must be done to polish existing experiences and create dynamic new ones that deliver a unique sense of place and make travelers feel the true essence of Guyana”*

(Conservation International 2010: 71).

Here, the visible distinction between Market-Oriented Conservation/Indigenous Conservation is captured in the collaboration frame, which sustains an ideology of “collaboration” between the international NGO and the indigenous groups of the Rupununi. The latter are positioned on a unilinear trajectory of both Western-based development and conservation. This trajectory, therefore, encourages conformity to Western ideals and portrays the Amerindians' traditional way of life as highly dependent upon the work of international NGOs: the so-called collaboration between these two parties portrays Guyana's indigenous peoples as “catching up” with the Western world, lest their customs and livelihoods disappear in our modern, globalized world. In the text above, the visible distinction between Market-Oriented Conservation/Indigenous Conservation is buttressed by invisible distinctions- namely, Modern/Customary and

Positivistic/Cosmographic. For example, Conservation International declares that the Rupununi already has “*a good base of excellent birding, nature and culture tourism experiences*”, but proceeds by stating that the communities can do more in order to attract more tourists. This is followed by suggestions that the current tourism experience must be “polished” to “*create dynamic new ones that deliver a unique sense of place*”, making travelers “*feel the true essence of Guyana*”.

This suggests that there is something “*passive*”, “*stagnant*” and “*untrue*” about the current experiences delivered by this Amerindian community. Moreover, they require Conservation International’s help to foster tourism in their villages. The irony here is the Rupununi already features a unique sense of place and does, in fact, embody the true essence of Guyana. What Conservation International is referring to then is a Western-based ideal of the commodification of the Amerindian ethnosphere and its integration into the mainstream market economy. In other words, tourists such as the “*special interest traveler segment*” will gain more of an “experience” from a commodified interpretation of Guyana. Abyssal lines can be drawn, therefore, between Conservation International and the Amerindians with respect to international tourism- the latter being forced to conform the former’s blueprint of tourism product development.

In the foregoing section, the conceptual differences between “community-based” conservation and “community-led” conservation were outlined. We can advance a critical analysis of Conservation International’s discourses surrounding the community-owned conservation area. Their website features a section on what they refer to as “community-based” management:

*“The Wai Wai community is now moving forward with conservation and development planning for the community conserved area. With the technical advice of Conservation International, the community leadership group has completed their long term Management Plan, and is in the process of completing their first two-year Operating Plan.*

*Six community members recently completed training as qualified rangers and para-biologists, and a community-led training program has revitalized their traditional craft enterprise. Under the new operating plan, a management training program will be implemented for the community leadership and opportunities are being developed to create partnerships for research and eco-tourism development”*

This explanation of “community-based” management aligns with Tiam Chung Fook’s (2011) critical analysis of community-based approaches to conservation. Recall from the foregoing section, community-based conservation is institutionally directed by organizations such as Conservation International and power is concentrated in the hands of this institution, curtailing the self-determination and agency of the Wai Wai. This passage also embodies Santosian distinctions- both visible and invisible. The visible distinction between Market-Oriented Conservation/Indigenous Conservation is foregrounded, again, by invisible distinctions between Modern/Customary and Positivistic/Cosmographic. Consider, for a moment, how the collaboration frame operates in this text: as in the previous text, the ideology of collaboration, and cooperation,

positions the Wai Wai as entirely dependent upon modern, scientific and positivistic epistemologies in order to move “*forward with conservation and development planning*”. This impetus to move forward, undoubtedly, is attributed to the “*technical advice*” of Conservation International via “capacity building”.

