UiT The Arctic University of Norway

Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education, Centre for Sámi Studies

Biocultural Storytelling Pedagogy in Indigenous Nagaland:
The Relational Worlds of Easterine Kire's Novels

Anna Ziya Geerling

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Master of Philosophy in Indigenous Studies IND-3904
November, 2023

Biocultural Storytelling Pedagogy in Indigenous Nagaland: The Relational Worlds of Easterine Kire's Novels

By
Anna Ziya Geerling

For the completion of
Master of Philosophy in Indigenous Studies
Centre for Sámi Studies
Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education
UiT the Arctic University of Norway

November 2023

Supervised by Dr. Michael Heneise (UiT)

Cover Image: Red Angami Naga Shawl with Elephants
(no longer commonly seen)[1]

Living Stories

Inbetween the lines of story -
what glimmer of spider's web,
what reflection of sun's ray,
what sounding futures
what scented pasts

Inbetween ancestors and children -
what roots in black gold
what branches in blue
where I become us,
where what becomes who

Inbetween half closed eyelids -
sunshine filtered into dreams
stains of rainbows,
whispers of unseens

Inbetween the stars and atoms -
chance is written fate
we are, therefore
I am - relation

Inbetween the stories,
melodies of belonging,
echoes of care
duties of love -

Woven fabric
of realms & times:

all that divides us,
is connection.

Anna Ziya Geerling ~ 19/02/21 Tromsø

Dedicated to Storytellers everywhere,
who distil meaning from the chaos.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to many people, places and teachings that have crossed my path. My journey into the critical awareness that comes with decolonisation of knowledge, started with one inspirational professor at my BA at University College Roosevelt, in the Netherlands, back in 2013: Rolando Vázquez. We all need that one professor that radicalises our vision on the world, and makes us deconstruct all we thought we knew; I had the luck of a professor doing so with utmost kindness and humility, teaching me not only to see my own privilege and the power residing within our very own university institutes, but also how to be more fully human. This ultimately brought me to seek a study like the MA Phil. in Indigenous Studies, organised by the Centre for Sami Studies (SESAM) at The Arctic University of Norway, where I not only learned about the International struggles of Indigenous peoples, but also of the politics involved in organising such a program itself. I thank all the staff and teachers for their patience with the insecurities that come up as a non-indigenous student wishing to do a good job in a historically charged field of inquiry. It was Dr. Michael Heneise that offered me the 'field' unto which to unleash my questions surrounding conservation and Indigenous knowledge systems, guiding me as supervisor through his many years of experience of research in Nagaland, into religious studies, and urging me onwards with faith in my capacities, when I thought I could not do the job. Thank you for many inspiring and fun conversations that made us forget our lunch breaks, and for taking me into The Highland Institute (THI) family. My first building of relationship with Nagaland and Naga culture, was through classes organised by THI in Nagamese and Tenyidie, through the dedicated and patient teaching of Rhovitono Yhome/Fifi, as well as the many insightful and exciting sharings with reciprocal curiosity with *Kia,*[2] who ended up becoming a friend that I look forward to meeting in real life when I finally set foot in Nagaland. Heneise then introduced me to the fantastic work of Easterine Kire, to whom my greatest and humble thanks for allowing me to enter a colourful imaginary of the forest and village worlds of the Nagas through her books, and who contributed so much to this research with the lovely conversation we shared around a fire in the cultural space of SESAM, Árdna. In addition, Heneise brought me into contact with other highly esteemed informants, and I cannot be grateful enough for the conversations with elder Niketu Iralu, and current chairman of the Khonoma Nature Conservation & Tragopan Sanctuary (KNCTS) Kezhasorie Meyase, organised in collaboration with THI with the help of Kevingunuo Savino and Lanuakum Aier - for which many thanks. Thank you all for your time, your trust and willingness to share with me, and your important work. I hope that my writing is of interest to some of you, though that is more than I can ask. Ultimately I want to thank the diverse Naga peoples, as well as the Sami, and Indigenous peoples around the globe, for the resilience and struggle to retain the freedom to one's own diverse cultures and knowledges. Specifically I am grateful for the stories, and all the beings they acknowledge, for the merging of the artistic, the spiritual and the social with the scientific, for the continued

relationships that negate the superficial divide between human and ‘nature’ so indoctrinated in 'Western' society, where we have mostly forgotten our own stories that narrate this fundamental life-giving, and meaning-giving entanglement. Your cosmologies offer hope for finding diverse sustainable ways of co-inhabiting this shared home, to those that have forgotten; hope that by working together with diversity, we might find solutions to our global crises.

Because ultimately my gratitude resides (t)here: in the ocean, that taught me to swim before I could walk, the instinct and melodies that taught me to sing, before I could talk, and in the varied lands that I have travelled in this life - including the mountains of Sápmi, this field of snow in front of my window changing colours with the waxing and waning of sunlight amidst the many polar seasons it took me to finalise this work, and in the forested Naga hills that started inhabiting my dreams; spaces home to biodiversity and cultural diversity alike, that teach me my place in the universe, and give sense to my existence on this planet. To those manifolded beings, my mother that brought me to the forest and ocean, my father that brought me to music and poetry, the community that I found in Tromsø that brought me home, and all the souls I have met during this journey of life that brought me to be who I am today, I say thank you, dankjulliewel, tusen takk, giittu, and ’n pezie. May we remember the knowledge that we thought we lost; may we remember that we exist only through relationship, and may we rekindle the curiosity for the unknown that will continue to shape our lives, as we relearn how to live *well* in a shared, more-than-human, world.

Anna Ziya Geerling, April 2023 / Romssa, Sápmi, Norge.

Abstract

In the quest for glocal solutions to glocal ecological breakdown, in which sustainability and biodiversity conservation have become powerful concepts at an international level, the causes of the ecological crises must be understood by their socio-economic ontological roots. Today, international fora increasingly recognise the contribution of Indigenous Peoples in safeguarding biodiversity, and attempt to embrace a culturally diverse, inclusive approach to 'nature' conservation. Two biodiversity hotspots that are at once notably rich in cultural diversity, we find converging around the forested slopes inhabited by the Nagas across the Indo-Myanmar border and at the foot of the Eastern Himalayas. As part of a decolonial quest for epistemic diversity, and out of a critique on the globalised ideals of 'modernity' and the 'Western' science hegemony with its entrenched human-nature divide, alternative ways to understand and relate with the 'more-than-human' world are sought as philosophical ground for sustainable co-existence relations, that integrate human livelihood practices with biodiversity conservation. Considering the biocultural relations and values found in Tenyimia Naga cosmology as encountered through the contemporary literary storytelling of Naga author Easterine Kire, entailing kinship relations, reverence and fear for spirit landowners, and therianthropic soul-travel to the embodiment of wild tigers, Kire's novels are explored as socio-ecological pedagogy. Though based on a recognition of more-than-human subjecthood, agency and kinship, traditionally giving rise to complex systems of taboos, her books furthermore detail aspects of cultural change, through colonisation, Christianity and missionary schools' education, and as such avoid simplistic traditional vs. modern discourse. Kire's literature is thereby presented as a potent narrative site of cultural (re)construction and biocultural heritage revitalisation amidst a context of hegemonic education curricula and socio-ecological crises. As such I locate this research within the Indigenous research paradigm and environmental humanities, interlinking the study of literature, cosmology and spirituality, pedagogy and ecological ethics and management practices. Besides text analysis of Kire's books, the thesis builds on a theoretical literature review, as well as dialogical interviews with Kire and few other local actors that shed light on contextual layers, and the paradoxes of heritage continuities through change, in biodiversity conservation efforts today.

Keywords: *Tenyimia Naga, Nagaland, Biocultural Diversity, Socio-Ecological Pedagogy, Storytelling, Decolonisation, Human-Nature Divide, Relational Epistemology, More-than-Human World, Spirits, Therianthropy, Community Conservation, Indigenous Ecological Knowledge (IEK), Revitalisation, Taboo, Hunting Ethics, North East India, Easterine Kire, Literature, Western Science, Environmental Education.*

Abbreviations

AIPP - Asia Indigenous Peoples' Pact
(UN)CBD - (United Nations) Convention on Biological Diversity
CCAs - Community Conservation Areas
EE - Environmental Education
FRA - Forest Rights Act (GoI, 2006)
GoI - Government of India
GoN - Government of Nagaland
ICORN - International Cities Of Refuge Network
IEK / LEK / TEK - Indigenous / Local / Traditional Ecological Knowledges
IPBES - International Policy-Science Platform of Biodiversity and Ecological Services
IPs - Indigenous Peoples
IPCC - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IUCN - International Union for Conservation of Nature
IWGIA - International Working Group of Indigenous Affairs
KNCTS - Khonoma Nature conservation & Tragopan Sanctuary
MOEFCC - Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (GoI)
MoTA - Ministry of Tribal Affairs (GoI)
NEN - North East Network (NGO)
NGC - National Green Corps (MOEFCC, GoI program)
NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation
NSFD - Nagaland State Forest Department
NTFP - Non-Timber Forest Produce
NWBCT - Nagaland Wildlife and Biodiversity Conservation Trust
SCERT - The State Council of Educational Research and Training (GoN)
TERI - The Energy and Resources Institute
UNCED - United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDRIP - United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (2007)
UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNEP - United Nations Environment Program
UNPO -Unrepresented Nations & Peoples Organization
UTC - Under the Canopy: A Window to Wildlife Education in North East India (2009)
WCS-I / WCS-M - Wildlife Conservation Society -India / -Myanmar
WWII - World War II

List of Figures

Notes on Terminology

Biodiversity:

Defined by the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) as: "the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part: this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems" (1992, Art. 2)

Indigenous Peoples:

There exists no formal legal definition of 'Indigenous peoples' (henceforth IPs), yet the most frequently used working definition was developed in the Cobo report for the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (1986). Therein, IPs are described as peoples who retain and seek historical continuity of their distinct cultures stemming back to a pre-colonial society on their territory, and who live in a non-dominant societal position that is often characterised by oppression. IPs are mostly distinguished from other minorities through their distinct relations to land, although this distinction in practice is much less clear-cut, and the designation of either term is foremost political. Nevertheless, this means that the ancestral territories of IPs function as a basis of their ethnic identity and legal collective rights as peoples, as distinguished from the individual rights of people belonging to minorities. In the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) Art. 25, IPs are said to have a "distinct spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories ... and ... resources" that they wish to maintain and pass on to future generations (2007). However, the originally proposed wording by IPs described this relationship not merely as 'spiritual' but also as 'material,' which was edited out in order for states to agree on approving the text (Regino Montes & Torres Cisneros in Charters & Stavenhagen (Eds.), 2009). This speaks to the way that Indigeneity has been conceptualised and classified by states in a way that fits their political agendas, thus glossing over pertinent questions related to material rights. Perhaps this has also influenced the way we globally perceive IPs, pertaining to the ideal of an 'ecological native' that will also be navigated in this thesis.

'Modern':

Following Quijano (2000), Vázquez (2011, 2012) and Mignolo (2000, 2011) as decolonial scholars, the idea and project of 'modernity' is seen here as part and parcel to coloniality, and an integral part of the Eurocentric 'civilising' project. It springs forth from the idea of a linear chronological progression of culture and livelihood towards 'development' and 'modernity,' which is 'Western' and is inherently based upon an illusionary nature/culture dualism (Latour, 1991). When the term 'modern' is used in this work, it will appear between quotation marks, to designate the colonial matrix of power in which this idea exists. See also ch. 3.

'Traditional':

Following Angelova (2017) in the context of Nagaland, when 'traditional' is used in this thesis, it is referring to being partially rooted in pre-colonial, pre-Christian beliefs and practices, even as I recognise that to create such 'benchmarks' of what is traditional is rather arbitrary, and that cultures have always been evolving and changing. This is also not to say that such 'traditional' knowledge has fully disappeared with conversion to Christianity, as will be further discussed in ch. 1, as well as through the data. It must also be avoided to construct "a traditional Naga" with respect to the huge variety of cultures falling under the contemporary designation of 'Naga'. Furthermore, as linked to the romantic idea of an 'ecological native', this comes with the understanding that no culture is either simply good or bad, as well as that culture is inherently fluid and changing in correspondence with its ecological and socio-political environments.

'Western':

Also sometimes referred to as 'The Global North,' 'the West' refers not simply to a geographical area but rather to a geo-policical sphere of dominance (also referred to as Eurocentrism), that has expressed itself through coloniality, neoliberalism and dominance - on the market, but also culturally and in the production of knowledge. The designation 'West' is also used to refer to a dominant discourse of science, as opposed to other knowledge systems, which is controlled and established in mainly North-American/European centres of knowledge formation and power, though spread globally - advocating predominantly a positivist method in determining what is considered valid knowledge, even if several critical disciplines within 'Western' sciences and philosophy have challenged this epistemological approach. The terminology exists as an illusionary, dualistic differentiation from a generalised 'non-West', or 'Orient,' which it regards as exotic and subordinate, as criticised notably by Said (1978), but also a generalised 'West'. We have thereby lost sight of a great internal diversity of cultures (including marginalised groups), experiences (of different classes for example), and stories existing in the past and present within the so-called 'West' itself, as well. Additionally, 'Western' sciences are in truth informed by varying knowledge systems stemming from outside of what we conceive as 'the West' today, of which the Western Arabic numerals at the base of mathematics are a prime example. As such, the signifier 'West' does not represent the very fluid reality of cultural knowledge exchange across time and ever-changing drawn nation-state boundaries. Yet, the term currently still best refers to the complex network of power relations organising the world in a set of hierarchies, and as such, remains relevant and useful for its reference to this political distribution of power, that we can discern in many aspects of international relations, including at the UN level, as well as in the particular of local realities. I will therefore for the current work continue to use the term, though within quotation marks to remind myself as well as the reader of its ambiguity.

Chapter 1. Introduction:

1.1 Project Summary & Research Question

Through colonisation of lands and cultures -of materiality and stories- and the ensuing globalisation of a neoliberal economy, the cultural forms that give shape to the relations and entanglements between humans and their environment, including land-use systems, of people 'glocally'[3] have been markedly transformed, often towards the depleting extents of those demonstrated by 'Western'[4] industrial standards. Especially Indigenous Peoples[5] have suffered the consequences of both land theft and cultural oppression, and are still struggling for their cultural and material survival, amidst (forced) adaptation and cultural change, including in their diverse relations to land. Although the Nagas faced British, and then Indian, colonisation,[6] they continued to own their land, which for the most part remained under their own control and wasn't settled by the colonising forces - though marked by (continuous) Indian militarisation. Nevertheless, economic, cultural, religious and educational change, amidst such longterm militarisation of their lands, bringing in roads and new technology, as well as population growth, has transformed local resource use and the (educational) narratives about the world that 'the West' calls 'nature'.[7] Though home to two biodiversity hotspots, the forests have seen increasing depletions by logging, and wildlife has been hunted to a near-extirpation of big mammals (like tigers and elephants) while people speak of a deafening silence having replaced the forest song of a great diversity of avian species - such is observed by local Elders, and stirs concerns at the local level, as well as at national and international levels, as we find ourselves amidst a global extinction of biodiversity.[8] The Community Conservation Areas (CCAs) mushrooming in Nagaland today,[9] are therefore not only locally, but also nationally and internationally applauded,[10] as the degradation of ecosystems is trans-national in its effects and the global discourse around 'sustainability' has gained significant political leverage. Yet, the current thesis proposes an intersection at this point in time, where a prudent question mark is placed on the changing *story* told about 'human/nature' relations, giving shape to local social ecologies of the Nagas. When foreign journalists make headlines about Nagaland that read in celebratory fashion that guns have been replaced by binoculars,[11] a new relationship to nature and wildlife is heralded, which though impressive, necessary and positive in the face of ecosystem degradation, is part of a more complex transformation and scenario. This thesis attempts to meet part of this complexity by considering the cosmological worldview and accompanying relational codes, taboos or ethics that shaped socio-ecological relations 'traditionally',[12] thereby complicating current representations of Nagas as needing to move from an insensible hunting culture to becoming conservationists, by deepening the regard for ways in which 'traditional' hunting and other sustenance practices, as parts of a wider cultural ecology, also constituted relationships of respect to the (sometimes invisible) forces of the world beyond the human. The thesis is thereby a springboard to raising the question of nuance as to what made those cultural systems unsustainable, giving rise to the

current reality of over-exploitation -amidst conservation efforts- as well as what those cultural systems have to offer today in a changed cultural ecological landscape in terms of their pedagogical qualities and values.

