

The Folktale of Bon Bibi and Geopolitics of Knowledge¹: A Decolonial Reading of Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*

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Abstract

Set in the labyrinthine Sunderbans, Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* dramatises a confrontation between two opposing worldviews – one based on rationality and the other on the local folktale of Bon Bibi, the goddess of the jungle – to weigh their relative viability in the uncanny ambience of the tide country. Locals like Horen and Fokir navigate its intricate waters and jungles by having immense faith in Bon Bibi who, to them, is a living reality, an omnipresent protective spirit. Therefore they remain unperturbed in any situation, even in the eerie ambience of Garjontola. Both Nirmal and Kanai, two outsiders, attempt to grasp the place in a reductive way. Their traumatic experiences at Garjontola reveal the limitation of the universalist method of Western epistemology². The paper intends to assess, from Walter D Mignolo's decolonial perspective of “geopolitics of knowledge,” how Ghosh has incorporated the folktale of Bon Bibi in the novel to critique the universalist tendency of Western epistemology. “Geopolitics of knowledge” is an approach to resist Western epistemology's propensity to do away with “the possibility of thinking about a conceptualization and distribution of knowledge emanating from other local histories (China, India, Islam).” It is a strategy to resist “egopolitics of knowledge” which dismisses knowledges produced in non-European locales and in non-scientific forms like myth, folktale as non-knowledge. However, while highlighting the limit of Western epistemology, the paper does not intend to critique Western epistemology in itself, but its method to invalidate non-Western epistemologies as mere superstition and inauthentic knowledge-system. In doing so, it seeks to analyse how the novel implies a delinking from Western system of thought and the viability of non-European, non-universalising epistemologies in specific places.

Keywords: Epistemology, Decoloniality, Egopolitics, Geopolitics, Delinking

Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* is set in the Sunderbans, an estuarine, enigmatic place known to the world for its dense mangrove jungle, its man-eating tigers and crocodiles, its innumerable creeks, rivers and ever-appearing, ever-disappearing islands. Tidal floods and powerful cyclones are common phenomena in the region. No wonder that such a place is harsh, precarious and inimical to human habitation. However, it is a matter of sheer wonder that humans have lived in the place for a long time either by catching fish, crabs and prawn in the rivers or by collecting honey, wax and wood from the jungle. Injuries and deaths are common occurrence. One may ask how the inhabitants, dealing with so many adversities, survive in the place and make it a home. Ghosh's handling of this question unravels a whole set of relations—between the place and its tales, between islanders/visitors and the place—which make the readers reconfigure their usual notions of place and knowledge.

In Ghosh's novel, the islanders cope up with all challenges in their life by having complete faith in Bon Bibi, the presiding deity of the forest. In reality also, as shown by Annu Jalais in *Forest of Tigers*, the worldview of most islanders of the Sunderbans is immersed in the rules and protective power of Bon Bibi. Though there is a booklet titled *Bonbibir Johurnama* written towards the end of the nineteenth century by Abdur Rahim, the folktale is circulated and transmitted mainly by oral stories and *Yatra*, a rural theatrical performance. The tale holds so much importance for Ghosh that in *Jungle nama* he retold it in verse that closely resembles the original Bengali *dwipodi-powar*, rhyming couplets with each line having twelve syllables and a caesura. Ghosh notes that such verses are "meant to be chanted, sung and read" aloud, highlighting the oral performance of the narrative and its passing down from generation to generation (*Jungle nama* 75). In the "Afterword" section of the book Ghosh remarks that "the story of Bon Bibi is a charter that regulates every aspect of life; the beliefs associated with it dictate how they relate to the forest and to the beings that inhabit it, especially tigers" (74). In fact, the Bon Bibi tale is such an integral part of the lives of the islanders that any study of the region would be incomplete without assessing its impact on people there. In *Writings from the Sunderbans* the editors Indranil Acharya and Sayantan Dasgupta observe that "a scrutiny of the cultural trajectory of some of the governing myths of the Sunderbans' folkloric tradition would surely point at the long process of adaptations of some overseas cultural icons like Bonbibibi in the riverine environment"(xvii). This is because, unlike in any other place, in the Sunderbans human life is entangled in a complex network between human and non-human forces, and thus a rationalist enquiry is likely to be insufficient to unravel the intricate dynamics between the place and its inhabitants. Hence, the folktale of Bon Bibi is of immense importance to understand the epistemology that sustains the islanders in such an inhospitable place. Since folktale is derided by Western rationality as something fanciful and inauthentic to rely on, one needs to move beyond the limit of rationality to understand its value in specific setting and context. The paper seeks to understand Ghosh's incorporation of the Bon Bibi tale in the novel and the characters' relation/response to it mainly from the