The text proceeds to boast the quality of its “capacity building”, stating that “*six community members recently completed training as qualified rangers and para-biologists*” and that these training programs have “*revitalized their traditional craft enterprise*”. It is glaringly obvious that the collaboration frame functions to perpetuate an abyssal ideology because there are taken-for-granted assumptions presented here: the Wai Wai are completely dependent upon external actors such as Conservation International in order to perform sustainable use of their resources and proper conservation of their lands. Nowhere in the text do we see evidence of “joint cooperation” (as clearly outlined in the MOC). Instead, abyssal lines are drawn between Modern/Customary epistemologies and practices, as the description outlined above adopts a very narrow-minded and unilinear approach to conservation, obfuscating the holistic and cosmographic relationship the Wai Wai have with their lands. It is almost as if the management of the area’s resources are entirely top-down, ignoring opportunities for local governance, self-determination and leadership- in other words, “*conservation by the people*”. Nowhere is this more evident than near the end of the text where Conservation International reveals its plans to “*create partnerships for research and eco-tourism development*”, an attempt to commodify Wai Wai landscapes and lifestyles, integrating the C.O.C.A. into the global market economy.

We see this positivistic and market-oriented *rationality* in various articles released by Conservation International. Consider the following quotes from CI President Dr.

Russell A. Mittermeier and Executive Director Dr. David Singh:

*“These irreplaceable forests are under threat from increasing demand from a resource-hungry world. The fact that the carbon market is finally beginning to look at the critical importance of forest carbon provides a unique new opportunity to compensate tropical countries for protecting these forests at a scale far beyond anything that has been done to date and in a way that is truly sustainable both ecologically and economically. Guyana’s enlightened approach to this issue could serve as a model for many other forest-rich countries around the world”*

(Stabroek News 2007: 9)

*“The carbon stock in our intact forests provides a global public good around which we must develop financial mechanisms for conservation and sustainable use...The people, the place and biodiversity come together to make this area a centre for tourism in Guyana. We look forward to continue working with communities and like-minded organizations in its development”*

(Stabroek News 2008: 12).

In both texts, the collaboration frame perpetuates the abyssal ideology of collaboration which is, in actuality, very one-sided and market-oriented. The visible distinction



between Market-Oriented Conservation/Indigenous Conservation is propped up by invisible distinctions between Stakeholders/Rights-Holders and Formalized Knowledge/Folk Knowledge. This is most evident in Dr. Mittermeier's statement that *"the fact that the carbon market is finally beginning to look at the critical importance of forest carbon provides a unique new opportunity to compensate tropical countries for protecting these forests"*. This reveals that conservation among the Wai Wai does not occur due to either customary and holistic relations between the indigenous peoples and their lands, but due to the carbon market's recognition of their lands as potential sites of carbon sequestration. Cosmographic conceptions of the environment, therefore, are replaced with strictly positivistic and market-oriented conceptions of the value of indigenous land, transforming the Wai Wai (among other communities) into stakeholders and not rights-holders with cosmological and spiritual connections to their land.

After presenting this "market" mentality, Dr. Mittermeier proceeds by saying that *"Guyana's enlightened approach to this issue could serve as a model for many other forest-rich countries around the world"*. The implication in the subtext is that a market-oriented approach to conservation is an *"enlightened"* one and that alternative reasons for conservation are *"unenlightened"*. Such a statement advances the integration of indigenous land into the global market for commodification and privatization by international actors (Phillips 2009).

The discourses surrounding conservation via Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD)+ initiatives are also highly problematic, raising concern among the Wai Wai and other indigenous communities regarding the perpetuation of mining activities in close proximity to indigenous land. For instance, in

2010, the Ministry of Agriculture signed a US \$700,000 agreement with Conservation International which purported to support the principles of the REDD programme, whilst building on existing initiatives such as the Readiness Preparedness Plan and the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS). The agreement was titled “*Avoided Deforestation through Consolidation and Creation of Protected Areas and Carbon Financing Mechanisms in the Guiana Region*” and was funded by KfW, the German development bank and the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC). Activists and scholars were critical of the agreement on account of the government’s emphasis on “sustainable” mining and forestry. The Minister of Agriculture, Robert Persaud, made it clear that the government would not curtail these projects, instead reconciling the tensions between forest operators, miners and the government. Consider, for a moment, his address to the people of Guyana:

*“This is about punitive action, yes, bad occurrences in the mining sector have been allowed to happen for too long without proper enforcement. In the mining sector, from a forestry standpoint, we have not been satisfied in terms of the enforcement. We have to ensure that compliance is uniform. I want to encourage miners and all those within the natural resources sector not to be afraid. You don’t have to be afraid if you are complying with the regulations.*

*As a nation, we must not compromise on any activity that will endanger our environment or any activity that will harm the patrimony of not only the current but the future generation”* (Guyana Chronicle 2010: 4).