To do so, in this thesis I analyse the contemporary literature of renowned Naga author Easterine Kire[13] whose fiction novels narrate the socio-ecological and cultural livelihoods of villagers, basing herself on both folktales, lived experiences that were shared to her - that she refers to as people's stories - and of course her own experience as a Naga and other research she has done into Naga history - primarily of the Tenyimia Nagas, and most prominently of the Angami Nagas.[14] This thesis explores the eco-cultural pedagogy of her narration of Naga lives and stories as a site where the entanglements of human and 'more-than-human' subjectivities[15] -notably relations between humans, wild cats and spirits of the forest- are told from a contemporary Naga perspective.[16] Contemplating the ways in which 'resource use' are represented therein, and can be understood as interdependent interrelationship with a world full of entities assigned with subjecthood, agency and land ownership, who need to be respected, and are thereby managed through the cultural values, rules, ritual and taboo practices that such an understanding gave rise too, Kire's contemporary literary narrations, by being partially rooted in such a traditional[17] non-anthropocentric *cosmology*, give rise to a pedagogical re-construction of a local 'relational epistemology'.[18] Such narrations inform readers both of a past, but potentially also a present or future way of co-existence, rooted in respect and humility in front of the forces of the world. For limits of space, I cannot fully contextualise the importance of such new tellings of older ways or stories by introducing the history and limits of a 'Western' science based *ontology* about nature,[19] and how this plays through in conservation history and contemporary practice, but the theory section will shortly delve into the rich difference of a relational worldview as compared to a 'Western' science one, especially concerning the overcoming of the 'nature-human divide' by returning to a philosophical understanding of humans as part of 'nature', which hosts wildly diverse beings, and by us being deeply entangled in its web of social, material as well as spiritual relationships.

The point here is not to refer simply to stories of the past, or retain simple dichotomies between 'modern' and 'traditional',[20] but instead suggest that remembering the diversity of local eco-cultural livelihoods and stories (also from the past) could inform a present 'pluriversal' glocal pedagogy alongside 'Western' science, which can lead to alternative futures of biocultural diversity. With the help of additional dialogues and interviews, with Easterine Kire and few other relevant Naga stakeholders, I have sought to address the following interrelated sub-questions:

> 1. What kind of socio-ecological values, relations with, rules and use regulation practices vis-a-vis the local environment, i.e. 'the more-than-human world', can be gleaned from Easterine Kire's novels chronicling (Angami, Tenyimia) Naga biocultural livelihoods and spirituality?

2. What is the relevance of such values, as qualitatively different and complementary to 'Western' science informed pedagogies, and in the current context?

To ultimately answer the question:

What is the socio-ecological pedagogical value today of contemporary literary re-tellings of Naga cosmological and practical socio-ecological relations, as found in Easterine Kire's novels?

By that this research delinks itself from the project of 'modernity'[21] and seeks a research praxis in line with Indigenous methodology, aiming for respect, responsible relationship and reciprocity as guiding actitudes in my positionality and methods, with active contemplation on what the research may contribute to locally, ultimately. Both the subject of research and the way of doing research thereby seek to humble the 'Western' hegemonic way of thinking about knowledge. This has been taken up, while navigating the tendency of over-simplification and romanticisation of Indigenous Peoples' socio-ecological systems, spiritualities and knowledges. As the relevance of such cosmological values or relations must be understood vis-a-vis the historical and contemporary context, an introduction to the socio-cultural ecology in Nagaland follows.

1.2 Context

1.2.1 The Naga Areas: Land, Livelihood & Politics

Stretching from the Barail Mountain Range to the Arakan-Yoma Mountain Range, the Nagas[23] inhabit an area that encompasses the North-East Indian states[24] of Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, and Assam, as well as a cross-border region in North-Western Myanmar - notably the Naga Self Administered Zone, and the Sagaing region and Northern Kachin state more generally.[25] Nagalim is the term given for this cultural-political ancestral territory[26] of the Nagas that reaches across state and nation-state borders.[27] Of the many and diverse Naga tribes, this thesis largely revolves around the culture of the (Western) Angami Nagas,[28] part of the wider Tenyimia Naga culture and language group,[29] in Kohima district in the South-West of Nagaland.

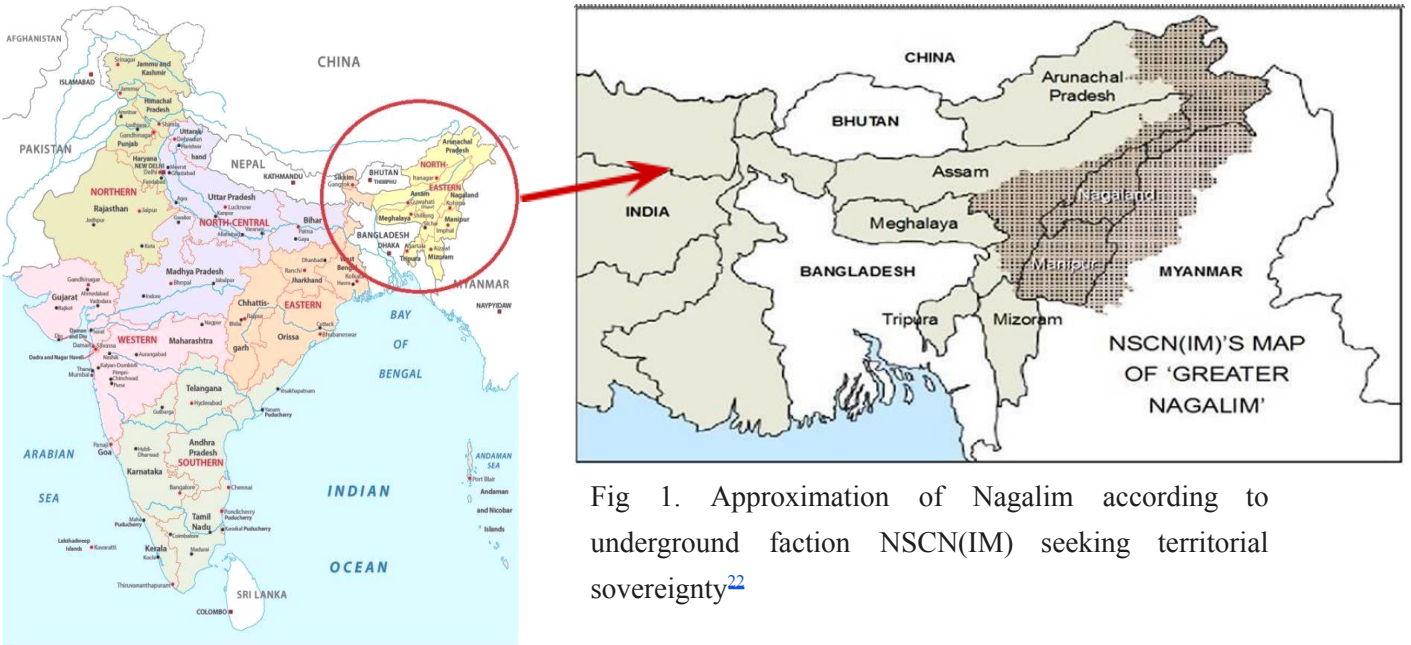

Fig 1. Approximation of Nagalim according to underground faction NSCN(IM) seeking territorial sovereignty[22]

British colonisation (1826 - 1947) came to the region in 1832,[30] quickly followed by the American Baptist missionaries in 1835,[31] though they only moved into the Naga hills from the 1870s and their evangelism did not book much result until the 1930s.[32] The most devastating battle can however be said to have been with India, which claimed sovereignty over the Nagas against their will after declaring independence in 1947, despite the Nagas already having declared their own independence one day earlier.[33] In 1963, Nagaland (see Fig. 2 on this page[34]) was formed as the 16th state of the Indian Union[35] with their own government, the Government of Nagaland (henceforth GoN). It enjoys relatively high degrees of autonomy compared to other Indigenous peoples in India, as enshrined in Art. 371(a) of the Indian Constitution (1999).[36] However, in a subclause 'b)' it is also stated that the Governor of Nagaland will have a final say on matters of law and order, as long as there occur "internal disturbances", as such rendering the execution of such rights somewhat ambiguous. Additionally, the creation of the state of Nagaland implied an administrative split from the Nagas in the other North Eastern states and in Myanmar, thereby dismembering the goal of a united Naga nation. With a population of approximately 1,978,502, with 71.03% living in rural areas, in 2011,[37] Nagaland thereby hosts only about half of the transnational Naga community.[38] Nagaland state is home to seventeen major 'officially' recognised tribes:[39] the Angami, Ao, Chang, Chakhesang, Kachari, Khianmniungan, Konyak, Kuki, Lotha, Phom, Pochury, Rengma, Rongmei, Sangtam, Sumi, Yimchunger, and Zeliang, of which many yet consist of sub-tribes,[40] each with their own local languages or dialects.[41] The official educational language in the state is English, and additionally people speak the common creole language Nagamese.[42] Customary law still takes precedence over Indian and state legislature and jurisprudence in many cases, and roots Naga sovereignty, including over land and natural resources, in local communities' decision making, rather than at the state level, with decisions still being made at the village level, through Village Councils today.[43] A village is further subdivided into different *khels*,[1] which function as familial but also political units uniting several clans; the clan as a familial sub-unit also operates as a political unit, for example by owning land, or today, initiating a conservation area. Furthermore, people are part of age-groups, with which they organise events, do community work, and stay connected for the rest of their lives.

[1] A term that was introduced by British anthropologists from a Pashtun word meaning 'clan ward' (Heneise, personal communication, 2021; see also Heneise, 2019, where it is defined as 'clan family'); defined by Sanyü (2017) as "a formation of several clans in a village" (p. 288)

The Naga areas are part of two (out of 36) globally identified 'biodiversity hotspots' by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN): The Indo-Myanmar and Himalaya biodiversity hotspots.[44] However, many of the forests have been degraded[45] by excessive logging as well as the over-hunting of wildlife,[46] during the last century, and despite conservation efforts, forest cover continues to shrink.[47] Such became increasingly excessive after industrialisation, foreign markets, and more effective technologies such as 'modern' guns,[48] as well as roads built for purposes of war and commerce,[49] entered the Naga hills, along with population growth.[50] Climate change is causing periods of moderate drought[51] and heavier monsoon rains, amidst rising temperatures, which is affecting food security and water run off.[52] This has been aggravated by deforestation, as it inhibits the water catchment and other regulating Ecosystem Services (ES) of forests.[53] The Government of India (henceforth GoI) adopted the Wildlife (Protection) Act in 1972, outlawing the hunting of most wild animals except those classified as 'vermin', and seeking to control poaching and illegal trade. First predominantly oriented at wild animals, and specifically tigers (and other endangered animals), it currently seeks to protect both flora and fauna, and amendments have made the regulations and punishments of wildlife poaching and trade increasingly strict.[54] As partial complement to, and partial balancing act to such prohibitions, The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, in short the Forest Rights Act (FRA) of 2006 (GoI), is supposed to regulate the use of forests for non-forestry purposes and thereby avoid deforestation while protecting the rights of forest dwellers, admitting "historical injustice to the forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers who are integral to the very survival and sustainability of the forest ecosystem" (p. 2). An amendment to the Wildlife Act allotted the Forest Rights Act to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) who detailed a set of rules in 2008.[55] On March 27, 2023 the MoEFCC issued the new 'Forest (Conservation) Amendment Bill',[56] which exempts many areas that previously fell under the protection of the FRA, no longer considering them as 'forest', especially when the land is considered important for national security (such as by international boundaries), thereby decreasing the legal protection of both forests and forest peoples, including in Nagaland.

In Nagaland today, it is said that basically all land (*Mati* [*Nagamese*], or *Kijü* [*Tenyidie*][57]) belongs to someone; most is by now owned individually and passed on to the boys of the family, but it can also belong to a whole family, or communally to a clan or *khel*. 88% of the forests (*Ketsa* [*T*][58]) are communally or privately owned, as opposed to state owned.[59] Much of the owned lands are 'jungle', according to Kia,[60] which may be used for small-scale wood harvest, and may contain a small cabin used only during hunting (*Rühou* [*T*]) trips, but where anyone is allowed to pass through. The knowledge about ownership of lands is passed on orally to the boys of the family - they usually know by certain landmarks, like trees and streams, to whom the land belongs, and sometimes iron wire is used for small indications in the landscape.[61] Not everyone

has land, and it's hard to find any to buy, as there are more and more generations of people to divide the land between, but also because wealth is measured in the amount of land one owns, according to Kia: "if you have land, you don't need to worry about anything."[62] The perceptions and use of land have changed radically from earlier times, now being mostly valued as potential building site, according to Kia, who further opined that "maybe because of that we are losing our own traditional views, […] because we want to adapt, we want to be like the western people, so much that we ourselves are ignoring our own traditional ways".[63] In the past, human land *ownership* wasn't a concept of Naga cultures at all, it seems - it was rather seen that the land belonged to 'master spirits' with whom agreement had to be sought to know whether one could settle in a place, through a ritual pact or *nanyü* [*T*].[64] This gives a first strong indication as to the tight fabric of interrelationships and rules abided by in traditional practices, in the use of what the 'West' would call 'natural resources'; which indeed were rather seen as subjects, with whom relationships and agreements needed to be made, respected and maintained. Ritual constituted an act of communication with the spirits, a form of dialogue with the world, through which potential conflicting needs between several subjects of the land could be mediated.[65]

With regards to subsistence and land-use, most if not all Nagas have traditionally practised a combination of rotary and settled agriculture, hunting, fishing and wild-foraging. Additionally, houses usually have small gardens (*Teizhie* [*T*]) for herbs and plants (*Nha* [*T*]) for daily use, which are mostly tended to by women. People also keep animals, such as the mithun,[66] pigs, cows, fowl and dogs,[67] and some do beekeeping.[68] In some of the Naga areas,[69] rice paddies are made in permanent terraces built into steep hills and down towards the valleys, with sophisticated systems of water irrigation.[70] Areas of land where certain widely used wild plants -such as thatching grass- grows, were communally owned and protected against damage, as village or clan land.[71] Also woods, including of bamboo, would be preserved near the village, and were highly valued, though in the time of Hutton's ethnography (1921) already as private property.[72] Fields or cleared lands — *kheti* [*N*] or *tekhou* [*T*] — are dedicated to the main agricultural practice of *Jhum:* shifting, rotary, slash-and-burn cultivation, which entails the cutting and burning of trees and plants on an area of land to be cultivated until the nutritional value is depleted, after which it would be 'given back to the jungle' for up to 30 years to regain its fertility. The land is cultivated in rotary cycles with a high diversity of crops,[73] and in the fallow period Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) is collected,[74] culminating in 90% of total agricultural production according to the Nagaland State Action Plan on Climate Change (2012). Hutton furthermore mentions the practice of pollarding[75] among the Angami to reduce deforestation, so that their jhum fields retain some vegetation of alder trees, which keep nitrogen and moisture in the soil, as well as continue to provide wood to be used as firewood, or for fencing off fields, in three year cycles.[76] As land has become more scarce and divided up alongside population growth, the in-between fallow periods of jhum cultivation have however

become increasingly shorter (about 5 years), and the practice is widely regarded as unsustainable and criticised for causing deforestation, CO2 emissions, and top soil erosion.[77] In replacement of jhum, people often shift to small orchards of orange and cherry trees, mixed horticulture, building terraced gardens, and 'cash cropping' monocultures. Switching to cash crops however comes with an inevitable loss of biological and seed (genome) diversity, and might additionally lead to a disconnect from cultural wellbeing.[78] Such loss of crop diversity is furthermore detrimental to the agricultural resilience of communities in the face of climate change, as it increases the risk of failing crops, and increases dependencies on imported goods. As such, the traditional jhum, especially when combined with Alder tree cultivation (*Alnus Nepalensis*) which restores soil fertility,[79] is by others argued to constitute a more climate change resilient and mitigative farming practice, best suited to the tropics, that maintains a higher agricultural biodiversity and the associated Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) of seeds, crops, medicinal plants, and the NTFP harvested during fallow periods; knowledges held and practised specifically by women.[80] The threats and realities of climate change have also brought about greater recognition of the value of traditional food crops and their benefits, such as traditional rice varieties[81] that can withstand higher temperatures and lack of water, and traditional millet varieties, which can be stored for a long time, and offer diverse pest resistances and grow well during droughts, and there are projects underway to re-activate such agricultural practices.

