PLANT HUMANITIES OF THE NATIVE-CENTRIC-ECOLOGY

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Abstract

The philosophy of planthumanities of the native-centric-ecology examines cultural representations of plants in literature, art, religion, and folklore. It reveals how indigenous people have constructed narratives around plants, often anthropomorphizing them or treating them as passive objects. The plant humanities explore the relationship between human societies and the plant world. This emerging field draws insights from indigenous and scholarly traditions. The purpose of this study is to appraise plant humanities of the native centric ecology. Using philosophical analysis, this interdisciplinary inquiry has moral implications such as the anthropocentric narratives of the complex web, plant personhood, and many others. Despite the challenges,plant humanities contribute to a deeper understanding of biodiversity, indigenous life, and sustainable coexistence between humans and plants. This study concludes that vegetal humanities of the native centric ecology is a philosophy of interconnectedness between humans and plants that recognize the intrinsic value of plant life to foster sustainable coexistence in the environment.

Keywords: Vegetal, Humanities, Plants, Ontology, Interdisciplinary, interconnectedness of nature

Introduction

The native centric use of plants by indigenous communities holds cultural and ecological significance. Indigenous communities have relied on plants for various purposes, including food, medicine, shelter, and spiritual rituals (Berkes et al. 1994, 269-287). Native centric ecological knowledge is closely linked to cultural practices, shaping indigenous identities and ways of life (Berkes et al. 1994, 269-287). From a cultural perspective, the traditional use of plants plays a vital role in preserving and transmitting indigenous knowledge (Osebor, 2024E.).Plant preservation contributes to the cultural integrity of indigenous knowledge, which is most often transmitted orally (Oguamanam 2006). Plants are central to rituals, ceremonies, and storytelling, serving as symbols of ancestral wisdom and connection to the land (Kimmerer 2013). Through the use of plants, indigenous communities maintain their cultural heritage and reinforce their relationship with the natural world (Kopenawa and Bruce 2013; Osebor, 2024C).

The study of indigenous plant use contributes to biodiversity conservation, ecosystem sustainability, and the environment (Posey and Dutfield, 1996). Practices such as agroforestry, wild harvesting, and seed saving promote the preservation of plant species and genetic diversity.

Despite the importance of plants, they facenumerous threats, primarily from human activities. Deforestation and forest degradation release carbon dioxide back into the atmosphere, contributing to global warming and biodiversity loss. Deforestation, primarily for agriculture, logging, and infrastructure development, is the most significant driver of forest loss in the region (Hosonuma et al., 2012).

Illegal mining, oil extraction, and infrastructure projects such as roads and dams contribute to plant destruction and fragmentation. The colonial project succeeds in establishing itself as a discrete and integral focus for agricultural involution but leads to an incisive and frightening description of the environment. However, it is an exemplary study in the interaction of history, physical environment, and agricultural technology (Geertz, 1963).

Climate change is exacerbating the impacts of deforestation, leading to more frequent droughts, wildfires, and extreme weather events (Marengo and Souza 2018). Colonialism has inflicted severe disruptions on indigenous plants. In Nigeria, the colonial masters imposed exploitative practices, disrupted traditional plants, and denigrated indigenous cosmologies (Ikechukwu 2022).

Bloom (2010) cites the impact of colonialism on African landscapes and plant life is a significant theme in Chinua Achebe's "Things Fall subtly addresses the disruption of traditional agricultural practices and the introduction of foreign plants and farming techniques. However, the impact of colonialism has significantly disrupted indigenous knowledge systems and practices related to plant use. Colonialism has led to questioning its historical effects, the structure of dominant modes of thinking, and understanding the ontology of Being and beings. Environmental disruptions have alienated res cogitans from res extensa, culture from Nature. The impact of colonialism on the environment has raised questions for deconstructing history to uncover an understanding of the conditions necessary for the sustainability of life on the planet (Leff and Enrique 2021).Colonial powers

imposed their own systems of land ownership, resource extraction, and agricultural practices, often at the expense of indigenous territories and traditional ways of life. This colonization led to the marginalization, displacement, and even the outright eradication of indigenous peoples and their knowledge systems.

One of the most devastating impacts of colonialism on indigenous plant knowledge is the loss of biodiversity and traditional ecological knowledge. Colonizers often viewed indigenous practices as primitive or inferior, imposing Western-centric ideologies that devalued traditional knowledge systems (Erkaeva2021; Thomas 2022). The globalisation of the world is, in the first place, the culmination of capitalism as a Euro-centered colonial/modern world power. It is one of the foundations of the social classification of the world population, based on the idea of race, a mental construct that expresses colonial experience and pervades the most important dimensions of world power, including its specific rationality (Quijano 2000). This resulted in the erosion of indigenous languages, customs, and land management practices, including those related to plant use. Colonial policies and practices promoted the exploitation of natural resources for profit, leading to environmental degradation and loss of habitat (Erkaeva 2021; Thomas 2022). Extractive industries such as logging, mining, and agriculture have devastated ecosystems and disrupted traditional plant-based livelihoods. Indigenous communities have faced displacement, land dispossession, and environmental pollution as a result of these activities (Doset al. 2021).