The collaboration frame endeavors to project a reconciliation between Conservation International, the government of Guyana, private miners, forestry operators and the country's indigenous peoples. One cannot help but wonder what role Conservation International was poised to play in this agreement. The relationship between conservation, LCDS and the continuation of mineral extraction was clearly market-driven. Again, market-oriented conservation is distinguished from indigenous conservation, and local communities are portrayed exclusively as stakeholders, not rights-holders.

Featured in this text, too, is a classic example of an *ideological dilemma*. Recall, this concept within the field of discourse analysis is inconsistent, fragmented and contradictory- hence their dilemmatic nature (Edley 2001). In the above example, Mr. Persaud states that the agreement is about "*punitive action*" because "*bad occurrences in the mining sector have been allowed to happen for too long without proper enforcement*". He proceeds by saying that "*we have to ensure that compliance is uniform*", but does not elaborate on how this enforcement will unfold. This is a rather curious statement, given the voluminous research on the utter failure of the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) in regulating mining operations in the country's interior, and the interminable struggle of the Amerindians to protect titled land from the expansion of mining regimes (Colchester et al. 2002). The Minister then states: "*I want to encourage miners and all those within the natural resources sector not to be afraid. You don't have to be afraid if you are complying with the regulations*". Such a statement, coupled with the fact that this project aims to continue mining operations and is funded by KfW (a development bank), is somewhat contradictory, raising many questions about how "sustainable" these operations will be; the nature of Amerindian rights amid the

continuation of mining and forestry operations; and the efficacy of enforcement mechanisms ensuring compliance with regulations.

This market-oriented ethos of conservation continues to permeate not only discourses surrounding the establishment of the C.O.C.A. but other initiatives such as LCDS strategies. In the text below, we see how conservation and financial aid to Amerindian communities is presented. In 2010, *The Guyana Chronicle* featured a story about the manner in which FPIC among Amerindian villages was addressed by both international agencies and the government of Guyana. During this time, one Yvonne Pearson served as the Chairman of the National Touchaus Council, claiming that such principles were evident in consultations with various Amerindian villages, and that the country's indigenous peoples were very supportive of the implementation of the LCDS. What is more, she declared that Amerindian communities were not being pressured to opt into the LCDS, and that CI would support the development of such efforts. Consider the following statement by the Office of Climate Change (OCC):

*“All titled Amerindian villages will have the option to opt in to the interim REDD+ mechanism at any time during the period 2010 – 2015, in accordance with the principle of free, prior and informed consent”*

*Those that choose to do so will have access to their share of Interim REDD + revenue through a benefit sharing mechanism”*

*“The Amerindian Development Fund will be established to provide*

*grants for low carbon energy and economic and social investments in Amerindian villages” (Guyana Chronicle 2010: 12).*

While the collaboration frame functions to portray CI, the government of Guyana, the OCC and other international actors as working in tandem with Amerindian villages to protect and conserve the forests, activist Janette Bulkan (2010) raises questions about FPIC- namely, whether or not such principles are respected during consultations. The text above presents an important caveat for inclusion into the LCDS framework: the provision of grants and funds to Amerindian villages who decide to participate in the initiative. The OCC makes it very clear that “*economic and social investments*” will be at the disposal of these communities and that participating communities will have “*access to their share of Interim REDD + revenue through a benefit sharing mechanism*”.

While the OCC did reveal that those communities who decided not to opt into the LCDS would still receive financial aid from revenues received for the State Forest Estate, such grants would pale in comparison to the revenue received from private donors. Invisible distinctions between Stakeholders/Rights-Holders inhere in the text, incentivizing Amerindian communities to adopt a more market-oriented mode of conservation. The incentive, of course, is the promise of “*economic and social investments*” which transform these villagers into stakeholders who engage in conservation for profit and not for its cosmographic value.