The importance of hunting is not limited to food and medicine provision; it has been a central element of many diverse Naga cultures. The pride related to hunting achievements can still be seen in the collections of skulls hanging on houses, and the tattoos that warriors and hunters in some Naga tribes carry. Hunting came with a deep and intimate knowledge about, and relations to, the wild animals and the forest, as well as encounters with spirits, as are expressed through hunting tales.[82] It was thereby bound by, and immersed into, a network of taboos and social relations with the manifold beings of the forest as well as of the village. However, the practice of hunting has changed considerably - from collective chases[83] and traditional traps[84] to the use of (increasingly effective) guns, and batteries for fishing.[85] Nowadays hunting has become more of an individual practice, which is also done for leisure and notably for commercial incentives, and is not as necessary anymore for food provision as it once was,[86] although people do still hunt for food.[87] An increasing awareness about overhunting and threatened species makes that hunting is looked upon with increasing negativity, by both outsiders and insiders. Overhunting is therefore currently counteracted by the grassroots community conservation projects, which often seek ecotourism as an alternative source of livelihood.

Nagaland has 3 officially state-protected areas, the Intanki National Park[88] and the Singphan and Fakim Wildlife Sanctuaries, and a third of Nagaland's villages seems to have created a Community Conservation Area (CCA).[89] The earliest records of CCAs in the Naga Areas go back to the early 1800s, while creating CCAs popularised after the 1980s.[94] The

documentation of CCAs throughout Nagaland organised by the Forestry & Biodiversity Group of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)[95] in 2015,[96] reported as the most common motivation for the creation of the 407 CCAs they found,[97] the degradation of forests (319), followed by decline of key wildlife species (265), excessive hunting (234), and (in result), loss of livelihood opportunities (231). Water scarcity was also often mentioned (220).[98] In 2014, the Nagaland Community Conservation Areas Forum was established as a common platform uniting 22 CCAs across Nagaland.[99] The CCAs are in most cases (84%) initiated by the community, as opposed to the Forest Department,[100] with the majority of land belonging to clans (72% of the CCAs), private individuals (56% of the CCAs), and 31% community land (plots that belong to village councils).[101] 311 of the 407 CCAs were declared through a resolution in the village council or tribal *Hohos*, while the others were of a more informal kind. The amount of use allowed in the CCAs range from complete hunting bans, seasonal hunting bans, bans to certain methods of hunting, burning of forests, or bans on general harvesting from the forest including timber and NTFP.[102] This however also affects the sustenance practices of the villagers, leading to declined food provisions or income, including because of increased risk of crop damage by wildlife. While the CCAs offer new livelihood options to some, as patrollers or tourist guides,[103] 81% of CCAs indicated that providing alternative livelihoods is an issue.[104] If this is not attended to - by financially rewarding conservation efforts while balancing sustenance practices with conservation - this could mean a massive turn away from conservation on the long run. It is interesting that the CCAs are simultaneously (presented as) spaces of continuity with older values and 'traditional conservation practices'[90] and as new interventions, aimed at moving away from (over-)hunting as well as from (excessive) logging.[91] While mention is often made of 'traditional conservation practices' without going much into detail,[92] a 'Western' science (educational) discourse is prominent. Thereby new narratives teaching new relations to the land manifest the CCAs as sites of change -away from current overexploitation- while the CCAs meanwhile seem to potentially stir the remembrance of older traditional practices.[93] Some traditional resource use practices, such as Khonoma's practice of pollarding alder trees,[105] for example show that resource use and conservation ethics do not need to exist in conflicting opposition.

1.2.2 Cultural Change: Beliefs

Pre-Christian Tenyimia Naga cosmology and spirituality,[106] which is often referred to as 'the old religion,'[107] has often been classified as animist, but this classification (and essentialization under a terminology) has also been critiqued. For one, because most Naga tribes believe in a type of Supreme Creator[108] - *Ukepenuopfü* / *Kepenuopfü*[109] for Angamis, which literally means 'birth mother' or 'birth spirit'[110] - though characteristics of such a supreme creator differ.[111] Arkotong furthermore mentions that in some local church circles, the term 'animism' may still conjure up pejorative connotations from colonial and missionary times (2018: p. 484).[112]

Totemism, unlike animism, is considered to be absent among the Angami and Naga tribes at large, according to Hutton (1921: 390-1). He nevertheless states that some clans seem to have (had) at least some totemistic 'ideas' and relates several stories of descent from some animal or plant and corresponding food taboos.[113] As such, it seems that classification would rather limit the acknowledgement of the old belief systems, than help it. It can nevertheless be said that 'the old religion' does contain many elements that would fall under what many consider 'animist', specifically that both biotic and 'abiotic' elements of 'nature', are 'animated' with souls, life, and agency. This is for example expressed through the Angami concept of '*ruopfü*',[114] roughly translating to spirit or soul, which is believed to inhabit the various elements of 'the more than-human-world,' such as animals, rivers, stones, trees, forests or mountains, but can also be used to refer to one's own spirit or soul, the spirits of deceased people,[115] and of ancestors.[116] According to Heneise (2019), it is hard to fully distinguish in which cases non-human *ruopfü* differ from the many differently natured lower deities *Terhuomia*,[117] who can take various forms (from spirits to fairy-like beings or dwarves) and inhabit specific sites or entities (such as rivers, stones or parts of forests). These are perhaps predominantly considered to be ambivalent towards humans, but both malevolent and benevolent *Terhuomia* exist and influence people's day-to-day realities. Hutton (1921: 182-183) and Heneise (2019: 13) list several *terhuomia* from the Angami context which have been recognised for specific deeds or characters, such as the evil *Rutzeh* (blamed as the cause of sudden deaths), *Telepfü* (who kidnaps people[118]), *Miewenuo* or *Maweno* (who is the source of blessings regarding good crops or livestock[119]), *Ayepi* (who is regarded as a type of fairy that brings prosperity to the home of people she lives in[120]), *Tsükho* and *Dzürawü,* or *Chükhieo*[121] (the guardian(s) of wild animals that take the shape of a type of dwarf, who withholds and grants hunting success), *Tekhu-rho* (the 'master spirit' of tigers and leopards, who avenges their deaths, and is as such a fearsome force[122]), *Kechi-ke-rho* (the 'master spirit' of stones[123]) and *Metsimo* (the guardian of the entrance to paradise upon death). Many other and different terhuomia will exist or have existed in other tribes,[124] and their scope and names may vary even between villages of the same tribe.[125]

By the understanding of ruopfü as a mobile entity with agency, people's own souls could also choose to leave the body - or be lured away from their bodies and trapped by a malevolent spirit or terhuomia.[126] Additionally, this explains the therianthropic[127] abilities in dreamtime shown by *Tekhumiavi* [*T*]:[128] people that 'turn into tigers,' as their soul embodies a specific tiger or leopard to which it is bound, while the human host-body sleeps.[129] This phenomenon is well recorded in Nagaland - though increasingly met with disbelief.[130] The tiger holds a specifically important place in various Naga cosmologies, just as it holds a specific position of power as apex-predator in the Naga inhabited ecologies. The creation story of the Angami namely narrates that the supreme deity, *Kepenuopfü,* was an ancestral mother whose three sons were the brothers Man (*Themia)*, Spirit (*Ruopfü*) and Tiger (*Theku)*, so that tiger is seen as an elder brother; other

Naga tribes' creation stories follow similar lines, though other apex predators such as pythons or bears may be added or take the dominant position among specific tribes.[131]

A complex system of rituals, prohibitions, and etiquette assured the respectful conduct of the villagers so that Terhuomia and other spirits would not be angered, or would be appeased, in the form of acts of gratitude or reciprocity such as animal sacrifices (to assure a good harvest for example), communal no-work days *penyü* (in which for example cultivation practices or other forms of land use needed to stop), and food taboos, as such preventing spirit attacks (for example the revenge of hunted animals), illnesses and other forms of misfortune.[132] Several divining practices - notably through dreams, but also with the help of fire sticks, the *chiese* plant, stones, or based on bird calls - furthermore take a prominent place in a spirit inhabited world whose manifold forces need to be apprehended to be mediated.[135] The sacrifice of chickens was for example done to divine good or bad omens, by looking at the way the legs crossed over each other,[133] or by pulling out the intestines (depending whether it came out intact or ruptured).[134] Besides those with therianthropic abilities, there are or were several other characters within communities with special abilities,[136] among the Angami ranging from: healers, seers and those specialised in dreaming[137] to read omens, divine the future or to communicate with spirits; such as women that do so from a trance state, *terhope*;[138] and specifically *themuma,* the Angami medicinal and ritual leader, whose services would be consulted for the more serious events such as droughts or heavy illnesses, mediating the forces of *terhuomia*.[139] Currently, however, many of such practices or abilities have become taboo and need to be concealed from the church, with the *themuma* therefore having stopped practising openly from the 1930s onwards.[140]

'The agricultural and livelihood 'calendar', as it moved from seasons for sowing or planting paddy to harvest, was furthermore organised through various detailed ritual observances, ceremonies or celebrations (often following the lunar calendar) - that Hutton (1921) at large referred to as 'genna' practices,[141] and that are now often called festivals - to prevent agricultural catastrophes such as flood, drought or pests, bless the crops and give thanks to the spirits.According to Methaheto Chase from Khonoma (2017),[143] among the most important 'festivals' of the Angami Nagas are *Sekrenyi*, a purification festival in february or march;[144] *Ngonyi*, which Chase refers to as a hunting festival, but Hutton (1921: 196-8) as the beginning of the agricultural operations, specifically with regards to the sowing of the *jhum* lands, in April; *Tekranyi*, which is celebrated at the start of the paddy cultivation season, as the transplantation of paddy begins, and in which the spirits are asked for rain[145] (which also marks the moment in which unmarried youth or childless married couples will dance, as such constituting a ritual for fertility at large), in June; and *Terhumyi*, meaning 'spirit feast', which is celebrated during the harvest, to give thanks to the spirits and specifically spirit Zisō.[146] Hutton furthermore mentioned recurring 'genna' practices like *Thezukepu,* to preserve the rice crop from mice and rats;[147] *Likwengi, the* 'bird' or 'field scaring' genna at the beginning of the millet harvest; *Thewüukukwü*,

meaning "giving the toad his share" related to a folkstory;[148] *Titho*, 'sky-ceremony,' which seeks to prevent hailstorm from damaging the crop;[149] *Lideh*, marking the start of the rice harvest in November; and *Tekedeh,* in December, which celebrates the completion of the harvest.[150] Mawon however observes with regards to the Hao Naga[151] that many festivals are no longer observed or have changed, indicating "Christianisation and assimilation with the western culture [as] major factors responsible" (2017: 180). Today Naga festivals may also be informed by socio-economic incentives to attract tourists, and sometimes play on essentializing 'exotic' images of the Nagas.[152] However, within a context of converging discourses on ecological sustainability, some are currently also celebrated in the media for their sustainability of materials used,[153] or become avenues through which traditional ecological practices can be explained to wider audiences, and thus preserved or revitalised.[154]

Although there are some that still overtly follow 'the old religion' - as reflected by the 'All Nagaland Indigenous Faith Council'[155]- Nagaland became one of few areas in India that is home to a majority of Christians.[156] This was brought about primarily by the American Baptist missionaries, though different denominations within the Christian faith exist in Nagaland.[157] Material culture of traditional crafts and ritual practices changed considerably during the first conversion periods (amidst other cultural oppressions[158]), following demonisation of such by missionaries in the name of Christ.[159] Amidst the great turbulences of the late 1950s, when the Indian army was militarising the Naga areas, a big Christian Revival occurred, which apart from spiritual reasons may be understood as linked to political resistance, as a united Naga nationalism was increasingly expressed through the shared religion of Christianity.[160] The Revival came with a renewed incorporation of pre-Christian practices,[161] and since the 1980s cultural revivalism gained prominence, so that some of the cultural practices and signifiers that were in the beginning demonised, have since been reclaimed.[162] As today pre-Christian beliefs are interwoven with Christianity as equal aspects of Naga identity and culture, the two religions are nowadays often regarded as similar or complementary, according to Kire. In our conversation she therefore speaks of a 'natvised Christianity.'[163] Stories about *Tekhumiavi* and *Terhuomia* and *ruopfü* indeed seem to remain common today,[164] at least in rural areas, yet some are still 'taboo' or demonised under Christian influence,[165] and especially in more strict denominations.