decolonial perspective of “Geopolitics of Knowledge” propounded by the Argentine thinker Walter D. Mignolo. “Geopolitics of Knowledge” is a strategy/praxis to dismantle “Egopolitics of Knowledge” which implies the propensity of Western rationality in particular and Modernity in general to delegitimise non-Western forms of knowledge as mere superstition and inauthentic. Mignolo argues that any “epistemology implies and is always embedded in a politics of location” (“I am Where I think” 236). “Geopolitics of Knowledge” focuses on the place of enunciation, and challenges Modernity’s claim to be the universal manager of knowledge for the entire planet. It critiques the “universal view of knowledge and epistemology where concepts are not related to local histories but to global designs” (Mignolo, *Local Histories* 66), and at the same time, “de-legitimizes the pretense of a singular and particular epistemology, geo-historical and bio-graphically located, to be universal” (Mignolo, *The Darker Side* 81). “Egopolitics of Knowledge,” along with claiming its universality, recognises only Western systems of knowledge contained in scientific books or research journals to be valid; it discredits non-Western systems of knowledge contained in forms like stories, legend, folktale, myth etc. as mere nonsense stuff. “Geopolitics of Knowledge” prioritises these so-called non-standard forms of knowledge to resist the totality of Western knowledge, and thereby paves the way for delinking which leads, Mignolo proposes, “to de-colonial epistemic shift and brings to the foreground other epistemologies, other principles of knowledge and understanding and, consequently, other economy, other politics, other ethics” (Mignolo, “Delinking” 307). Delinking from the self-fashioned universality of Western epistemology opens up new possibilities to understand the world where multiple epistemologies can coexist without the monopoly of one particular epistemology. The role of Bon Bibi tale in *The Hungry Tide* signposts to this direction.

People relate to the folktale in two ways. The islanders have an unflinching faith in it and have an emotional connection with it; the outsiders who come to the Sunderbans dismiss it as a cock-and-bull story and ridicule the local folks’ faith in it. Both Nirmal and his nephew Kanai, two highly educated persons with metropolitan upbringing, at first deem the islanders’ faith in the tale as puerile. Their outlook at the beginning is rationalist; they attempt to grasp the place and its stories in a reductive way. A confrontation between two epistemologies—one being rationalist, upheld by Nirmal and Kanai and the other being folkloric believed and practiced by Horen and Fokir—is at the heart of the novel. The outcome of this confrontation unveils Ghosh’s subtle critique of Western epistemology.

Over the years, Ghosh has become increasingly critical of Western Modernity, and, at the same time, he has recognised the value of indigenous stories, songs and legends as a storehouse of knowledge which is essential for the survival and sustenance of people of specific place and its environment. In *The Great Derangement*, Ghosh lambasts Western Modernity for discrediting non-human

forces which are, nonetheless, very much operative in the world. In the same book, Ghosh reminisces that while staying at the Sunderbans in 2002 he realised that “the land here is demonstrably alive” (7). In *The Living Mountain* Ghosh narrates, in the form of a dream, a cautionary tale of disregarding the ancient wisdom of revering the earth as sacred and alive, and thus to brutally exploit natural resources for economic growth. What Ghosh is extremely critical of is Western epistemology’s method of disparaging non-Western, non-modern ideas and proclaiming itself as universal: “The Anthropoi had always told us that one of the reasons why they were so much stronger than us was that their ideas were universal – unlike the false, local beliefs that circulated amongst us Valley-folk” (*The Living Mountain* 26). What “Geopolitics of Knowledge” does is to pay attention to these indigenous systems of knowledge emanating from non-Western places and contained in stories, songs, legends, dreams etc. In *The Hungry Tide*, Nirmal and Kanai try to uphold what Mignolo calls the “Egopolitics of Knowledge” which is pitted against the “Geopolitics of Knowledge” embodied by Horen and Fokir.