The final text which will be presented in this section truly exemplifies abyssal ideology vis-à-vis conservation. During the celebration of Biodiversity Day, observed March 22, Prime Minister Samuel Hinds delivered a succinct speech on the importance of protecting the nation’s resources. 2010 marked the international year of biodiversity and

the theme of the commemoration was “Many Species, One Planet, One Future”, but it was Hinds’ speech which warrants a closer analysis. He clearly placed more emphasis on certain actors in the field of conservation, ignoring the contributions of many others—namely, the country’s indigenous population:

*“Today, mankind has to develop a new way of living which allows all of earth’s people to be secure. We can no longer live in a way where we essentially pillage the environment. This poses new questions for engineers and scientists and all, and is a cause for all to show greater consideration for our surroundings”* (Guyana Chronicle 2010: 23).

CDA explores the lexical devices present in a given text, but it also explores what is rendered invisible or absent. The collaboration frame is captured in Hinds’ declaration that “*mankind has to develop a new way of living which allows all of earth’s people to be secure*”, but this merely illumines the invisible distinctions of abyssal ideology which values certain epistemologies over others. In this particular example, when Hinds explores the solutions to the decline of biodiversity and the pillaging of the environment, he states that “*this poses new questions for engineers and scientists*”. This statement reveals the purported supremacy of technocratic and positivistic methodologies of conservation over other methodologies. Thus, invisible distinctions between Formalized/Folk Knowledge and Modern/Customary are referenced here and it is only the practitioners in the fields of engineering and science who are portrayed as capable of enacting conservation. This is entirely false, given the research on Amerindian epistemological and methodological bases for conservation (Chung Tiam Fook 2011). It

is the deliberate exclusion of indigenous methodologies of conservation in Hinds' speech which should be critically analyzed, especially after the MOC's emphasis on cooperation between Amerindian communities and global conservation actors. Again, the Amerindians are discursively portrayed as needing the guidance of Western-based paradigms to achieve their goals.

### **The Negotiation and Contestation of Discursive Power: Amerindian Resistance**

Scholars such as Mercurieff (2002) and Tauli-Corpuz (2003) assert that indigenous discourses challenge hegemonic, command-and-control forms of conservation, placing more of an emphasis upon indigenous agency, rights and epistemologies. Invoking Santos' framework here, we can draw parallels with what Agrawal (2005) refers to as the cultural and epistemological divide shaped by Western science and its hierarchal typologies. Scientific and managerial frameworks have been positioned as normative and universal, leading to the depoliticization of local knowledge (Bannerji 2003; Odora-Hoppers 2002; Simpson 2004; and Smith 1999). It is through the interminable struggle of indigenous groups, however, that discourse can be enacted to transcend the rigid ideological boundaries of conservation, offering a post-abyssal approach to conservation.

The above texts reveal that discourses surrounding conservation and LCDS are hardly apolitical, but rather reinforce powerful, epistemological regimes. Whether it is through the marketization of conservation, or the commodification of indigenous lands, power imbalances inhere in national, and international, discourses. Most importantly, however, the examples presented above re-inscribe an abyssal ideology which pits a market-oriented, technocratic, model of conservation ("this side of the line") against

indigenous conceptions of conservation (“the other side of the line”). Now, despite the mechanisms which promote cooperation and collaboration between these two distinct realms (MOCs and principles of FPIC), CDA allows us to recognize how the efforts of both the government of Guyana and CI ensure the impossibility of co-presence between these two realities. In this section, I present evidence of resistance against the model of conservation championed by international donors, the government of Guyana and CI. Power, then, is exercised by both Amerindians and institutions such as the Guyana Human Rights Association (GHRA), re-negotiating and contesting the abyssal dimensions of Western-based conservation.