1.2.3 Cultural Change: Knowledges & Pedagogies

The entrance of the American Baptist missionaries into the Naga areas in the late 1800s also meant the creation of mission schools.[166] Such came to replace older pedagogical institutes, such as the *Morung* - bachelor houses or boys' dormitories[167] - where storytelling pedagogy was practised.[169] Also the (more inclusive) pedagogical space of the Hearth, as the heart of the domestic sphere,[170] or experiential learning in the field, suffered from this take-over by 'formal' education. In order to translate the Bible and Christian hymns, missionaries however also

contributed to some form of preservation of (standardised versions of) oral Indigenous Naga languages, by introducing the roman script and transcribing various oral languages. Although such education also became somewhat of a factor in stirring political self realisation, giving rise to the Naga independency movement, Kikon describes the colonial inbring of education as:

> "a way [...] by which the colonial rulers also gained more power and legitimacy [...] where western power was equated with knowledge while the already existing system of [knowledge and education] was seen as "barbaric" and "inferior" (since it was) characterised by the prevalence of "superstition" and "myth"." (Kikon, 2003: p. 237)

Such denigrating glance existed outside of the school system as well and is prevalent in colonial accounts about Naga tribes. Building on Thong (2012), Wilkinson (2017)[171] discusses the construction of an idea of 'Naga manhood', through internalisation of descriptions as 'barbaric' or 'primitive' and colonial representations (and naming) of 'headhunting', as something that has come to inform Naga self-identity and 'self-alienation'. As formal educational centres play(ed) central roles in cultural assimilation and 'mind colonisation' of Indigenous societies the world over, as the institutional manifestations of what is considered 'civilised culture',[172] and as Nagas continue to face cultural discrimination from India,[173] educational narratives are pivotal areas of research. Linking the presence of the GoI and its military in the Naga areas to its educational policy, Kikon (2003) demonstrates the political power residing in education curricula also in India-administered Nagaland, especially as it pertains to erasing knowledge about the history of the Naga struggles for independence and self-determination, with education curricula oriented at 'nation building' of one unified India.[175] According to Kikon the standardised syllabus "'recolonised' the Naga mind, to an extent where the Nagas have lost the ability to construct their own past objectively and critically. This has resulted in misinterpretation and misappropriation of the Naga indigenous knowledge and perspectives" (2003: 241). As such people are educated to become accomplices of cultural assimilation and the system of political domination (Ibid.). Kikon's observation that the education system's content has a huge discrepancy with the reality that surrounds Nagas,[177] was confirmed to me by *Kia* regarding her schooling experience (2020):

> "[...] We are so focused on this book knowledge, that we don't know what is happening around the world, we don't know what happens around us, we study only the one that is in the book, like, we have to memorise that. [...] Now, [only] after I graduate, I start slowly learning what is happening around me to be honest, because we are only focused on this bookish knowledge"
>
> > "So the books also don't really talk about your own reality, like, it is not really representative?"
>
> "No, we are only studying about [...] past Indian stories, you know, the history […]"
>
> > "So you don't even learn about Naga history?"
>
> "Not at all. When I was in class 10 or something, there was one small book about the Nagas. They started to promote that book, but I think it didn't work. We were the first class to study that book, and then it was gone. […] we didn't even have time, we didn't go through the textbook" […] "we don't know nothing about our own culture, because we only study about the Indian culture, and we don't promote any of Naga culture. Even we Nagas ourselves, we don't know anything about our own culture, which is really sad."

When asking Elder Niketu Iralu in our conversation (2021) about his opinion on the current education system, he also stated that "education is in real crisis because it's very shallow at the moment." After quoting George Orwell's[179] "'the most effective way to destroy a people, is to eradicate and destroy their own understanding of their history,'" he expressed with regards to Naga society and their struggle that "in the future, the question of who are we, will come up again and again." Author Easterine Kire also explained in our conversation (2021) that the loss of such knowledges that are contained in oral storytelling is in part to blame to the educationists that did and do not value storytelling as pedagogy and stories as sources of knowledge, and partially due to the current educational infrastructure. She also added that parents might be too busy in this day and age to tell stories, and that the pedagogical space of the home is losing ground as children often move to attend primary schools in other towns; thereby no longer spending evenings times with family around the hearth where such stories would have otherwise been shared. As such, the formal educational infrastructure has taken over traditional and informal educational infrastructures, just as oral pedagogies have lost ground to textual pedagogies. Discussions about the education system and what it lacks are especially pertinent now that the Elders - that have still grown up with oral storytelling as the dominant form of pedagogy[182] and other traditional practices - are reaching such old age that they are 'dying out'. With younger generations no longer knowing all the stories, this threatens cultural survival. This has been iterated and responded to by story-collectors publishing such stories in books. In *People Stories: Volume One* (2016) by the Naga Heritage Centre (NHC), it is indicated that NHC "has been formed with the intent of preserving, revitalising, safeguarding, promoting and increasing awareness of Naga Heritage through various means" (p. 1) in response to "the stark reality of a dying generation of "professional storytellers" [...] taking with them the bulk of information vital for our cultural survival, as well as our survival as a people" (2016: p. 1-2).[183]

Besides the NHC, there are several other projects on their way in Nagaland that are oriented at a revitalisation of Naga cultural heritage. The State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) in Nagaland[184] has developed a series of videos that detail elements of Naga cultural heritage.[185] A revaluation of Indigenous Ecological Knowledges (IEK) is gaining ground, especially amidst the concern that such knowledges are dying with the Elders that carry them. TERI (2017) is for example producing People's Biodiversity registers in which knowledge about biodiversity is presented in relation to local culture and livelihood, while political, economical and cultural change are taken into account as affecting biodiversity, and in which the importance of place-based education is reflected. Some NGO interventions, like North East Network (NEN)'s in Chizami, seek recursions to traditional knowledges and practices, such as by reviving the arts of weaving for sustainable livelihoods and women's emancipation,[187] while some bring in new educational narratives and methodologies, including visual storytelling, such as The Green Hub project.[188] Education and cultural heritage revitalisation also takes place through

arts[189] and online.[190] The increasing attention for cultural revivalism is especially *visible* in the yearly Hornbill festival,[191] where different Naga tribes gather to demonstrate traditional dress, dances, songs and crafts like weaving of cloths and baskets. Such demonstrations of culture function to reclaim pride and stimulate awareness about Naga cultures, but are also contested, as they are much oriented at tourism, and constitute a kind of commodification of the visible and performative part of Naga cultural heritage.[192] Simultaneously it is a platform within the political process of gaining recognition as 'Indigenous Peoples', and the rights to self-determination that pertain to it.[194] Cultural heritage, and 'traditional' culture, knowledges and practices, as much as biological heritage, through buzzwords like sustainability and ideals of 'eco-indigenism,' and the eco- and ethno-tourisms that accompany them both, are thus embedded within complex layers of political-economic and educational oppression, adaptations, and resilience, as they constitute sources of self-identity and address both cultural and natural heritage loss, while seemingly also giving way to commercialisation. It is my question whether the revitalisation of culture in the form of storytelling pedagogies and the content of myths, as done by Kire's novels, could simultaneously also further the revitalisation of biodiversity, by reminding an older 'environmental ethic' which prevents 'Western' modes of over-exploitation and of seeing 'nature' as separate from humans, through narrating a relational worldview of a reciprocal co-existence with more-than-human subjects that need to be respected.

1.3 Thesis Outline

Having introduced the biocultural, religious and historical-political layers of context within which Kire's works and its value must be understood, especially perhaps as it relates to the implications of the current education system, ch. 2 will address my methodology. I will position this work in the Indigenous Research Paradigm, outline my methodological process, and introduce you to my data sources and resulting methods: from the analysis of Kire's books, to few dialogical interviews, of which data is spread across the thesis to offer context and discussion. Continuing with a literature review in ch. 3, I provide the theoretical basis for the acknowledgement of Indigenous cosmologies as important alternatives to 'Western' hegemonic 'nature' thinking, and dialectics between these different epistemes. In ch. 4 themes and excerpts from Kire's literary storytelling will be presented as data of contemporary iterations of a Tenyimia cosmology, and IEK shared therein. The meeting of the 'old religion' with Christianity, as well as between pedagogical systems in her work will be addressed specifically in ch. 4.5. Ch. 5 dialectically discusses the data and the relevance of such contemporary relational storytelling for conservation and environmental education today, with help of the interview dialogues with local actors as well as by linking back to the theory section. Ch. 6 offers a summary, suggestions for policy, and outlines the limitations of this thesis with suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2. Methodology

2.1 The Loom: Indigenous Research Paradigm & The Covid Pandemic

> "If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." - Lilla Watson, 1985[196]

Learning about guiding principles of Indigenous Methodology like *relationality*, *reciprocity*, *respect,* and *responsible accountability* in my MA program organised by the Centre for Sámi Studies (SESAM), and through scholars such as Kuokkanen (2000), Wilson (2008), Kovach (2009), Chilisa (2012) and Smith (2012), it has remained an active learning journey to see how Indigenous methodological thinking can be applied, and how research can be decolonised, especially as a non-indigenous student. The statement of Lilla Watson guided me in navigating the complexity that comes with doing research as a non-indigenous scholar within the Indigenous research paradigm.[197] It made me understand that it is not my position as a scholar of Indigenous studies, but rather my position as human within the context of global crises[198] - along with critical (re-humanising) engagements of self-reflexivity and humility - that give me accountability, rather than legitimacy, to speak to issues of concern that relate to the struggles for epistemic diversity as part of the struggles for Indigenous self-determination and, so I argue, glocal biocultural diversity restoration. From my 'Western' position, I have found that diverse ways of seeing, knowing, and engaging with the world, are what 'we' as 'planetary citizens' need, to rethink the causes and solutions to the current and impending 'ecological crises' which are really socio-economic and cultural crises of a loss of understanding of value. As such, my liberation is tied up with theirs, with the diverse struggles towards cultural and territorial rights, that retain or reclaim the freedom of the periphery to be its own centre; to revalue what it means to be 'different' than any hegemonic mainstream, and thereby to liberate the possibility of self-determining old and new ways of living well and sustainably. As such this thesis is focused on "different ways of knowing and theorising [...], [while] challenging and deconstructing dominant values, world view and knowledge systems" (Kuokkanen, 2000: 414). Audre Lorde's 'The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle The Master's House' (1984) applies to intersectional social justice struggles, but generally makes us consider the deeper structure upon which inequality is built; namely the ontology, a way of seeing the world, which gives rise to engagements with it. To create just, decolonial societies, we therefore need to decolonise our perceptions of what constitutes knowledge, and who is considered authoritative on determining what are the conditions of validity of knowledge.[199] This would allow for the building of healthier relations between 'Western knowledges' and 'Indigenous knowledges'.[200] To recreate ethical and sustainable societies, we need to unlearn the conceptualisation of humans as separate from and dominant over an external 'nature', and decolonising epistemes is a part of that process; not only in academia, but also in local education systems and practical interventions such as nature-management practices, to re-establish safe havens of *biocultural* and therefore epistemic

diversity. Such entails pragmatic information about e.g. ecological functions of organisms, seasonal patterns and medicinal uses of plants, but also of the sense of self-identity, spiritual relationship with, and moral responsibility to the world one is related to. Safe havens in which the ecological community is again listened to as constituting a knowledge bearer itself- towards a sense of humble shared subjecthood and social relationships with the 'more-than-human' world. It is this philosophical, spiritual, and normative dimension of Indigenous conceptualisations of, and engagements with the land and its many subjects that this thesis wishes to contemplate as living alternatives to the equally philosophically and culturally informed, and normative dimensions of -equally important- Western approaches to 'nature', that increasingly replace those older, locally rooted systems of 'resource management' or, management of socio-ecological relations. Seeking to find decolonised *relational, reciprocal, respectful*, and *responsible* relationships is therefore both at the heart of my contemplation on research methods, and of my inquiry into different ways of living with the world. As part of an epistemologically decolonising project, going beyond the secular by acknowledging the knowledges derived from, or expressed through spiritual stories and encounters, and highlighting the social relations involved and produced in folktale based knowledge production and sharing, with an emphasis on community-values, the thesis seeks to overcome the tendency of postcolonial research to remain rooted in the Western tradition (Chilisa, 2012, p. 49; Grande, 2000).

At the outset of this project I wished to root my methods in a multispecies ethnographic approach, with long term collaborative fieldwork and an epistemological emphasis on embodied and place-based knowing through the diverse senses. The Covid-19 pandemic imposed distant research methods and in many ways limited and characterised my entry into contact and relationship with the places, people and other subjects in Nagaland, affecting the data I was able to obtain, and making it hard to organise my research as a partnership collaboration as suggested by Smith (2012). I chose (pre-covid) to focus my master research in Nagaland, because it was the first space I felt invited to, by the then director of The Highland Institute (THI), Dr. Michael Heneise,[201] who also teaches at my university and subsequently became my supervisor.[202] When the pandemic hit in March 2020, planning activities for fieldwork and engagements through THI in Kohima were put on hold, and instead I started studying Nagamese,[203] and some words related to human/nature relations in Tenyidie, spoken by the Western Angami as part of the Tenyimia language group, for several months in 2020 through online video calls.[204] This served as my starting point of building a connection to Nagaland, not only through the understanding of culture that comes through the language, but also by bonding with my teacher, Rhovitone Yhome (Fifi).[205] In addition I had nearly weekly meetings with an anonymised associate of THI *Kia*, with whom I developed friendly relations to the extent that the sharings about life and culture became a truly reciprocal exchange of curiosity.[206] Both allowed me to build relationships to people and place,[207] while deepening my understanding of the layers of current practical everyday reality in

Nagaland that one cannot find easily represented in books. When it finally became clear that fieldwork was not happening, I had to officially relocate my research 'field' to the *narratives about place*, entering the Naga hills, forests and villages through author Easterine Kire's lyrical narrations, travelling by her books through different landscapes, times and spiritual dimensions to place, as seen through the eyes of a local.

2.2 The Yarn: Introducing the Sources of Data

2.2.1 Easterine Kire's Novels

The fiction novels by Angami Naga author Easterine Kire,[208] based largely on real lived experiences and in some cases folk stories, though written in the format of fiction,[209] have been chosen and used as a source of emic ethnographic narrations and ethnophilosophy,[210] written from a Naga perspective. Easterine Kire is the first Naga author to have published in English,[211] and is widely known and respected as an authority in Naga literature, with an extensive repertoire of books. Offering a remembrance and local perspective on Naga life and culture beyond and amidst the conflicts that shaped Naga's recent history, Kire indicates about her books that she hopes "readers would accept them simply as chronicles of Naga life."[212] The status of her authorship in Nagaland, India and abroad,[213] and most of all, the content and themes of her books, informed my decision to choose her books as main source material. I have read 7 of her books: *The Windhover Collection* (2001), *A Terrible Matriarchy* (2007), *Forest Song* (2011), *When the River Sleeps* (2014), *Son of the Thundercloud* (2016), *Don't Run, My Love* (2017), and *Sky is My Father: A Naga Village Remembered* (2018 [2003]).[214] *The Windhover Collection* (2001) and *Forest Song* (2011) are collections of short stories and poems based on folkstories and real lived people stories,[215] and *When the River Sleeps* (2014) is based on a hunting tale which Kire heard of a hunter friend, of which Kire furthermore said that it "is the geography of the Naga forest" though complemented with imaginative narration.[216] *Sky is My Father: A Naga Village Remembered* (2018 [2003]) is one of Kire's dedicatedly historical books,[217] as well as *A Terrible Matriarchy* (2007),[218] while *Son of the Thundercloud* (2016)[219] and *Don't Run, My Love* (2017)[220] are allegorical novels. Yet all books contain true, (self-)ethnographic reflections of Naga village life, spiritual beliefs, socio-ecological landscapes, gender relations, governance structures and political history, that takes 'the real' of Naga culture, history or a specific legend or people story as a starting point to expand imaginatively from.[221] Regarding writing historical content she stated in an interview with Longkumer & Menon (2019) that: "I felt the need to chronicle history – all that the people have gone through, historical events that shaped the community and produced the socio-cultural changes that we see now in place – and I feel I have done that." (p. 8) Although she explores the customs and geographies of various tribes in Nagaland, a majority of the stories and experiences she based her work on originate from her own tribe and area of origin, the Western Angami regions around Kohima and Khonoma. Kia for example also informed me[222]

that Kire has lived next to Kia's grandmother's sister, who would share many of the old stories of the Western-Angami area with her. This further confirms that even though Easterine's books are classified as fiction, they are based on oral folktales, beliefs and every-day narratives of lived experiences, that Kire refers to as 'people stories'. Like oral storytelling carries the function of passing on knowledge about cultural practices, history, values and lessons of morals and respect to both the natural and supernatural world, while being simultaneously entertaining, Kire's books pick up on the content and function of such storytelling, and though clearly different by being written instead of oral and in English, partially on the form.[224] Through the stories we will be further introduced to the Tenyimia Naga world "wherein human beings co-inhabit the world alongside other people, some of whom may not be human" (Heneise, 2016: 97).