When Nirmal, a secular rationalist, settles with his wife at the Sunderbans, he is amazed at the geological wonders of the place. He, however, sneers at the islanders’ faith in Bon Bibi from the very beginning. He has always kept him away from “*matters of religious devotion*” and despised religious beliefs as “*false consciousness*”; therefore he “*had never seen a Bon Bibi puja or indeed, taken any interest in this deity*”³ (Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide* 222). When young Kanai first became curious about Bon Bibi after knowing from Kusum about the upcoming performance of *The Glory of Bon Bibi* at Lusibari and asks Nirmal about it, Nirmal scolds the boy and strictly prohibits him from bothering about it. He snapped at the islanders for preferring “the imaginary miracles of gods and saints” instead of paying “close attention to the true wonders of reality around them” (102). Another instance of Nirmal’s universalist rationalist outlook and consequent mockery of the Bon Bibi tale comes out while recounting to Horen *Travels* by François Bernier who ventured into the tide country in 1665. Bernier narrated, among several strange experiences, of having been lost on the fourth day in the labyrinth of rivers, creeks and jungles and then on that night facing a fierce storm striking them suddenly from nowhere, without any indication. Having heard the story, Horen instantaneously came up with the explanation that the Frenchman and his crew must have “crossed the line by mistake and ended up on one of Dokkhin Rai’s islands” (147). Horen does not have least doubt that storm like the one (sudden storm with ferocious wind, vivid lightning, loud thunder and incredibly heavy rain) described by Bernier is the deed of Dokkhin Rai. For rationalist Nirmal, however, “*A storm is an atmospheric disturbance: it has neither intention, nor motive*”, and he snubs Horen for believing in such superstition (147). Being an uneducated, simple person but firm in his conviction, Horen does not contend with Nirmal’s meteorological explanation, but consigns it to future to determine who is right.

Nirmal's disillusionment with the universal effectiveness of rationality happens in his visit in January 1979 to Garjontola with Horen, Kusum and child Fokir who were going there to offer their annual homage to Bon Bibi. Garjontola is a remote island located in deep jungle. To Kusum, Fokir and Horen, it is a sacred place where long ago Kusum's father built a shrine of Bon Bibi. While their boat was in the middle of an estuary, Nirmal was bemused to see Horen and Kusum making genuflections while supposedly entering into Dokkhin Rai's territory. He also laughs at Kusum's story of how once her father faced a violent storm at Garjontola, became unconscious and had a dream of Bon Bibi. In that dream, he received her instructions on the purity of heart, and also is told by the goddess that the dolphins are her messenger. Nirmal deems the story as another instance of the islanders' superstitious nature, and sarcastically teased her about the dolphins. When Kusum tells him that they would soon see Bon Bibi's messengers, the dolphins, Nirmal only "laughed louder still" (Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide* 234). However, nearing Garjontola they soon saw the dolphins the kind of which Nirmal had never seen; they played in low tide around their boat and one even looked straight into his face. The "unbelieving secularist" who wanted to mock Kusum by confounding her credulousness had to admit that the "triumph was hers now" (235). Nirmal finds that all his convictions are turning out ineffectual at this uncanny place.

Nirmal's shock only increases at Garjontola by reaching where Horen instinctively feels a reverential fear which, according to Horen, only protects them in the island. Nirmal at first mocks Horen's fear but soon afterwards he himself feels fear in the strange and frightening ambience of the place. He felt as a complete outsider there at that moment. As Horen, himself a 'bauley' (a tiger charmer), mumbles mantras to prevent a probable tiger attack, Nirmal feels an assurance of safety. He admits:

*Perhaps in another circumstance would have laughed. But it was true that I was afraid now: I did not need to feign my fear. I knew Horen could no more shut the mouth of a tiger than he could conjure up a storm – but I was still reassured by his meaningless mumbles, by his lack of bravado. His manner was not that of a magician weaving a spell: he was more like a mechanic, giving a spanner an extra turn, in order to leave nothing undone. This reassured me. (Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide* 244-5)*

Nirmal's profound unease at Garjontola makes him realise that rationality is ineffective in a place like Garjontola and the folktale of Bon Bibi is at the heart of local epistemology which is effective in grappling with a place like this. This realisation changes Nirmal's view on rationality as the only valid system of knowledge and makes him accept the co-existence of multiple epistemologies. Nirmal's last writing on the mythical journey of Ganga is an indication of his changed worldview. Nirmal's notebook reveals the transformation of the rationalist into a spiritualist who, Kanai concludes, ultimately felt an

interconnectedness among all things such as “the trees, the sky, the weather, people, poetry, science, nature” (282-3). This is a complete overhaul of his earlier stance.