Amid claims that protected areas and the country’s first C.O.C.A. promise social and economic advancement via job opportunities for villagers, the Wai Wai, among other communities, have demonstrated skepticism. Consider, for instance, Paul Chekema’s thoughts on the establishment of conservation sites within his village. A Touchau of Masakenari, Chekema joins a growing chorus of Amerindian voices for more information to be shared among the country’s indigenous peoples regarding the Amerindian Act, Protected Areas and LCDS. Residents need to be properly informed (in their native language) because language still seems to be a major barrier in communicating the benefits of such initiatives. In an interview with Chekema in 2010, the village leader lamented that the promise of market-oriented conservation and the commodification of their land (via LCDS and REDD+) has yet to benefit the villagers. Instead, the reliance upon CI and other institutions’ models of conservation has led to the fragmentation of the Wai Wai community. When young people graduate from school, they leave their villages



seeking employment because there simply aren't enough job opportunities in their own communities:

*“When they finish school, they just go there (in the village), no jobs...I wonder what will I do, because they will want little jobs, especially since they finish CXC...I don't want my people to go out far away from the village and never come back because they don't have job”* (Stabroek News 2012: 9).

Chekema's comments address the tension between Western-based models of conservation and the preservation of indigenous culture, contesting the tenets of CI-endorsed initiatives. It is quite evident that CI has afforded educational opportunities to the Wai Wai community, but what good is that education if young students are unable to find employment in their community-owned conservation area? Further, limited job opportunities for young people force them to leave their communities, seeking employment in the city. Thus, market-oriented conservation, despite its promises of “capacity building” and social and economic advancement, merely perpetuates an individualistic lifestyle, reconfiguring the social organization of villages through a form of social and cultural dislocation.

In 2011, Heritage Village celebrations were held in Aishalton, Region 9. The theme of the celebration was succinctly captured under the theme: “Our Culture, our heritage, our life: a fusion of indigenous diversity”. Among the attendees were Prime Minister Samuel Hinds, Minister of Amerindian Affairs Pauline Sukhai and PPP advisor and presidential candidate Donald Ramotar. While these individuals were boasting the country's ambitious conservation projects and LCDS, Sukhai delivered a speech which

captures Amerindian contestation and renegotiation of their identity as both stake/rights-holders in conservation projects:

*“We must also celebrate our advancement which does not mean that we have accepted induced advancement but celebrate the responsible approach that we have displayed with the opportunities that are being offered to us so that we are able to mainstream our ethnic groups into the lifeblood of Guyana”*

*“As we celebrate, I want to encourage this current generation of Amerindians to ensure that they make a commitment to not only develop themselves but to contribute significantly to the development of your village”* (Stabroek News 2011: 19).

This is an extremely important speech because it challenges the principles of market-oriented conservation projects such as the collaboration between the NRDDDB and the IIC and the partnership between CI and the Wai Wai in the development of the C.O.C.A. For example, when Sukhai speaks of advancement, she makes it very clear that advancement—that is, development—should not eclipse customary practices and that a sustainable balance between the commodification of indigenous land and community-led conservation should be reached: *“we must also celebrate our advancement which does not mean that we have accepted induced advancement but celebrate the responsible approach that we have displayed with the opportunities that are being offered to us”*. Resistance, then, is captured in not blindly accepting the *“induced advancement”* of market-oriented conservation, but by acting responsibly so that the Amerindians are able

to “*mainstream our ethnic groups into the lifeblood of Guyana*”. The metaphor here is deliberate, as it reveals the Minister’s aim to integrate Amerindian cosmographies into mainstream society, re-asserting their customs, practices and epistemologies.

The Minister proceeds by stating that “*I want to encourage this current generation of Amerindians to ensure that they make a commitment to not only develop themselves but to contribute significantly to the development of your village*”. Her remarks explore how Amerindian identity is reconfigured and contested through discourse because it serves as a direct attack against market-oriented, capitalist conservation. In this statement, Sukhai implicitly identifies prominent attributes of capitalism- namely, individualism- and calls upon Amerindians to use the personal wealth accumulated through ventures such as ecotourism, LCDS and conservation not exclusively for individual development and advancement, but for the development of their villages. This emphasis on the redistribution of wealth and communitarianism adheres to Amerindian conceptions of community.