2.2.2 Interview Participants Sample, FPIC and Interview Method

Through open-ended, semi-structured interviews that I will cite as dialogues (in case of repeated informal interactions), dialogue/interview's (in case of single meetings with an open character, sometimes also simply referred to as a conversation), or interview (when the conversation, though unintended, took a more formal form) respectively, with a selected sample of individuals, I have gathered data that allowed me to gain deeper understanding of the context of contemporary Naga society, the current conservation movement as a site of 'nature narratives', and the texts studied, and allowed me to dialectically discuss my research questions with local actors. I have sought to centre dialogue in all my interviews and additionally made a point of asking and inviting each one I have engaged with to share with me any critical feedback on my (approach to the) topic or questions, asking if they might have questions or suggestions regarding my research questions, methods, assumptions or project at large. In total I have spoken one-on-one with four informants,[225] and the conversations usually lasted between 1 to 2 hours, though without imposed duration, letting the dialogue run its course. Except for the dialogue/interview with Easterine Kire, all conversations happened online through video calls. The sample came about mostly through recommendation of my supervisor Dr. Michael Heneise, co-founder and at the time leader of the Highland Institute in Kohima, Nagaland. Initial conversations were with a woman in her late 20s from Kohima district, anonymised as *Kia,* with whom I met nearly weekly for a period of 2.5 months during the latter half of 2020. After reading the novels and deciding they would become central to my analysis amidst the Covid pandemic, I have spoken with the aforementioned author and Dr. Easterine Kire, who I could meet in person in Tromsø in 2021.[226] Upon my supervisor's recommendation, I then spoke with Niketu Iralu in 2021, a respected Elder from Khonoma, who as nephew of Zapu Phizo that spearheaded the Naga Independence movement, worked actively locally, regionally and internationally, towards pan-Naga conflict resolution and peace-building,[227] and who was also present in that capacity in Khonoma, leading up to the creation of the local CCA, the Khonoma Nature Conservation and

Tragopan Sanctuary (KNCTS).[228] Lastly, I spoke with the current Chairman of the KNCTS, Kezhasorie Meyase,[229] with whom the meeting was organised in collaboration with The Highland Institute[230] in 2022. Before an interview/dialogue would take place, explicit Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) was assured by sending a consent form, which detailed participants' rights of withdrawal, the topic and scope of the research and conversation, asked whether participants wanted to be anonymised or if they wanted their names included, and in which permission was asked to record the conversation for transcription. An indicative interview guide was also sent in case the participants wanted to gauge what kind of questions I might be asking, before accepting the invitation.[231] The interview guides were however followed quite loosely, allowing the conversation to run its course. Of course the interview space remains a charged interaction, as participants may feel they need to answer what they think is expected of them,[232] especially as the researcher speaks from a linkage to an established institute and therefore a position of power.[233] In each conversation I have explicitly sought to undo such a power dynamic by verbally communicating my wish to be confronted on anything that my conversation partners might disagree with, and wrong assumptions I might be entertaining.[234]

2.3 Weaving: Analysis

2.3.1 Text & Discourse

My analysis of text and discourse[235] was informed by Boréus & Bergström (Eds.)'s understanding of texts as 'crucial artefacts' of social phenomena, which "mirror conscious ideas as well as unconscious ones. They might reproduce, strengthen or challenge power and they also do myriads of other things in social settings." (2017: 4) They conceive the functions of text to be first ideational, and second interpersonal, as social inter-action, thereby stirring both thoughts and action; which brings about questions related to the background of the text producers, and the audience and context for which it was written (Ibid.: 5). Kire's fiction novels describe Naga lifeworlds and experiences -ranging from historical events, sustenance practices, cultural concepts and institutions, beliefs and spiritual encounters- from a Naga perspective, thereby imparting information about (predominantly Tenyimia) Naga culture, history and society (ideational/content aspect). She does this through an enjoyably readable fiction novel format, with the potential result that her foreign and Indian readers may learn about and come to understand Naga society, and her Naga audience may recognise, remember, preserve, revitalise and reconstruct accounts of Naga history, cultural heritage and self-identity (interpersonal aspect). Of Boréus & Bergström's (Eds.) (2017) four strategies of text interpretation, I have partially pursued the producer-oriented strategy, which seeks to find out more or less what the author meant the text to mean, for which they mention that one needs to consider the surrounding textual corpus of the author(s) (1), as well as relevant text by other authors (2) (p. 16). With regards to Kire's books, this was done by reading various of her books, interviewing Kire about

the books read, and reading other interviews conducted with her (1), as well as looking into other scholars' interpretations of her work, and reading it alongside other works that are based on folkstories, or narrate the life-worlds of the Tenyimia Nagas (2). The second, entangled interpretation strategy applied is a *discourse*-oriented strategy.[239] Such focuses on the wider social practices and context of which certain texts or language use are part, by which they are informed, and to which they contribute. Text is thereby linked to practical societal action as well as other texts, as a manifestation of a wider discourse (Ibid.: p .6). For both interpretation strategies, the context in and for which the author produced the text, and such a larger discourse developed, must be understood. This predominantly means the context of Nagaland, especially of education and spirituality, that I already introduced, but thereby also the context of the currently incoming, influencing and contrasting (educational) narratives of the globalised 'Western' discourse about 'nature', what constitutes 'valid' knowledge, and the axes of power of 'modernity/coloniality' along which such ideas exist, and conversely current approaches that highlight Indigenous Ecological Knowledges and give rise to imaginations of 'the ecological native' (see ch. 3). As Kire's books are built on a local, ancestral, cultural or 'traditional' discourse, as informed by people's stories, experiences, folktales and the wider Naga folklore, they present an 'anti-thesis' within a context of discourse about Naga society and culture written from an outsider perspective,[241] such as colonial ethnographies, but also in contemporary media, as reflective of a wider political history and present, in which discriminatory perceptions of Naga cultures prevail.[243] In simple words, her books are thus a part of the wider discourse about Naga cultures, including about Naga socio-ecological systems. The books also contribute -whether intended or not- to a wider discourse on Indigenous Ecological Knowledges,[244] and a movement of cultural heritage revitalisation.[245] Her work can also be said to be part of a wider discourse on cultural change -the narration of how it happened, as well as potentially the stimulation for reclaiming some cultural practices that were lost by a re-told understanding of such, as well as of how they may fit in with current realities, such as Christianity, or the wider discourse on sustainability.[246]

My reading of the philosophical or ideological content of the books, focuses on ideas about the relations between humans and the more-than-human world or 'nature' -including through spirituality- (the presented ontologies in the texts), related ideas about knowledge and pedagogy (the presented epistemologies in the texts), and resulting ideas about morals or ethical rules - notably as applied to traditional sustenance practices such as foraging and hunting vis-a-vis conservation. *My reading* of Kire's work can thus be said to be part of the methodological field of 'ecocriticism',[248] as part of the wider field of environmental humanities, with an anthropological focus on a specific culture. By reading several of Kire's books, I encountered returning topics, though differing per book, which have given rise to a categorising re-reading of the books, bookmarking and saving segments or quotes of the novels that spoke to the topic of research, including: practical socio-ecological knowledges (sustenance knowledges

and practices that give shape to the socio-ecological systems), spiritual socio-ecological knowledges (beliefs, relations, rules, rituals or myths that permeate cosmological understandings of, epistemological ways of gaining knowledge about, and axiological ways of morally regarding and treating the world), and the pedagogies and educational institutes of past and present shaping such knowledges (amidst colonial and missionary influence and resulting cultural change). Within these themes, I found recurring culturally specific topics and concepts, such as *terhuomia* (spirits), *tekhumiavi* (tigermen), *kenyü, penyü* and *nanü* (taboo and ritual observances), and seeking to position my theory through local concepts,[249] I then organised my analysis based on those. I added a subchapter on the books' narratives as sites of meeting of traditional systems of thought with 'Western' or contemporary influences, as the influence of Christianity is noticeable in several books, and was also mentioned by Kire in conversation.[250] Furthermore, this highlights the narratives as a contemporary discourse, that nevertheless sets out to remember the past.

2.3.2 Dialogues/Interviews

The data obtained through the dialogues/interviews have been interwoven throughout the thesis, as it supplied me with an understanding of the context, but also is central to the dialectic discussion of the research question(s) and data from the books. Through my limited sample, they allowed me to gain some insight into the state of education in Nagaland, and to build relationships with both people and place. They furthermore provided me with an understanding of the still lived presence of some of the spirit-stories read in Kire's work, as well as the ways such continued beliefs are navigated amidst a context of Christian and Western Science discourses. For analysis of the novels, it has been especially beneficial to converse in person with their author Easterine Kire, allowing an understanding of the background stories of the various books. The Dialogues/Interviews were events in which the contexts, texts and discourses I was delving into were unravelled and interwoven with my participants' various viewpoints as individuals, and in two cases, as spokespersons in Nagaland through their occupations. The narratives of the interviews have not been analysed in a similar way as the texts, yet I present the conversations in order to directly speak to the themes encountered in Kire's novels.

2.4 The Bigger Entanglement: Temporal Positionality & Relevance

Crutzen and Stoermer (2000) first suggested to call our current geological epoch the Anthropocene to acknowledge the scale of impacts of human-induced drivers of change, especially climate change[255] - meaning that human-induced direct or indirect impacts on environmental parameters[256] are out of the fluctuation ranges of the Holocene.[257] The Anthropocene crosses disciplinary boundaries by reflecting that the *human, the cultural, the societal and social,* are an interwoven aspect of the geophysical, ecological and material, "destroying the artificial but time honoured distinction between natural and human histories" (Chakrabarty, 2009: 206). This context of crises fundamentally changed the scale of our thinking

- spatially towards the planetary, and temporally towards the uncertainty of continuity, though the risk of extinction.[258] It seemingly connects us globally by a 'pan-human' negative bond of vulnerability.[259] Yet the term Anthropocene implies that it is some homogenous 'humanity' in general and at large that is responsible,[260] while the majority of the emissions and exploitation of resources can be traced back to a small affluent percentage of the human population.[261] It is therefore essential to seek the 'deeper' roots of the issue:[262] this is not 'just' a material, ecological crisis, but *thereby* a social, economic, and cultural crisis.[263] The threats we (human and nonhuman organisms both) face can largely be traced back to the widely spread cultural hegemony[264] of advanced capitalism, with its goals of infinite 'growth' while its modes of production lack ethical and *relational* regulations or feedback loops, that have made it rather constitute a depletion.[265] Hence the so-called 'Anthropocene', has also been called the 'Capitalocene'.[266] Decolonial thought locates the start of this extractivist regime at the beginning of the European colonial project in 1492, and therefore 'Plantationocene' was suggested by Tsing and Haraway amongst others.[267] That is, when 'Western' extractivist colonies, plantations, but also *mindsets*, started to occupy lands, ecologies, peoples and their cultures globally. Others, like David Abram, overcoming the fatalist sound of having arrived, seek to rather spur us into transformation through the envisioning of terms as 'the Humilocene'.[268] The ways we treat each other and the world is regulated by cultural-societal values (giving shape to laws), which are based on how we see and understand ourselves as humans, and the world. It is these values, ontologies and epistemologies, that interpret and create the world, that need inspection. Indigenous cultures and knowledges offer much needed different understandings of and approaches to the multi-species entanglements that we are part of and depend upon. Specifically the mental divide between human and 'nature', perpetuated also in the name of conversation through the distance and divide imposed through 'fortress conservation' models, between an enclave of 'Nature' and human civilisation, I wish to challenge. Such an approach is part of a larger academic stream within the environmental humanities, which seek a re-evaluation of our place and identity as human within an ecological world, towards 'eco-cultural identities'.[269] I also position this research in a moment in which the Naga community laments that the Elders, who know the old stories and ways, are dying;[270] yet in which some of the old stories and storytellers still remain. This while the movement of grassroots CCAs is rising, and international and national attention to Naga society is growing. As such, this attention could lead to an increasing understanding of Naga cultures. However, 'Western' Sciences seem to take the floor -through external NGOs or community members- as the new and better educational narrative about 'Nature' and its wellbeing, even if 'traditional conservation' is also often referred to, without going into much detail of what this entails. This thesis seeks to contribute by delving into the socio-ecological pedagogical value of Easterine Kire's novels,[271] and by offering a dialectic discussion about any such resulting traditional environmental, or conservation ethics or practices.

Chapter 3. Theory & Literature Review

Coming from an interdisciplinary background, I predominantly ground my theory in fields oriented at critique and the unlearning[272] of Eurocentrism in paradigms of knowledge, for alternative epistemologies to take space, informed by the post-humanities and feminist philosophy,[273] and especially decolonial studies[274] and Indigenous studies.[275] Thematically, I locate myself within the environmental humanities,[276] especially in the convergence of philosophy, social sciences and natural sciences, as well as between the sciences and the arts,[277] seeking to uncover the myriad entangled threads between such imbibed 'Western' binaries as between human and nature, but also between spiritual/myth and science. Where the differences between literature (as imaginative, emotive art) and science have been used to posit them as antagonistic to each other, as indeed was largely done in the history of IPs' knowledges and 'Western' sciences more generally, and as is equally understood for religiosity and secularity, their differences really make them complementary in their approaches to the world. Analysing the 'Western' Science discourse is essential for understanding the globalised approach to 'nature' and its implications, due to the force of the science discourse.[278] I can however not provide a detailed overview of the mycelium tapestry of critiques to the 'Western' paradigm for lack of space, yet will shortly introduce the toplayer of theoretical soil that it built regarding the 'human-nature' question, as this is what informs my analysis of the importance of Indigenous (literary) storytelling as Kire's, as constituting a source of relational understandings of, and accompanying values pertaining to, 'the more-than-human world' (Abram, 1996).