In addition to environmental impacts, colonialism has undermined indigenous health and well-being by disrupting access to traditional medicinal plants (Safarovna 2021).Indigenous healing practices, based on centuries of observation and experimentation, have been marginalized in favor of Western biomedical approaches (Dhanarto 2016). This has resulted in the loss of traditional medicinal knowledge and increased dependence on pharmaceuticals, often with adverse effects on indigenous health outcomes. The commodification of plants led to the exploitation and appropriation of indigenous botanical resources (Whitt 1998). Centuries of colonialism in Africa and around the world have led to eco terrorism and enduring scars plants (Wood 2015).

The exploitation of plants for economic gain poses ethical dilemmas within vegetal humanities (Whitt 1998). Industrial agriculture, deforestation, and bio-piracy prioritize human interests at the expense of plant welfare and ecological integrity (Mgbeoji2007). Numerous organizations, governments, and indigenous groups are actively working to protect plants, they advocate for sustainable land use, supporting indigenous land rights, and implementing mechanisms that protect plants. How can we address the impacts of colonialism on plants?
The philosophy ofplant humanitiesin the native centric ecology is an interdisciplinary field that investigates the relationships between humans and plants, highlighting the importance of plant life in shaping human culture, thought, and existence. This area of study draws from various disciplines, including philosophy, botany, ecology, anthropology, and cultural studies, to investigate how plants influence human life and how human activities impact plant life. The central part of the native centric ecological humanities is the sense of 'brotherhood' and inseparable oneness of nature (Osebor 2024b).

The native centric ecological humanities raise moral questions about our responsibilities toward plants and the environment. It promotes a reevaluation of how we interact with the natural world, advocating for sustainable practices and a deeper respect for non-human life forms (Gardner 2002).

Literature of plant Humanities

The field ofthe native centric ecology isnot relatively recent branch of academic inquiry; philosophers have made significant contribution surrounding plant life, consciousness, agency, and their implications for human existence. Nyamnjoh (2015) cited Amos Tutuola that plants are significant cultural symbols and spiritual entities. These views support the assertion that the connection between land, plants, and community is a recurring theme, highlighting indigenous knowledge systems and their importance in sustaining ecological balance (Campbell 2003).

Plants possess a unique mode of existence. In a book entitled *Plant-Thinking: A Philosophy of Vegetal Life,* Marder (2013) arguesthat plants exhibit forms of intelligence, communication, and responsiveness that invite us to reconsider our understanding of consciousness and subjectivity beyond the human realm (Gibson and Baylee 2018).A plant has the capacity to actively engage with its environment (Hubbell and Ryan 2021). Plants are interconnected to all life forms; they are not passive objects for human use, but rather active agents with their own modes of perception, communication, and existence (Marder 2013). Plants possess a form of "vegetal thinking" that differs from human cognition but is no less valid or significant. This mode of thinking is characterized by processes such as growth, reproduction, and response to environmental stimuli, which can be understood as a form of intelligence (Marder 2013).

In the book *Plants as Persons: A Philosophical Botany* (Hall 2011), Hall maintains that plants have been central to human culture and civilization since ancient times, serving as sources of food, medicine, shelter, and spiritual inspiration. Plants have been represented, mythologized, and domesticated throughout history, and cultural practices reflect and shape human attitudes towards the natural world. Hall's work addresses the ethical dimensions of human-plant relationships, arguing for a more respectful and reciprocal approach to plant life. The protection of plant is important for man and posterity sake is the goal of the native centric ecology. Hall argues that the moral standing of plants is that of other-than-human persons. Plants constitute the bulk of our visible biomass, underpin all natural ecosystems, and make life on Earth possible. Yet plants are considered passive and insensitive beings, rightly placed outside moral consideration. As the human assault on nature continues, more ethical

behavior toward plants is needed. Plants are often viewed as mere resources for human use, but advocates call for an ethic of care and stewardship towards plants and the ecosystems in which they are embedded (Monday 2021).

Environmental ethics and sustainability call into question the dominant anthropocentric attitudes that have led to environmental degradation and biodiversity loss. Plant life and femininity are both marginalized within patriarchal societies (Gibson 2018). The marginalization of both plant life and femininity reveals deep-rooted cultural narratives that devalue the natural and the feminine (McLeod 2015). In many societies, plants are often seen as secondary to human progress. The focus on industrialization and technology tends to overshadow the importance of ecological balance and biodiversity. This marginalization has led to environmental degradation and a lack of appreciation for the intricate ecosystems that sustain life (Monday 2021). Similarly, the intersections of gender, ecology, and ethics involve recognizing the agency and value of non-human beings (Mallory 2009). The concept of botanical insights explores the aesthetic, cultural, and metaphysical dimensions of plant existence and challenges the notion of plants as passive objects or mere resources for human use,–instead recognizing the dynamic vitality and generative power (Coccia 2019).