If Nirmal realised the limit of his worldview by facing the ground reality at Garjontola, the same also happens in case of Kanai. Kanai has been sceptical about the tale from very early age. When 10-year-old Kanai hears Horen thanking Bon Bibi for granting him two bottles of honey and learns from his aunt that inhabitants of the tide country believe Bon Bibi is the “goddess of the forest” who rules “over all the animals of the jungle,” young Kanai is amusingly surprised to find how a strong, grown-up person like Horen can be so credulous. Consequently he could not “suppress the snort of laughter that rose to his lips” (Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide* 28). Nilima immediately acted as a discerning guardian of the boy and warns him: “Don’t act like you know everything. You’re not in Calcutta now” (28). This advice is very significant in two ways: first, Kanai has already formed the mentality to assume that he knows everything about everywhere, and second, he is not in Calcutta where he lives, but in the Sunderbans, the reality of which is quite different from that of Calcutta. Mature Kanai, however, fails to follow his aunt’s judicious advice. When he revisits the tide country in 2002, he is already a confidant, successful businessman at Delhi; groomed in the ethos rationalist and capitalist world, he thinks that he can preside over any situation. His venture to Garjontola as a linguistic mediator between Piya and Fokir turns out as a hard lesson for him. While passing by Garjontola, Fokir claims the presence of tiger in the island by noticing footmarks on the slopes, and, at the same time, by having an intense feeling of fear. Kanai takes these marks as crab’s burrow and amusingly thinks that Fokir is playing a game with him. Not to be easily duped by illiterate Fokir, he sportily accepts Fokir’s challenge to go into the island. Before making the footfall, Fokir conveys to Kanai Bon Bibi’s injunction that anybody with a pure heart/mind has nothing to fear at Garjontola. However, once Kanai lands on the island, his rationalistic overconfidence betrays him. Having landed on the muddy slopes, Kanai feels as the earth has become alive; he gets stuck in the mud and falls flat on the mud. He loses his composure and hurls torrents of abuse to Fokir and orders him to get out. After Fokir leaves, Kanai hallucinates of tiger attack, makes innumerable cuts on his body by crawling through mangroves, and ultimately faints. When he regains consciousness on Horen’s boat, he is no longer the same person. The self-assured bully is now a diffident, humble person. At the root of this transformation, lies a profound realisation about the epistemic system of the islanders that he only ridiculed earlier.

As Kanai returns to normal state of mind, he confesses to Piya that the tide country is not his “element” (Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide* 334). He now realises that the Bon Bibi tale is actually at the heart of the knowledge-system of the islanders, and it is this system which makes them understand the place and feel its pulse. Before Kanai leaves for Delhi, he gifts Piya a translation of Fokir’s song on

Dhona's story which he failed to translate earlier. In his letter to Piya containing the translation, Kanai confesses: "at Garjontola I learnt how little I know of myself and of the world" (353). Kanai who has always boasted of his knowledge of the world and slighted the islanders for their faith in Bon Bibi now writes about the tale:

[But] Nirmal recognised also that for this boy those words were very much more than a part of a legend: *This was the story that gave this land its life. That was the song you heard on Fokir's lips yesterday: it lives in him and in some way, perhaps, it still plays a part in making him the person he is.* (354) [emphases added]

Both Nirmal's notebook and Kanai's letter reveal the same realisation they have after visiting Garjontola. He recognises that for the islanders the folktale of Bon Bibi is not a fanciful story, but actually a living reality. The tale is not about individuals but about the place; it animates the land; it is the tale which constitutes the very subjectivity of Fokir.