3.1 Decolonising our Entanglement with the World: Overcoming the Human-Nature Divide

Colonisation constituted not only genocides and land theft, but a decline of cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as biological diversity, through systematic changes in land use, as well as ways of thinking about and narrating humanity's role and relation with the land. Local cosmologies or life-visions were often negated and oppressed by forces of domination under the cloak of 'development', 'modernity' or religious salvation. As such, the concept and project of 'modernity' is directly linked to 'coloniality', as was first pointed out by Anibal Quijano (2000).[279] Monocultures of crops were enforced alongside, and as much as 'monocultures of mind'[280] or epistemes,[281] as the 'West' imposed its hegemony of not only science, but also religion, industry, economic ideals, laws and land-use practices; narrating them as the only way of being 'civilised'.[282] Gayatri C. Spivak[283] coined the term 'Othering' (1985)[284] to describe a mental process of social differentiation by which colonial officers in British India regarded the colonized "Others" as inferior, which extended to the realm of knowledge.[285] Global frameworks like International law arose from the nation-state logics of sovereignty based on the *terra nullius* doctrine, which legitimised the colonisation of Indigenous lands by arguing for a lack of traces of habitation or land-use - according to Western standards.[286] As such, the ways we co-exist with the

'natural' world have been central to colonial history. Based on such 'Western' land use practices and resource use, human sustenance came then to be conceived of as anti-ethical to that 'nature', so that areas safe of such intrusion had to be created, giving rise to conservation practices of 'wilderness' areas. However, the drawing of such lines in the land between 'nature' and human development, also allowed for the careless destruction of that which was not considered 'wilderness'. Additionally, such "uninhabited wilderness had to be created before it could be preserved" (Spence, 1999: p.4); in America, and elsewhere. Similar to the *Terra Nullius* doctrine, the designation of 'wilderness' due to absence of land degradation, ended up legitimising the disregard of Indigenous peoples' land rights (dispossession, displacement, and even murder) once more, this time in the name of conservation.[287] In the case of British India, wildlife reserves were first created as 'game reserves', to *reserve* 'the game' for the British (or royal Indian princes), who hunted for fun, and in order to increase the financial value of land, making it more safe to cultivate.[288] Only after independence and a serious depletion of wildlife,[289] some of such game reserves became actual 'conservation' reserves, further dispossessing and displacing native inhabitants that had managed a co-existence with this wildlife, as is exemplified in the North-East of India by Kaziranga National Park in Assam.[290] Such instances of 'green colonialism' unfortunately are still a globally recurring issue today.[291] To call lands 'wild' then, is a negation of both the land management skills and the ancestral (livelihood) relations of the native inhabitants of the land,[292] and points clearly to the constructed philosophical divide between humans and 'nature'.[293] The continued focus on 'unspoilt, pristine nature' ignores the continued exploitation outside of those landscapes, while humans have modified and impacted most of the earth's surface.[294] With more than 24% of Earth's terrestrial surface taken up by cultivated systems, it is paramount that we also focus on how we *do* use 'nature', re-establish values of care within our land-use systems, and make them inclusive of biodiversity.[295] Moving production elsewhere to protect seemingly 'pristine' areas, furthermore leads to ignorance of the direct effects of consumption and alienation from the simple fact of our interdependent entanglement with the 'natural world', as is prevalent in industrialised and urbanised societies.[296] It is exactly among peoples that live in close and direct sustenance dependency with the environment, that an awareness of this interdependence and of the effects of over-exploitation (through direct negative feedback loops) remains, while additionally often giving rise to an intimate, deep cultural (and spiritual) relationship;[302] though even in such places, through manifold influences and cultural change, but notably the influence of capitalism, this reciprocal intimacy is often deteriorating.[297] In the progression of the field of conservation science we can see an increasing focus on the interrelationships between humans and nature, ultimately (finally) acknowledging we speak of 'socio-ecological systems', which Mace calls the 'nature and people' approach.[298] Nevertheless, a false dualism between 'nature and people' as separate entities so far remains.[299]

Social scientists and post-humanist philosophers, through diverse inter- and trans-disciplinary efforts, have sought to trace, deconstruct and overcome the "inherited dualisms that run deep in Western cultures" (Haraway, 2004: 2), finding them back in deep theological roots,[305] the (resulting) natural sciences,[306] generic 'Western' thinking, and in capitalist livelihood practices. It has proved itself to be rooted so deeply, thorny and widely in our thinking and language,[307] that it has taken the imposition of new terms to replace the english word of 'nature' to seek to escape this philosophical divide,[308] speaking instead of the 'ecology of selves'[309] or our entanglement with the more-than-human-world.[310] Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss' deep ecology movement, largely built on Aldo Leopold's work on a 'Land Ethic', indeed sought to overcome the human-'nature' divide by urging humans to expand their understanding of 'self'-overcoming the individuated ego self to an 'ecological self'[303]- by the 'self-realisation' that they are part and encompassing of this 'nature.' This meant that any actions for the wellbeing of 'nature' would not be done out of sacrifice (of one's own interest) but out of genuine 'self love', by which "the own interest is served by environmental protection" (1988, p.24),[304] rooting his environmental ethics in a rethought ontology. The dominance of the human-nature dichotomy in 'Western' thought has been linked to related dualisms, like Descartes' body-soul binary which allowed the human to maintain a unique transcendental element above the rest of the world's machine-like matter,[311] centering ratio as the characteristic that defined humanness: 'cogito, ergo sum'.[312] Arguably, by overidentification with our ratio, we were all 'dehumanised', or deanimalised and denaturalised as humans, as we were philosophically separated from our own material embodiment,[313] as the philosophical stream of new materialism would also argue.[314] The related "nature-culture" binary within anthropology[315] as well as other sciences, furthermore exist intertwined with and through the 'civilised-barbaric' dichotomies inherent to Eurocentrism,[316] that organises the evolution of culture along a vertical axis - in which culture is expected to be as far away from 'nature' as possible. 'Nature' is thereby the 'other' of culture. As such the human/culture-nature dichotomy also speaks to the placement of human 'Others'[317] towards the 'nature' realm of non-human, and we cannot see the domination over 'nature' by the Western subject, separate from the related and intersectional issues of seeking domination over, and dehumanising other humans, that critical race scholars like Frantz Fanon[318] and Du Bois,[319] and ecofeminist philosophers like Vandana Shiva[320] and Val Plumwood,[321] addressed. Decolonial feminist philosopher María Lugones indeed considers this "dichotomous hierarchy between the human and the nonhuman [...] the central dichotomy of colonial modernity" (2010: 743).[322] This separation furthermore plays through in an objectivity-focused scientific inquiry, in which subjecthood and local situatedness must be avoided, to speak to an abstract sense of (universal) truth. According to such an episteme, we must keep the illusion of division to the world to be able to speak about it, rather than be rooted in a relationship,[323] to speak about and with the (local) world, while our ideas are always situated, and part of a complex network of relations.[324] Stuck

on its premise of human exceptionalism, the 'Western' sciences furthermore took a long time before it could discover that *other* animals also possess the capacity for emotions or intelligence.[325] The terminology 'Anthropocene' seems to only augment the idea of human exceptionalism, even as it describes our failure to the world; for although (a part of) "humanity" changed the face of the earth, this was not through human control, which the term seems to imply; we actually -increasingly- find that we were never in control.[326] This acknowledgement of not being in control, in a world full of agential forces, is a necessary element to rethinking the place of humanity, back into its humble and mortal place amidst the rest of nature.

My use of 'environmental ethic' then, as I use it in the thesis to speak to ways by which Tenyimia Naga lifeworlds full of sentient others were mediated, links to David Abram's understandings of the self and world, coining the term 'the more-than-human world' (1996), as acted upon in his 'Alliance for Wild Ethics':

> "Although "ethics" is commonly equated with a set of rules or principles for right conduct, the heart of ethics has more to do with a simple humility toward others—an attentive openness not just toward other persons but toward the inexhaustible otherness of the manifold beings that compose this earthly world." (2017: 13)

'Knowing' nature only by its (scientifically observable) processes, is not enough to give rise to such a 'wild ethics', Abram continues, and further relates how this affects the way we treat (use) that living world as a set of resources (Ibid.). Even the mental step to explore the capacities of other animals, though it humbles our sense of human uniqueness, may yet keep us in a distanced sense of alterity.[327] Yet bridging this alterity by rooting us in sameness, by for example ascribing human characteristics to other species (in order for us to acknowledge their rights for example[328]), on the other hand risks losing sight of our specificities as species - and again superimposes anthropocentrism (the model of the human) upon the rest of the world.[329] Alas, the reconfiguration of self and ethics, as it pertains to how we relate to other beings and elements of the world in all their diversity, seems a complex task. Post-humanist and feminist philosopher Rosi Braidotti (2013), as scholar within the stream of vitalist materialism,[330] basing herself on Spinoza's 'monist' ontology[335] "that considers all matter as intelligent and self-organizing" (2013: 136), uses *zoe* as a reconceptualisation of the life force that overcomes the limited boundaries of the concept of 'nature': "It is neither human nor divine, but relentless material and vowed to multi-directional and cross-species relationality." (Ibid: 136). Also Morton (2017) went in search of an ecological pronoun, to communicate the subjecthood of non-human beings, while Robin Wall Kimmerer - Indigenous Potawatomi author and 'Western' Sciences trained botanist and biologist - offers the suggestion of '*ki*' for singular, and 'kin' for plural to speak to more-than-human subjecthood.[337] In *Braiding Sweetgrass,* Kimmerer (2013: pp. 48-59) furthermore shares how a much wider 'grammar of animacy' already exists in various Indigenous languages, like the one of her Anishinaabe ancestors.[338]

Indeed we will now turn to Indigenous cosmologies in which the world is *known* as a social world full of subjects, while exploring the concept of biocultural diversity. Though ranging close to the new materialist turn, this thesis takes a different approach regarding the secularism of such a posthuman outlook, as I root my theory in an ontology based on encountered elements of a Tenyimia Naga cosmology[336] - which seems to understand the agency of all kinds of matter, partially through a multitude of differently natured *ruopfü*, spirits. The spiritual thereby is the acknowledgement of invisible, immaterial forces that nevertheless express themselves materially, hereby aligning more with what Merleau-Ponty called "the paradox of transcendence in immanence" (1964: 16). Therein, meaning derived from materiality, the power of the discursive to shape the material, embodiment and mobile spirits, are all interwoven aspects and forces of the same reality, that all need to be reckoned with.

3.2 Biocultural Diversity: Indigenous Relational Cosmologies

> "The traditional ecological knowledge of indigenous harvesters is rich in prescriptions for sustainability. They are found in Native science and philosophy, in lifeways and practices, but most of all in stories, the ones that are told to help restore balance, to locate ourselves once again in the circle." (Kimmerer, 2013: 179)

Indigenous peoples globally, often through decades long resistance movements and under severe pressures, have to diverse extents managed to hold on to their cultural identities, territories, relations, stories, languages, knowledges, and livelihood practices, amidst ever changing social, political and ecological conditions. Today, Indigenous Peoples steward 25-28% of terrestrial areas that contain 80% of the planet's remaining biodiversity.[339] This area overlaps with 35 - 30% of officially Protected Areas (PAs),[340] which at once indicates that biodiversity is actively managed and maintained outside of officially recognised PAs. In those major biodiversity regions left on our planet, we also find the richest cultural and linguistic diversity left among people; a correlation that indicates at the very least the effects of colonisation on both people and land,[341] but also alludes to the fact that diverse cultures come with diverse land-use practices, and/or diverse ecologies give rise to, or can host, diverse cultures and land use practices; the way we live influences the world we live in, and vice versa.[342] In that way, cultural diversity is the human equivalent of/contribution to/co-evolution with biological diversity. Indeed, this paper follows the argument that an 'inextricable link' exists between cultural and biological diversity.[343] Different cultures have had different (and changing) tendencies of creating, tending, or destroying the biodiversity of which they are part. Following Posey (Ed., 1999) the concept of biocultural heritage was developed and defined as "the cultural heritage (both tangible and intangible, including customary law, folklore, spiritual values, knowledge, innovations and practices) and biological heritage (diversity of genes, varieties, species and ecosystem provisioning, regulating, and cultural services) of Indigenous Peoples, traditional societies and local communities", with the understanding that "maintaining and restoring the diversity of life

means sustaining both biodiversity and cultures, because the two are interrelated and mutually supportive." (Ibid.: p. 33) Leopold also recognised that "the rich diversity of the world's cultures reflects a corresponding diversity in the wilds that gave them birth" (1988: 188).

Many Indigenous cosmologies indeed give rise to different understandings of self and the subjecthood of the manifold non-human beings of the world, as well as different ways of knowing. Philip Descola's *Beyond Nature and Culture* (2013) theorised there were four distinct ontologies -animism, totemism, analogism and naturalism- based on ethnographic examples from around the world. He thereby decentralised the West's assumed universality of its ideas, and brought into discussion the concepts of 'nature' and 'supernatural'.[345] As mentioned in ch. 1.2, I don't aim to classify 'the old religion', but yet it is interesting to note that an animist world does not need a word to separate human, nature, nor the supernatural, yet it is neither the case that other animals, plants or 'supernatural' beings are not distinguished at all from humans. Instead, a sense of kinship prevails across such differences, which acknowledges the *animacy* - agency, 'soul' and intelligent capacity - of more-than-human (including more-than-animal) creatures or entities, as subjects of a shared world. Walsh (2014) and Quijano (2015) point us to such Indigenous and Afro cosmologies in Ecuador and Bolivia[346] that do not subscribe to the nature-human divide, and "unite the material and spiritual and promote a practice of co-existence and "living with" across difference." (p. 56) Central to such cosmologies is the principle of *relationality* of all the constitutive parts and variables of the cosmos, which can be said to be 'managed' by reciprocity: an ethics that is seen as a cosmic obligation and stems from the understanding that everything is in transformative interaction.[347] Such 'animist' worldviews were first shed in new light when David-Bird (1999) recast the previously denigrating glance on animism as constituting a 'relational epistemology'.[348] Wilson explained such as "systems of knowledge built on relationships" (2008: 74). Escobar, while arguing for a 'pluriverse' instead of a 'universe',[349] conceived of relational ontologies or cosmologie as "those that eschew the divisions between nature and culture, individual and community, and between us and them that are central to the modern ontology" (2011: 139). Chilisa (2012) furthermore points to how in such an ontology, 'relations' are understood to extend beyond those with humans, but also beyond those with 'the living', including relations with the 'nonliving' (p. 20). Deloria (1999) speaks to how such a relational worldview plays through in Indigenous methods of inquiry about the world, as knowledges and modes of living well, are derived through relationships. Stories and knowledges in such a cosmology then, are therefore interwoven intricately with the land and its multiplicity of beings from which they arose or were derived, in which they were passed on for generations, about which they teach, and on which the interdependence sustenance system relies; as such accumulating in what has been called Indigenous Ecological Knowledges (IEK), Traditional Ecological Knowledges (TEK) or Local Ecological Knowledges (LEK). It

encompasses ways of coming to know, as well as what, or rather *who,* is known. In *Sacred Ecology*, Berkes (2008 [1999]) provides a working definition of TEK as:

> "a cumulative body of knowledge, practice, and belief, evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment." (p. 7)

Berkes furthermore discerns four (analytical) levels of TEK, within concentric circles: i) local empirical knowledge of land and animals,[351] giving rise to ii) the land and resource management systems, with its rules, norms, or taboos, as parts of iii) larger social institutions and relations, as again embedded within iv) an all encompassing worldview, with the latter encompassing beliefs and ethics (Ibid.: p. 8, 17-18).[353] Berkes also refers to a statement of Inuit participants to a conference on traditional knowledge in 1995, in which they eloquently refer to the 'wisdom to use knowledge', understanding TEK to encompass of:

> "practical common sense; teachings and experience passed through generations; knowing the country; being rooted in spiritual health; a way of life; an authority system of rules for resource use; respect; obligation to share; wisdom in using knowledge; using heart and head together (Emery 1997: 3)." (Berkes, 2008 [1999]: 5).

While TEK reflects Indigenous understandings of the world then, such knowledges also reflect the spiritual relations, morals and rules by which they are bound to that world that is known[354] and to the knowledge itself. Relational Indigenous worldviews furthermore point us beyond the destructive aspect of resource use, towards the understanding that we have co-evolved as species and ecosystems, so that balanced resource use may also contribute to the wellbeing of certain organisms' populations, and cultures may create biocultural landscapes that enhance biodiversity.[355] This exemplifies the importance of safeguarding plural, different philosophical understandings of, and ways of relating with the world; for local livelihoods and biodiversity conservation, as for the global search for solutions to our socio-ecological crises. Yet, Banuri & Apffel Marglin (1993) conceive that IEK's embeddedness in a local cultural milieu constitutes the defining difference from 'Western' scientific knowledge which seeks to be universal.