In 2012, the GGMC announced that small, medium and large-scale miners would not have their river claims processed for approximately one month in order to allow a review of reports on irresponsible mining. Not long thereafter, miners across the country protested the ban and placed pressure on the government to reverse its decision. This prompted the GHRA to author a report on the effects of mining, stating that the profits accumulated from Guyana’s mining industry have yet to be translated into wealth at both the local and national level. While small, medium and large-scale miners pay royalties to the government not exceeding 5% and 8% of their earnings, respectively, villages in close proximity to this industry continue to remain in poverty (Stabroek News 2012). The

statement by the GHRA below criticizes NGOs who trumpet the merits of market-oriented conservation:

*“It is intriguing why these NGOs are not more resolute in offering support for the ban on river mining as such type of mining impacts the very places they are aiming to protect as well as communities they work with. Iwokrama Forest, Kanuku Mountains, Shell Beach, Kaieteur Falls and Konashen are not isolated from such impacts; rivers and creeks flow through these protected areas and affect communities within and surrounding these sites. Indeed, as these international NGOs aim to sell ecosystem services of Guyana on the global market, it is important that the values of the services they aim to sell are not degraded along the way”*

(Stabroek News 2012: 11).

In this example, the GHRA ponders why international NGOs do not support the ban on mining, given their mandate is to protect the very places affected by these mining operations. It is a matter of conventional wisdom that certain regions are designated as “protected areas”, yet ecologically devastating practices are condoned by the international community: *“It is intriguing why these NGOs are not more resolute in offering support for the ban on river mining”*. This is followed by the observation that *“rivers and creeks flow through these protected areas and affect communities within and surrounding these sites”*. If such mining operations continue unabated, then, conservation efforts are rendered futile. Such a statement raises serious questions about the conservation model adopted by the government of Guyana and some of the practices (in

this case, mining) encouraged by institutions such as GGMC, CI and the international community. Finally, the GHRA proceeds by concluding that these protected sites are merely commodified- that is, transformed into ecosystem services- and integrated into the global, neoliberal market. The association warns, however, that, “*as these international NGOs aim to sell ecosystem services of Guyana on the global market, it is important that the values of the services they aim to sell are not degraded along the way*”. This statement serves as a clarion call to local, national and international conservation actors, challenging the current conservation paradigm which attempts to balance conservation, development (by way of small, medium and large-scale mining) and the selling off of ecosystem services.

The final text which will be analyzed in this section eloquently captures Amerindian resistance against technocratic and market-based conservation. As mentioned in the previous section, terms such as “capacity building”, collaboration and cooperation are ideological insofar as they conceal the abyssal dimensions of conservation: each concept casts taken-for-granted assumptions regarding the unilinear trajectory of both Western-based development and conservation, encouraging conformity to Western ideals. Amerindians are, therefore, portrayed as highly dependent upon the direction and guidance of international NGOs in the struggle to preserve their land and resources. In 2007, during the second Latin American Parks Congress, Cemci Sose, the Kayaritomo (chief) of the Wai Wai, shared his thoughts on the creation of the Wai Wai’s community-owned conservation area:

*“We have always been keepers of the forests that support us and now it is official, recognized by the government and the world. The*

*immediate challenge we face is creating economic opportunity through the Community Owned Conservation Area to prevent young people from leaving, which could destroy our community”*  
(Schertow 2007: 12).

Sose’s comments reassert the identity of the Amerindians: they are not passive actors in the field of conservation, but leaders. The statement above is empowering for the Wai Wai, especially when Sose declares that “*We have always been keepers of the forests*”, reinforcing that it was the Amerindians which have always been aware of the potential of their land and resources. He proceeds by acknowledging the obstacles ahead of the Wai Wai- namely, the challenge of “*creating economic opportunity through the Community Owned Conservation Area*”. Well aware of the limitations of CI’s market-based model of conservation, he speaks to the potential ethnocide of his community when he states that his village must “*prevent young people from leaving, which could destroy our community*”. Unlike the institutional discourses in the previous section, which position the Wai Wai as unenlightened, passive and culturally inferior to Western-based, technocratic models of conservation, Sose’s remark subsume power, re-negotiating, and contesting, the identities of the Amerindians. They are no longer viewed as having to be elevated to a more modern cultural level of conservation. More importantly, however, Sose’s discourse challenges abyssal ideology by creating a space for post-abysal thinking wherein both social realities coexist, facilitating social and cognitive justice in the field of conservation.