Plants shape our world in the native centric ecology and have profound ways, not only through their material presence but also through their symbolic and affective significance in human culture (Coccia 2019). Foregrounding the interconnectedness of all living beings underscores the need for a more respectful and reciprocal relationship with plants. The concept of "poiesis" or "bringing-forth" sheds light on the creative potential inherent in both human and non-human beings (Di Pippo 2000). This view is similar to the concept of autopoiesis developed by Humberto and Varela (2009) arguesthat plants as capable of self-creation and self-maintenance, characterized by their ability to reproduce and maintain their own organization through internal processes rather than relying on external influences. They create their own components and processes, leading to a dynamic and self-sustaining cycle, establish their own boundaries, distinguishing themselves from their environment while remaining interconnected with it, and allow for adaptation to changing environments as the system continually evolves through internal interactions while In *The Origin of the Work of Art,* the role ofplantsserve as a reminder of the fundamental interconnectedness of all beings within the fabric of existence (Kuka 2012,).

TheRelevance of plant humanities

The discussion of plant humanities" in the native centric ecological world views is a complex and multifaceted topic that encompasses various dimensions. Indigenous peoples have inhabited Africa for thousands of years and have developed relationships with plant life in the region (Posey 2019). Plant humanities in the native centric ecology represent a radical reimagining of the relationship between humans and plants, challenging anthropocentric attitudes and advocating for a more inclusive and ecologically sustainable approach to philosophy and culture (Elton 2021;Goodbody2023).The inquiry into the vegetal plant aims to open up new possibilities for understanding the complexity and interconnectedness of life on Earth, as well as for rethinking our ethical responsibilities towards the natural world (Ryan 2016).

The native centric ecological humanities is an interdisciplinary study of plants, their relationship with humans, and their impact on culture, society, and history is profoundly significant, as indigenous communities have rich traditions and knowledge about the plant life around them (Gardner 2002). Philosophical analysis of the plant humanities involves understanding how plants are woven into the fabric of daily life, spirituality, medicine, and ecological practices of indigenous peoples. It's a fascinating area that sheds light on the connections between humans and their environment (Newell et al. 2001). In indigenous cultures, plants are not merely resources but are considered sentient beings with their own agency and wisdom that is pass through generation to generation (Osebor 2023).

The plant humanities of the native centric ecology redefine moral agency, arguing that plants possess forms of intelligence and agency that deserve recognition and respect (Gibson and Baylee 2018). Plants communicate, respond to their environment, and exhibit behaviors that suggest intentionality (Marder 2012). Acknowledging plant agency raises questions about the moral treatment of plants and the ethics of plant-human interactions. The rise of vegetal humanities challenges the ethics of consuming plant-based diets (Bishop et al. 2020). Proponents argue that over consuming plant-based diets will lead to environmental crisis. It raises questions about the ethics of agriculture, monoculture farming, and the impact of plant consumption on ecosystems (Sanford 2011).The interconnectedness of plants and human beings calls for ethical frameworks that prioritize the well-being of plant communities and recognize their intrinsic value (Osebor 2023). This includes advocating for sustainable agriculture, conservation efforts, and rewilding initiatives that restore plant habitats (Monday 2020). One major critique of vegetal humanities is the proposition of granting plants legal personhood and rights (Roncancio2020).

While this may seem radical, it reflects a growing recognition of the moral ability of non-human entities. Granting plants legal personhood could entail protections against environmental destruction, habitat loss, and exploitation (Pain and Pepper 2021). The anthropocentric view of the world raises important moral questions about the treatment of plant life and reimagining plant agency, advocating for ecological justice, and interrogating cultural representations of plants.

4. **Conclusion**

The research appraises plant humanities of the native centric ecology. It offers a new framework for understanding and engaging with the plant world. It involves navigating moral implications and requires careful consideration of the complex relationships between humans and plants in ecosystems, as well as a commitment to ethical action and environmental stewardship. The core of plant humanities is sustainable use and management of plant resources through native centric ecological practices such as regenerative agriculture, permaculture and agroforestry prioritize the long-term health and resilience of plant ecosystems, promoting ethical stewardship of the land.

The pursuit of sustainability must also consider the needs and livelihoods of human communities that depend on plant resources for survival. Indigenous cultures around the world offer valuable insights into ethical relationships with plants, rooted in centuries of traditional knowledge and practices. Vegetal humanities do not move away from the philosophy of indigenous communities regarding plants as sentient beings with spiritual significance, fostering reciprocal relationships based on respect, reciprocity, and gratitude. Ethical considerations must recognize and respect diverse cultural perspectives on the value and treatment of plant life.

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