3.3 Oral & Literary Indigenous Storytelling Pedagogies

> "We are told that stories are living beings, they grow, they develop, they remember, they change not in their essence, but sometimes in their dress. They are shared and shaped by the land, the culture and the teller, so that one story may be told widely and differently." (Kimmerer, 2013: 386)

Such relational knowledges and values are embedded in and traditionally taught through a varying range of pedagogic tools, such as stories, songs, values, rituals, laws, proverbs, languages, practices, and beliefs[357] - the 'lore of the folk'- which allows for place specific, and relational modes of knowing and teaching about the world, often rich in metaphor. By such stories being orally passed on from generation to generation, yet being firmly rooted in the moment and place of sharing, storytelling pedagogy is a relationship crafted between storyteller and listener, between ancestors and new generations, between 'traditional' and 'modern' or rather past and present context, as the stories continuously update to present circumstances, while

building on ancestral knowledge and values.[359] Gaski (2019) in his article on Elder's knowledge,[360] points out how the final interpretation of a story is left to the receiver, and additionally how they are often accompanied by practical, action and experience-based teaching, giving rise to a holistic pedagogy which unites practical skills, transgenerational history and relation, and (spiritual) connection to the land. Such stories, metaphors, proverbs or sayings may continue to live in the back of the mind as uncompleted learning tropes, that blossom to full meaning in an experience later in life, actualising the knowledge or meaning ingrained in the story. Additionally, he points out that various persons within the community would function as pedagogues; so that children would be exposed to different versions of stories and opinions on matters, indeed making the receivers of knowledge active participants in its interpretation and understanding (unlike the unengaging memorisation of 'facts' that is often central in school education focused on books). This also means that oral knowledges cannot be 'codified' in written text, as they constitute a diversity of voices, versions, and interpretations, which cannot be traced to one author, but rather a whole lineage of ancestors (Wouters, 2019b). As oral pedagogy entails the event of a social exchange in place, it emboldens social relationships (between storyteller and listener, and with the world) - unlike books, which as private objects, are often read individually - and the story's moral can be adapted or applied to fit current circumstances, while a book's content is frozen in time. T. V. Kunnunkal expressed in the foreword to Luikham's compilation of Naga folk tales and lore that:

> "Stories [...] were used, not merely to entertain or engage the young or the older, but also to teach. [...] Since stories use not merely words, [...] but use visual imagery and evoke feelings, they continue to remain in the memories of people. [...] [T]he medium of the story was used by the Naga people to convey to the young, their traditions and conventions, their view of reality and their value system. Through these stories, told by the grandmother or another respected elder, in the cosiness and ambience of a fireside, the young got to know their people, discovered their roots and became emotionally and culturally integrated." (1987: p. 7)

Author Easterine Kire says in an interview with Longkumer & Menon regarding Naga oral storytelling that: "The stories are community property, they are shared memory, they are the tribe's means of passing down history, moral education, rituals and cultural information, and they also entertain." (2019: 6). Different forms of oral pedagogy furthermore inform and complement each other and are part of a complex system of knowledge sharing,[365] and can be tied to specific educational sites, events and relations of knowledge sharing. Pedagogy is then indeed very much interwoven with life, rather than limited to a classroom experience.

According to David Abram (1996), the take-over of written literature constitutes a powerful form of magic -linking the word 'spelling' to the casting of a spell- which abstracts our embodiment within and entanglement with the world we describe. He thus argues that not only the content, but also the form of pedagogies and their sites, are influential elements of identity construction of the human vis-a-vis the 'natural' world. Unfortunately, as introduced, oral pedagogies and knowledges are disappearing due to (imposed) nation-centric education schemes,

in combination with the dying of the generation of elders that shared the oral narratives outside of the formal education spaces, and the loss of local languages.[367] Written versions of oral stories are therefore important for cultural continuity,[368] even as they will lose the dynamic and relational-communal sharing that characterises oral pedagogies. Kire speaks to this, when I asked if she uses the books and its retellings of folktales as repositories of knowledges and practices: "it's sort of fading out all these practices, and I wanted to write about them in order to preserve them… Even if it's just in books."[369] This is of course specifically relevant for Indigenous communities, whose histories, cultures and identities have been oppressed, misrepresented and generalised in research and educational narratives alike (from savage to noble). Regarding the role of literature today regarding the transmission of such stories that were traditionally passed on orally, Vipralhou Kesiezie[371] stated that: "Writers Collective Kohima is the link between the past and the future of the Nagas in rediscovering and promoting the rich cultural heritage of the tribal Nagas".[373] This task encompasses the weaving of both the traumatic events (of conflict and colonisation) and the richness of a cultural past, with the challenges and cultures of today, towards the hope for tomorrow. Such comes through in Kire's work, as a pedagogy that despite being written, still not only informs through facts, but engages its readers in a geography of cultural and ecological relationships and political histories in which the knowledge is embedded, and which notably acknowledges more-than-human agents.

3.4 Integrating & Revitalising Knowledge Systems towards Biocultural Diversity

The increasing focus on biocultural diversity and interest in TEK or IEK, including in international bodies governing responses to biodiversity decline,[383] reflects the increasing awareness of the need for Indigenous ecological insights, inclusive approaches to epistemes, and an enhanced ecological ethic.[384] The Local Biodiversity Outlook-2 (LBO-2) of 2020,[385] specifically reports on the contributions of IPs and "embodies an optimism that the destruction of Nature and the dramatic loss of biodiversity and cultural diversity can be successfully reversed, by embracing the values, and building on the collective and local actions of the World's indigenous peoples and local communities."[386] It has thereby become an international concern that people are not only facing biological, but also cultural diversity loss. The LBO-2 states that: "These losses stem from unsustainable global systems of values, knowledge, governance, production, consumption, technology, economics, incentives and trade, all underlain by unequal decision-making power about the future of nature and peoples."[387] Target 1 proposes that: "'living in harmony with nature'[388] requires a radical paradigm shift in value systems away from economic values alone towards value systems that emphasise connections between people, nature and *living well*",[389] emphasising the need to counter cultural erosion and incorporating Indigenous value systems in educational systems.[390]

Nevertheless, in practice such integrative approaches often still fall short by remaining located within a 'Western' dominant perspective (on knowledge), focusing on "commonalities between diverse value sets" (Díaz et al., 2015: 5), rather than allowing the differences of diverse epistemological systems to challenge hegemonic approaches. Nadasdy (2005) has furthermore demonstrated that in the institutionalisation of TEK, state values often remain dominant, while TEK may be taken out of its relevant contexts. TEK or IEK are then mostly only recognised for utilitarian values and 'extracted'[391] as if they could exist in isolation from a wider, complex cultural fabric in which the relations between knowledge teacher and learner, as well as the modes of knowledge transmission are often specific.[392] Additionally, Bird-Davit observes that the comparison between Knowledge systems within the field of sociocultural anthropology has usually and problematically left out the element of scale.[399] The focus on IPs' spiritual relationships to land (and not their material relationships) as a defining quality of indigeneity in international legal documents has also given rise to generalised romantic images of 'the ecological native',[393] which end up being contested, so that Indigenous life-worlds have often been stigmatised in discourses as either harmful or ideal.[394] The maintenance of this image among IPs has thereby become a factor in the political fight for IPs' cultures, identities, and rights, in particular to their land. This notes the dense context of both cultural oppression and idealisation, but also resilience, in which IEK and values now operate. Additionally, it is important to recognise that also Indigenous cultures are constantly changing; integrating 'Western' and other cultural influences of thinking, of trading, narrating, and believing - both by force, and by volition, and indeed as survival strategy and part of resilience[395]- especially in the face of socio-political as well as ecological and climatic change. Simply juxtaposing ''Western' knowledges' to 'Indigenous knowledges' (like other binaries[396]) would be ineffective, then, as it ignores the internal diversity in both[397] and fails to recognise the cross-cultural interactions, adaptations and hybridisations that inform knowledge systems (historically and presently).[398]

The power dynamics inherent to 'Modernity/coloniality'[400] however taint such 'encounters' of hybridisation.[401] De Sousa-Santos (2014) in his decolonial quest towards "an ecology of knowledges" therefore spurs us to learn "not from the imperial South (which reproduces in the South the logic the North takes as universal) but rather from the anti-imperial South." (p. 42) This speaks to the risk of internalised 'mind-colonisation',[402] as critical race scholars like Fanon (1967) & Du Bois (1903) have addressed with regards to internalised racist stereotypes. Linking back to Lorde's speech (1984):

> "Difference must be not merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic. [...] Only within that interdependency of difference [...] acknowledged and equal, can the power to seek new ways of being in the world generate." (p. 1-2)

Some researchers therefore speak of an in-between or 'third space,'[403] so that neither Euro-'Western' paradigms or the postcolonial indigenous paradigms need to be essentialised into

either/or constructions, but have the possibility to be dynamic entities that can inform each other, as "a culture-integrative research framework."[404] Nakata (2007) refers to such as a 'cultural interface', taking into account the multiple complex layers that inform and give shape to our identities. This applies to knowledge discourses, as it regards the continuity and dis-continuity of and between ancestral systems of thought and contemporary 'other' epistemes. As discussed by Vieira (2019), the point should not be to seek a return to any 'authentic' pre-colonial beginning, but rather to acknowledge both origins and influences, and arrive at an ever evolving hybridity and plurality of ways to approach the self, knowledge, and the world. Such is decolonising, for it honours both the diversity of origins, the process of resilience that included adaptation to hegemonic forces and change, and the resurgence of cultural and epistemological freedom and diversity which can give rise to alternative ways of living. As such, revitalisation is an act of remembrance, but also of creation towards alternative future hybridisations.

3.5 Re-storying Environmental Education, Re-storying our relationship to the World

> "It's not just land that is broken, but more importantly, our relationship to land. As Gary Nahban has written, we can't meaningfully proceed with healing, with restoration, without "re-story-ation." In other words, our relationship with land cannot heal until we hear its stories. But who will tell them?" (Kimmerer, 2013: 9)[374]

The presented threads of Western binary thought and its material counterparts (of development here, and fortress conservation there), feed into the world of Environmental Education (EE). Building on the wings of the environmental movement, EE is a pedagogic realm which exists to inform and normatively shape the ways humans ought to relate to, treat, use, and co-exist alongside this "environment", by which we are not only surrounded (*environ)*, but out of which we are made. However, such education is often based on 'Western' models, with its positivist approaches to knowledge, human/animal and nature/culture binaries, teaching about the environment as a separate entity.[375] The objective of protecting this entity, comes with the objective to predict, control and regulate 'it'.[376] Chessa Adsit-Morris' *Restorying Environmental Education: Figurations, Fictions, and Feral Subjectivities* (2017) reflects the realisation that we need to 'unlearn' many of those introduced binaries and arrogances like Eurocentric universal claims to knowledge. Kimmerer has helped us see how objectification is entrenched in the English language. Foucault (1977) helps us understand that spaces and institutes of learning are not neutral, but informed and indeed built by structures of power. 'Western' Education and the 'Western' ecological crises are linked then:

> "modern western education as practiced tends to represent the underlying presuppositions of its culture, and that culture tends to situate itself in competition with the non-human world….general educational theory and the current troubling environmental situation both arise from that same nexus of modern western ideas" (Blenkinsop & Ega, 2009: 85, as cited in Adsit-Morris, 2017: 19).

Adsit-Morris warns that "[EE] is far from innocent in the types of stories it tells and teaches; stories inherited from a range of disciplines and philosophies" (p. 20). As "the natural world" is

an inherently interwoven aspect of existence, it would furthermore make sense that such a topic is an equally interwoven aspect of all our study fields and disciplines.[377] Indeed, economics, from *oikos nomos,* shares the same Greek root as ecology, *oikos logos* - with the first being the science (and art) of managing, and the latter of understanding, the *oikos: home.* As Rotas points out: "when ecology is transformed into a school subject, it creates the assumption that ecology is a natural system that it is universal, and that it is outside, or separate, from human communities." (2015: 91) Furthermore, EE is often co-opted by agendas oriented at development, rebranded into sustainable development, in which nature once more becomes mere resource.[378] As we have already seen in the context chapter on education in Nagaland, education is a power-mediated tool, often used for assimilation, "as a means of cultural reproduction or transformation" (McKenzie, et al, 2009: 2). This however, also renders it a potentially positively transformative tool today.

As was explored by Tachine (2018), through an interweaving of Indigenous cosmologies, storytelling pedagogies and ways of life into dominant (educational) narratives and research, alternatives to the 'Western' approach to ecologies could gain traction again; among youth locally, while restoring a sense of self, and maybe even pollinate the desire for change abroad. 'Stories' here are seen to act as mediators of material reality, feeding values, ethics, and rules. Cover (1983) speaks to the importance of such mythical stories with regards to law:

> "No set of legal institutions or prescriptions exists apart from the narratives that locate it and give it meaning" (p. 4) [...] "These myths establish the paradigms for behavior. They build relations between the normative and the material universe, between the constraints of reality and the demands of an ethic.." (p. 9)

Building on Cover, Celemajer & O'Brien (2021) echoe the transformative potential of myths. As such, Indigenous 'myths' and stories are important pedagogical, and transformative normative narratives, which explicates how cosmovisions abound with ethical relationships. With the understanding that 'tradition' is something dynamic, and stories adapt to contexts, myths can be re-applied, as Celemajer & O'Brien propose, for current challenges and constitute a way forward. Furthermore, this re-telling, or restory-ation, does not need to rule out the integration of 'Western' Science knowledges - with such an integration only feeding De Sousa-Santos' (2014) 'ecologies of knowledges', and acknowledging that indeed we live in a 'Pluriverse' - as long as it would not negate and push away those locally embedded and different understandings of the world. This thesis however approaches 'restoryation' of environmental education, conversely by reflecting on the environmental education in Kire's stories, as holistic chronicles of Naga ways of life.