## **Conclusion**

### **A Shift Towards Post-Abyssal Thinking**

As I sit down to write a conclusion to this dissertation, I glance over a copy of *The Guyana Chronicle*, acquired from my local Caribbean convenience store. The front page features an article entitled “Karrau Residents Upset - Say Action of Village Council Not Transparent”. According to the author, Alva Solomon (2016), residents of Karrau, Mazaruni, are disappointed with the Village Council’s management of affairs- namely, the investment in a well and the contamination of the village’s creek. The contamination, it is believed, is attributed to various mining concessions handed out by the village leader. What is more, residents of Karrau are upset that the village leader is not embracing principles of accountability and transparency when making major decisions that affect the entire community.

The Amerindians of Guyana are far from achieving social justice within their communities, especially when the nation’s political, economic and social structures perpetuate abyssal ideology. This entire dissertation has endeavored to reveal how an emphasis on abyssal thinking unmasks cognitive injustice (the division of social reality into two realms and the impossibility of co-presence between these two realms). Recall, cognitive injustice underlies all other forms of injustice, be it social, political, cultural, ethnic, religious, or ecological. Conducting a comparative and critical analysis of the discursive representations of the indigenous peoples of Guyana, I gained a better understanding of eco-criminality at the hands of the state and various international actors. The utilization of Fairclough’s (1995) CDA and Santos’ (2006) theoretical framework of abyssal thinking, moreover, opens new vistas of both qualitative and quantitative research

on eco-crimes. If discourse, in the Foucauldian sense, can be interpreted as a ‘technology of government’, we begin to see how the written word translates into a collection of strategies and techniques utilized by the powerful to exercise domination and control over a particular group of people. As discourses are articulated in hegemonic structures, they construct social hierarchies, projecting a particular perception of social life (Shuter and Turner 1997).

This is especially evident in Foucault’s (1975) work: power, knowledge and discourse are intricately interwoven insofar as power determines what constitutes knowledge and these bodies of knowledge are transmitted to the population through discourse. Discursive practices become conventionalized, becoming taken-for-granted-aspects of social life. For Carabine (2000), the intersection of power and knowledge produce material effects by way of influencing social policy; groups of related statements ‘cohere’ in some manner so as to produce meaning and effect in the social world, so that discourse is seen as having force. My contribution to the field of green criminology is an attempt to demonstrate how Fairclough’s CDA and Santosian abyssal lines can be integrated into an eco-crimes framework, advancing the social legalist perspective of criminality. CDA is highly political in its intent, encouraging analysts to effect real social change by reducing harm and promoting social justice, whilst creating a space where people are not discriminated against because of ‘sex, color, creed, age, or social class’ (O’Connor 1996). Fairclough’s ‘three-dimensional’ framework and his emphasis on *describing* the text; *interpreting* the relationship between both the productive and interpretive discursive processes and a text; and *explaining* the complex relationship



between discursive processes and social processes have guided my comparative and critical analysis.

I presented three questions at the beginning of this dissertation. The first was: how does an investigation of discourses enrich our understanding of abyssal ideology and how can such an understanding be integrated into an eco-crimes framework? Discourse refers to a process through which social reality comes into existence. It also features articulations of power and knowledge. Ergo, it is an analysis of discourse which aids in my investigation of social and environmental injustice and the radical restructuring of reality which exaggerates perceived *difference* among the Amerindians. Abyssal ideology can be unmasked through discourse and green criminologists, like constitutive criminologists, can begin to see criminality not as the function of individual pathology, but a direct result of interminable constructions of social identities via discursive practices.

The second question was: how do discursive representations of Guyana's Amerindians reproduce Santosian abyssal thinking, and what are the implications for global social, and cognitive, justice? Santos makes it very clear that "the other side of the line" is produced as nonexistent because modern humanity is inconceivable without modern subhumanity. Thus, Santosian lines were drawn between the Amerindians and others. This engendered the cognitive injustice of failing to recognize their alternative "ways of knowing" and how they bring meaning to their lives. This, in turn, led to an onslaught of violations against their biological, ecological and cultural integrity.