If we look at Horen and Fokir, they are simple, uneducated guys who know the tale by heart and value it utmost. The knowledge-system of the islanders is completely different from that of Western epistemology internalised by Nirmal and Kanai. Unlike the Western epistemology's method of transmission of knowledge through publication of books and articles, the knowledge-system of the islanders is transmitted orally. Horen learnt the legend from the recitation of his father; Fokir learnt it, without knowing to read or write, from his mother in such a way that "these words have become a part of him" (Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide* 248). Legend, song, dream, intuition, sensing and the like constitute his knowledge-system. Kusum's father received Bon Bibi's injunction on the purity of heart in a dream; Fokir gets his mother's instruction to bring his son to Garjontola and comes to know of her wish to be united with him in a dream. Horen feels instinctive fear by setting foot at Garjontola; so does Fokir. Both Nirmal and Kanai do not feel fear at Garjontola at first, but soon fall into pathetic states of diffidence and hallucination respectively. In Ghosh's presentation, Nirmal and Kanai are representatives of Western epistemology which, premised upon rationality, proclaims itself as the only valid system of knowledge, applicable universally and capable of explaining logically everything under the sun. There is no place for dream, story, intuition or sensing in its scheme of things. Mignolo observes that Western epistemology privileges eyes and view whereas non-Western epistemologies "do not "see" the world but "sense" it, including of course the sense of vision" (*Local Histories* xi). From a decolonial point of view Mignolo prefers to supplant terms like "world view" and "perspective" by terms like "world sense" and "sense-sensitivity" respectively (xi). Non-Western epistemology, embedded in specific place, implies an individual's deep spiritual connection with the place, and therefore entails an intuitive sense-perception regarding the reality of the place. Fokir has this kind

of sense-sensitivity to feel the presence of tigers or dolphins. Fokir's debate with Kanai at Garjontola on the presence/absence of tiger nearby exemplifies that by seeing the footmarks on mud and having sudden goose bumps in fear, he can sense the presence of tiger. Kanai has neither the sense-sensitivity like that of Fokir nor he feels fear like Fokir does; he only relies on objective seeing of the marks and concludes that these are made by crabs. It is a matter of sheer irony that Western epistemology's method of seeing and then inferring fail miserably at Garjontola as Kanai soon hallucinates of tiger and collapses. Like Nirmal, he learns the limit of Western epistemology, but he learns it in a harder way than Nirmal does.

The transformation of the worldview of Nirmal and Kanai also results in the transformation of their subjectivity. Decoloniality always stresses that epistemology deeply informs one's subjectivity and "praxis of living" which, in turn, are embedded in "geopolitics of knowing, sensing and believing" (Mignolo, *The Politics* 7). As long as Nirmal and Kanai remain absorbed in the ethos of rationality, they brag about their knowledge-system. Once they are disillusioned with its universal efficacy, they become humble and silent. Interestingly, Piya, the marine scientist, remains non-judgmental about the local knowledge system. Piya senses rightly that Fokir's knowledge is not textbook knowledge; rather, it is intuitive. Fokir has "an incredible instinct", thinks Piya, and "as if he can see into the heart of the river" (Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide* 267). The islanders never talk about their knowledge system; they simply live it out in their daily life. Their epistemology and subjectivity get fused in their way of living and making sense of the world around them.

Everything about Fokir — his singing, his way of living, his disinterest in money — indicates his complete immersion in Bon Bibi tale. Fokir's lack of interest in modern education and his so-called primitiveness make him a ghost from past to his wife Moyna who is a progressive woman. He embodies what Mignolo identifies as the 'spiritual option,' one of the decolonial options to get outside the trap of Western Modernity. The spiritual option goes beyond the confines of religion and inscribes spirituality "to find ways of life beyond capitalism" (Mignolo, *The Darker Side* 62), and "connects the land with spirituality and not with commodity" (63). Mignolo observes that decolonial spirituality "is not only confronting modernity but also proposing to delink from it" (63). Fokir embodies this sort of spirituality; he has a spiritual connection with the tide country. He never criticises other worldviews; he only lives in accordance with his own knowledge system. Fokir's disinterest in money can be interpreted in the light of the instructions of Bon Bibi. To have purity of heart and to relinquish greed are Bon Bibi's injunctions to the forest fishers. An economic morality is essential to have the protection of Bon Bibi. Annu Jalais writes:

Following the recitation of Dukkhe's story, the islanders often explained that Bonbibi had left them the injunctions that they were to enter the forest

only with 'pure heart/mind' (*pobitro mon*) and 'empty hands' (*khali hate*). The islanders explained that they had to identify completely with Dukkhe, whose unfailing belief in Bonbibi saved him, and consider the forest as being only for those who are poor and for those who have no intention of taking more than what they need to survive. (*Forest of Tigers* 72-73)

Fokir sings of Dukkhi's story as Kanai's letter to Piya reveals to us. It suggests that he has identified himself with Dukkhi and eschewed greed from his life. Though Moyna snubs Fokir for his song ("gaan") and makes fun of his knowledge ("gyan"), the song actually is at the heart of Fokir's knowledge-system and makes him so perceptive of the tide country (Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide* 212). The worldviews of Kanai and Moyna are rooted in the ethos of capitalism whereas Kanai's system is rooted in Bon Bibi. That is perhaps why Moyna never understands Fokir.

The sacredness of forest and the economic morality that Bon Bibi decrees are also very significant from practical perspective. Actually too much forest fishing is often detrimental to the subtle ecosystem of the forest, often causing disturbance to the tigers. Dokkhin Rai is punished by Bon Bibi because of his greed and his attitude to consider the forest as his private property. Bon Bibi, on the other hand, is egalitarian in making the forest accessible to humans on condition that they have "to show the same kind of restraint and to abide by the laws of the forest left by Bonbibi" (Jalais 85). Jalais also observes that Bon Bibi tale underscores that the forest is a site of equality because, unlike the land which gives birth to hierarchical relations on the basis of greed and craving for power, the forest entails that one has to discard all man-made divisions of class, caste and religion before entering it. By defeating Dokkhin Rai, the supposedly Brahmin zaminder, Bon Bibi symbolically dismisses both caste and class hierarchy. Nirmal and Kanai have hierarchical mindset; they belittle the islanders. Horen and Kanai, on the other hand, never treat anyone with disrespect. Only at Garjontola the hierarchical relation between Nirmal and Horen as well as between Kanai and Fokir is suspended perhaps because the forest has a leveling effect; it treats everyone as equal. Additionally, it should be noted that Bon Bibi is sent by Allah, and therefore her own religion is Islam. Interestingly, however, Bon Bibi completely disregards religious divisions and stands for a syncretism between religions.

The failure of Nirmal and Kanai to understand the true spirit of the tide country can be ascribed to their rationalist worldview which turns out ineffective in the place. Does the novel then suggest the folklore as an alternative to rationality? One should remember Horen's way of arguing with Nirmal on the issue of unusual storms in the Sunderbans: he does not refute Nirmal's argument but at the same time he sticks to his own argument which is only specific in the tide country. In presenting the limitation of the rationalist worldview, Ghosh never suggests that rationality in itself is an ineffective system; in fact, it is one of the

most effective epistemologies governing the world today. What the novel mainly critiques is its underlying philosophy to be the only universally effective system of knowledge. Decolonial delinking shows the way “to change the terms in which the conversations of knowing, understanding, and existing take place, rather than to change the content” (Mignolo, *The Politics* 535). Folkloric knowledge system is never an alternative to rationalist knowledge-system; to claim so is fall in the trap of the hegemonic rationalist epistemology. In fact, decolonial approaches are not about finding an alternative to Modernity, but are about options emanating from the diverse realities of the world. Ghosh’s take on the Bon Bibi tale implies that it is one of the options among many epistemologies. “Decoloniality is not a mission, an option that cannot be dominating and imperative, but have to be confident, convincing and empowering” (Mignolo, *On Decoloniality* 224). The folkloric epistemology is one of the many non-western, non-hegemonic epistemologies that are effective in specific places. What the novel suggests is not a reversal of hierarchy between Western epistemology and folkloric one; rather it advocates an epistemic delinking that would lead to psychic liberation and pave the path for living with dignity for those whose dignity has been denied by the dominant knowledge system.

Notes

¹The phrase “Geopolitics of Knowledge” has been taken from Walter D. Mignolo’s book *The Darker Side of Western Modernity*. Mignolo, however, used the term in most of his other writings also.

²The term “epistemology” has been used in the article in the general sense of knowledge-system.

³All italicized in-text citations from the texts were originally italicized.

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