The final question was: what does a legacy of eco-crimes imply for indigenous resistance? What does green criminology stand to gain from analyses of such forms of resistance? Whether it is through Foucauldian concepts of *contestation*, *transgression*,

*struggle and resistance*; processes of *replacement discourse*; or even *post-abysal thinking* and an *alternative thinking of alternatives*, green criminologists stand to gain much insight from any efforts made to challenge hegemonic social structures, effecting transformative change.

Capturing the “Amerindian experience” from the dawn of colonialism to recent conservation efforts, I demonstrated that certain actors utilized the textual and linguistic resources available to them in order to discursively portray the Amerindians as both civilizationally and culturally inferior. Parallels can be drawn, then, between Santos’ notion of cognitive injustice and constitutive criminology, opening interstices for reflection. After all, green criminology’s *raison d’être* is to: (1) to record the existence of ‘green crimes’, (2) to document the myriad laws which have been established to address eco-crimes, (3) to link ‘green crimes’ to social inequalities, and (4) to identify what role, if any, green social movements play bringing about social change. It is the latter objectives that have served as the impetus behind this project.

Chapters Four to Seven reviewed a collection of discourses which featured systems, and sub-systems, of distinctions between this “this side of the line” and “the other side of the line”. It is the Amerindians who are perpetually relegated to the latter, subjected to racist and discriminatory tropes which operate in both Faircloughian and Foucauldian fashion. From the moment the Europeans landed on the coasts of Guyana, the Amerindians exercised some degree of resistance, challenging the ideologies of the colonists; when the country gained independence, the Amerindians fought for civil and political rights, pleading their case for titled land and self-determination; today, hemispheric actors, under the tutelage of neoliberalism and market-oriented conservation,

perpetuate abyssal ideology but the local communities steadfastly remonstrate against such infringements of their rights. It is this common motif of struggle, contestation and renegotiation of power that warrants further analysis. Throughout this work, I endeavored to illustrate the indefatigable efforts of the Amerindians to resist the imposition of abyssal ideology through the discursive reconstruction of their identity as a people with a destiny. Certain forces have tried to enact, and sustain, abyssal thinking through the country's laws, policies and various international partnerships, but have been challenged every step of the way; the mobilization of the Amerindians (along with international agencies) demonstrates that these indigenous communities are not passive victims to be coerced and disempowered by the inequitable facets of abyssal thought, but are prepared to respond to the cognitive, social and environmental injustices associated with the local and globalizing ecological, social and economic changes affecting their communities.

### **Future Research Endeavors**

This dissertation is merely the beginning of an exciting journey for green criminologists. Presenting empirical evidence of abyssal ideology through discourse offers ample opportunity for an epistemological shift in the field. Concepts, then, such as *resistance* (Foucault 1979); *post-abyssal thinking* (Santos 2007); *replacement discourse*, (Henry and Milovanovic 1996); and *subalternism* (Guha 1983; Spivak 1988; Prakash 1994) feature broad political orientations of struggle. These perspectives can enhance the remit of green criminology. As mentioned throughout this dissertation, the dichotomy between the strict and social legalist perspective is not so simple, but more complex and nuanced. The latter perspective can shed much insight into how cognitive injustice facilitates social and environmental injustice, which then falls under the strict legalist

perspective. I wish to revisit this theme in subsequent research, especially through a more in-depth analysis of how the Amerindians continue to strive towards a post-abysal thinking- that is, an attempt to challenge the impossibility of co-presence between the two realms of social reality. Santos encourages us challenge what he refers to as epistemicide so that alternative “ways of knowing” and the manner in which indigenous peoples provide meaning to their existence can be celebrated. Furthermore, he posits four analytical tools when attempting to recover and valorize the epistemological diversity of the world: the sociology of absences, sociology of emergences, ecology of knowledges, and intercultural translation (Santos 2014). I hope to revisit these analytical tools and apply them to the mobilization of the Amerindians of Guyana, revealing how post-abysal thinking can reconfigure the relationship between the country’s indigenous peoples and the rest of the world, ensuring cognitive, social and environmental justice are achieved.

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*United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Archives, London*

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Reports of W.H. Brett and other missionaries, 1861-1867

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