Chapter 4. Data & Interpretation: Naga Socio-Ecological Subjects & Relations in Kire's Novels

> "This invisible world functions as a repository of knowledge, housing historical, religious, and moral teachings accessible through dreams or in the telling of folktales, in the singing of songs, in the enactment of rituals, and in some cases through divination" (Heneise, 2016: 99)

Through the presentation of passages from various of Easterine Kire's books, structured under several themes,[405] this chapter will give insight into some aspects of the socio-ecological and spiritual relations that exist within a (predominantly Angami) Tenyimia Naga cosmology, as they were encountered in Kire's storytelling. As introduced in ch. 1.2.2, parts of this cosmology informed by 'the old religion' still permeate the currently dominant religion of christianity, though some beliefs or practices are shunned or considered taboo today. The presented fragments highlight passages speaking of cosmologically rooted kinship with the more-than-human world, specifically to tigers, as embodied by the theriantrophic abilities of *tekhumiavi* weretigers, reverence and fear for spirits *terhuomia* and *ruopfü*, taboo practices *penyü, kenyü* and *nanü*, as well as sustenance practises related forms of IEK, which all serve to give insight into a relational worldview which understands the world as a shared space of subjects, and the values, ethics, social relations, and livelihoods that such an equally materially and spiritually immersed understanding of self and ecology gives rise to. With regards to Christianity and other forces of change, Kire's storytelling also interweaves such plural aspects of Naga cultures in their current constituencies, and narrates processes of change, which will be explored in ch. 4.5. The books quoted will be referenced to by acronyms:

TWC - The Windhover Collection (2001)
SIMF - Sky is my Father - A Naga Village Remembered (2008 [2003])
ATM - A Terrible Matriarchy (2007)
FS - Forest Song (2011)
WTRS - When the River Sleeps (2014)
SOTT - Son of the Thundercloud (2016)
DRML - Don't Run my Love (2017)

4.1 Kinship with the More-than-Human World: Brothers, Lovers & *Tekhumiavi*

> "Then he stopped struggling and concentrated instead on the spirit words he had learnt: "Sky is my father, Earth is my mother, stand aside death! Kepenuopfü fights for me, today is my day!" (WTRS, 2014: 103)

In the creation story of the Angami Nagas, the upper deity is *Kepenuopfü,*[406] meaning birth mother, or birth spirit.[407] The 'spirit words' in the fragment above, come from a prayer, so Kire tells me in our dialogue (2021):

> "that anyone can pray if they are in the forest and a storm comes, [they] will cut a tree a little bit, [...] with this machete, and then the wood and the metal make contact, and then they call out: "Sky is my father, Earth is my mother!" and,"I believe in the creator!", so that is a prayer of protection."

We see how the creator Kepenupofü as birth mother is aligned to earth, with the sky father, perhaps as her partner, together as parents of the world,[408] pointing us clearly to a relational cosmovision. This phrase also appears in the title of Kire's book *Sky is my Father: A Naga Village Remembered*, and in our conversation (2021), Kire told me that a new book she was writing would be titled 'Earth my Mother'. This birthing mother,[409] is creator or birther of the earth then, but also narrated to be the mother of the ancestors of Man, Tiger,[410] and Spirit.[411] Because of such a creation story, in the Tenyimia Naga worldview or cosmology,[412] Tiger and Spirit are both Elder Brothers of Man, which clearly communicates a kinship relation with the world of more-than-humans. In our conversation at Árdna's fireplace,[413] Easterine Kire started narrating the origin story to me as we spoke of the understanding of Tiger as Elder Brother, and how this relates to the practice of weretigers, *tekhumiavi*. Her narration went as follows:[414]

> "Why they call it elder brother, [...] goes back to a story of origin, that [...] the first family was made of man, tiger and spirit, and they were brothers, and their mother was a human mother, and they used to take turns to look after her because she was old. But on the day that tiger took care of her, he would say, mother, I want to eat, when you die, I want to eat this part of you, I want to eat and he would keep troubling her *laughs*, so she wouldn't get any rest. On the days that spirit was looking after her, he would uhm… because his nature was to scare, he would scare her, so again she would not get any rest. But on the day that man was looking after her, she would be rested, because he would bath her, feed her, and take care of her. The day she died, the two brothers Man and Spirit, decided to bury her under the hearth, under the fire place, so that tiger wouldn't come and eat her. So, there are two versions of this story, one says Tiger couldn't find her, the other says, Tiger came and sniffed out where the body was and then ate the mother so since it was such a great taboo, it broke up the family. So that is a more practical version. And, yet, to keep the relationship, the sibling relationship, Man always calls out 'Elder Brother', when he is in the forest and he hears a tiger, [...] and also the story continues that, [...] tiger promised to bring a bit of game back to man, but, instead of bringing meat, he leaves hair, yeah, the fur, so man knows when his elder brother has gotten game. And as for the spirit, they say that spirit gave man all the days for cultivation, and the taboo days, because the taboo days are also important, [...] you work one day, and then you have a taboo day and you rest. Or you work a week and then you have a taboo day and you rest. So these are supposedly given by Spirit, to Man his brother. So, it always goes back to that, when people feel that they have a relationship with tiger, then, the whole idea of some men becoming weretigers, becoming dual souls with a tiger, they again pick up from that story, from the origin story."[415]

This origin story clearly indicates how Man, Tiger and Spirit are relatives, yet how they are different, so that they ended up going their own ways and living in different spaces: how the relations between the brothers were to be managed but kept, despite their different natures. The story also may inculcate the awareness and acceptance of the fact that Elder Brother Tiger's nature is to eat, also humans.[417] Through the concept of *ruopfü* as Spirit,[419] we may furthermore understand how Elder Brother Spirit permeates the forest and 'natural' world, so that the forest with its manifold beings, elements and entities, can be perceived as related 'kin' too,[420] indeed a world full of more-than-human subjects.[421] This kinship with the world indeed comes through in other passages in Kire's books, beyond the sentences of 'Sky is my Father, Earth is my Mother':

> "'Just one question before I go. Where have those trees and rocks come from?' 'It's called birthing, headman. The earth has birthed trees, rocks, stones, and grain, just as a mother births her offspring. The trees and rocks are the sons of the earth. Take care of them and they will take care of you and your children.' The headman bowed low and left." (SOTT, 2016: p. 46)

In this passage we find that not only Man, Tiger and Spirit, but all elements of the earth are sons of the birthing mother. They are presented as subjects that will take care of man, depending on a reciprocal relationship.[422] This relationality and subjecthood is also expressed through accounts of humans forming love relationships with elements of the more-than-human world, such as rivers, mountain tops or certain spirits.[423] This is also expressed by character Vilie in *WTRS*:

> "The forest is my wife" [...] "The forest was his wife indeed: providing him with sanctuary when he most needed it; and food when his rations were inadequate. The forest also protected him from the evil in the heart of man. He felt truly wedded to her at this moment." (WTRS 2014: 7, 51)

Kire also states in our conversation (2021) regarding this phrase that:

> "It's not just food from the forest but you even get clothes from the forest, the yarn, and, when Vilie says 'the forest is my wife,' there is so much in that word, the forest really is his wife; it covers him, it feeds him."[424]

Here Kire expresses how the intimacy of a local sustenance life brings about such a deep relationality.

The understanding of Man, Spirit and Tiger being brothers, and the remaining intimacy between them since the time of creation, is most pronounced through the belief in, and practice of *tekhumiavi*[*T*] (also referred to as *Tekhumevimia*, or *Tekhumevi*),[427] also known as tigermen, weretiger, or even werewolf in colloquial speech, in which Man's mobile and agential spirit or soul, *ruopfü*, enters and becomes the body of a tiger. Kire defines it in WTRS as: "Tekhumiavi: weretiger, a phenomenon amongst the Tenyimia people where certain members of the tribe transform their spirits into tigers." (2014: 242)[428] The stories and legends of the *Tekhumiavi*, appear throughout Easterine Kire's books, as the legends and stories about them abound throughout rural villages:

> "He was half-man, half-spirit, the last in a long line of weretigermen. Tsaricho's father and his father before him had carried the spirit of the tiger in their beings. Many in his family thought he would bequeath this strange legacy to his young son who was unformed but not much younger than Tsaricho himself when he became a tigerman." [...] "Tsaricho's son [...] pondered on the desire that led men to become weretigermen. It was the power of course but something more than mere power, he had never himself felt the fire to become one with the tiger, only a few men were destined to carry the spirit of the tiger and his father had been one of those men. Could it be, he wondered, that there was some truth in the story that Man, Spirit and Tiger were once brothers and were some men therefore so driven to recapture their fraternity by the only avenue now open to them?" (Ibid.: 75, 80)

The tigerman as a concept and phenomenon therefore merges all three brothers, and tigermen as such often fulfilled the role of a type of village 'shaman' or seer, for his (or her) knowledge extended to the realms of both spirits and tigers. Such culminates into the spiritual power that the passage refers to. The passage also speaks to the contemporary judgement the church has of tekhumiavi practices as seeking demonic, supernatural powers, contesting it with the spiritual

origins of the practice, which rather link humans to the rest of the world through kinship bonds, and in which the tigerman becomes a spiritually powerful intermediary across the differences that once had splitted up the family of Man, Spirit and Tiger; indeed as Kire puts it, "to recapture their fraternity". Besides tigers, the word is also applied to those that turn into species of leopards, and there are also some accounts of people turning into snakes, dogs, and monkeys:[429]

> "Legend said that every weretiger began as a smaller animal, possibly a wildcat. He then remembered the story of a young boy who came from a long line of weretigers. When he and his father were out hunting, a wildcat crossed their path. The boy raised his slingshot and took aim at the cat but his father knocked the slingshot from his hand. When the boy wordlessly looked at him, his father simply said, "Son, that cat is you!" That was all that the boy needed to understand that his spirit was becoming one with the tiger." [..] "It is not only tigers that men transform themselves into. There are men in the other tribes who have been known to turn their spirits into giant snakes, and their women's spirits have become monkeys." (Ibid.: 27-28)

As Kire's fragment shows, such cultural practice may also have given rise to prohibitions on killing tigers, especially those believed to be weretigers. This fragment is a poignant example of relationality, as, more than just kin, the boy is perceived to *be* the cat, and become a tiger. Such a practice is possible or explained through not only the mobility and agency of spirit, *ruopfü*, which can leave the body,[434] but also through a continuum between wake-time reality and dream-time reality, as theorised by Heneise (2019),[435] so that the tekhumiavi's dream time is the tiger's wake time. Tekhumiavi's are thereby entities that defy a Western understanding of the realms of human, 'nature' and 'supernatural' as divided, by constituting living in-betweens. This also allows tekhumiavi to perceive and know, through the body of their tiger. This is especially reflected in the manifold stories about tekhumiavi men being injured, or dying, after the tiger to which their souls were bound, had been wounded or shot:[437]

> "From the day the tiger was killed, Tsaricho's great grandfather began to die. It was not an uncommon event for the village community had had weretigermen before him. But the nexus between tiger and man was still attended by the mystery and the awe that shrouds the supernatural. […] A week after the death of the tiger, the old man died." (TWC, 2001: p. 77)

Equally tekhumiavi can wake up tired, from their souls having spent the night hunting and running.[438] Fürer-Haimendorf furthermore related regarding a weretiger man among the Konyak Nagas that "at any hour of the day he knows exactly the whereabouts of his tiger." (1946: 209). Such practices, and the space-time of dreams, can be seen as portals of communication then, that might help reduce human-wildlife conflicts, as described in the following passages of WTRS:

> "As a rule, ordinary tigers kept their distance from man. [...] Vilie was quite sure by now that it was a weretiger. The folk practice of certain men transforming their spirits into tigers was a closely guarded art. Despite the secrecy, most of the villagers knew who were the men who had become weretigers. He rapidly thought of the names of those men who had their tiger spirits in this region. […] "Kuovi! Menuolhuolie! Wetsho! Is this the way to treat your clansman? I am Vilie, son of Kedo, your clansman. I am not here to do you harm. Why are you treating me as a stranger? I come in peace. You owe me your hospitality. I am your guest!" He shouted these words out with absolute faith that they were being listened to and heeded. Sure enough the animal retreated for the second time, but not before it had made a call like a warrior's ululating cry" [...]

> "The village of Dilhoma had the most number of weretigers at one point of time. But when the cattle in the village began to diminish alarmingly, the village council demanded that the men send their tigers away to another region. This was done and the cattle population was restored in the next months." (WTRS, 2014: 25-27)

The respect for tiger as Elder Brother as well as the fear of his intelligence and prowess (and of his master spirit Theku-rho[440]), furthermore gave rise to elaborate and complicated ritual observances in the case of a tiger-killing:

> "His paternal uncle ran to him with some grains of soybean in his hand. He was stern as he rebuked his nephew: 'They say you have killed our elder brother who was kind and gentle. Do not come.' Vilau stopped and gravely replied, 'Apfü, it was not I. It was the spear that struck him down.' [...] A tiger kill was an unusual event. The tiger was beheaded. Then the men proceeded to open it, cutting out its heart and kidneys, which they wrapped in straw and chilli leaves. Another man took the mess and thrust it into its mouth. They then opened the tiger's mouth with a stick and took the head to a waterfall. The eldest among the men stepped forward and declared: 'When your relatives come asking for you, be smooth-voiced as the straw and the leaves of the chilli and may your voice be as unclear as the sound of this waterfall so that your kin will never discover who killed you.' The head of the tiger was placed under the waterfall in such a way that the water ran through its mouth. Levi remembered that this was done so that when other tigers came to avenge him, they would hear only the sound of the waterfall which would echo: 'thevo, thevo, thevo,' and the tigers would go away angrily and kill the pig, believing it had killed their brother. […] He was made to hoe a new water channel from which he would fetch water. When he reached his house, he continued the ritual by making a new fire from split bamboos. […] Vilau proceeded to cook his food at the new fireplace, initiating the five-day ritual. " (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 15-17)

> "The headman was waiting at the gate and said, 'Do not come. You have killed our elder brother, do not come.' That was the traditional initiation of the many rituals of tiger killing. […] Rhalie repeated what Pele had whispered to him: 'It was not I, apfu-o. It was the spear who killed Tiger.'" (SOTT, 2017: 131)

Here we get a glimpse of how elaborate tiger killing rituals were. This segment further shows that spirits lived on beyond death, so that the killed tiger's spirit may still inform other tigers, or the master-spirit Theku-rho, who killed him, so that they would avenge him. It also came with taboos on eating the meat of tigers (for women, at least, if not total abstentions), and this cultural reverence as such may have limited the hunting or killing of tigers:

> "The tiger returned, this time roaring loudly as though it were in pain. Vilie woke and pulled his gun to him. Should he shoot and finish it off? He was quite used to shooting smaller animals for food but he had never shot a tiger. For one, he could not use it for food. Secondly, he would be obligated to perform the tiger-killer ritual which was complicated and not meant for a solitary hunter to fulfil alone in the forest. It was a ritual that required the presence of many members of the clan." (WTRS, 2014: 25)

At the same time, it did not prevent the killings of tigers altogether, as the above quotes equally show, and the very real threat of the tiger perhaps made it a worthy opponent rather than a friend:

> "'Vilau has killed a tiger!' a man was shouting up the valley. […] The men laid the animal down on the open space, below the last house, and they began the tekhu kete. Turn by turn, the men came to strike at the dead tiger with their spears. Male children were encouraged to thrust their spears at different parts of the tiger's body so that their fear of the tiger would be diminished and their hearts strengthened." (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 15)

Thus, perhaps paradoxically, as shown in the following passage, it was also a source of pride to have managed to kill a tiger, and tiger killings do appear prominently in the books as well:

> "'It was bigger than the tiger Vito's father killed,' Lato claimed. 'No, that was just as big. What would you know? That was only the second tiger you had seen,' Levi stated in a rather superior way for he had seen at least four tigers killed by their men. The second was the most ferocious. It had killed a man and three cows. The whole village rose to chase it and in the end, Levi's grandfather had shot it with his musket. After that some other men had also shot it but the first shot had been his." (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 17)

Yet, the passage continues to consider the sibling relation with tiger as protection against attacks:

> "'Do you know why we call the tiger "elder brother"?' Levi asked his younger brother. [...] 'Every child of this village knows the answer to that question. It is because man and tiger and spirit were once brothers. When we were hunting two months ago, we heard a tiger howling. Delhi shouted, "It is only us, elder brother" and he stopped growling immediately.'" (Ibid.: 18)

Such paradoxes speak to the complexity of the relationship maintained with tiger, as indeed the origin story also reflects: it is one of respect, yet rivalry for survival as well, only sometimes preventing them from becoming each other's prey. Despite the threat, people still regard tiger as an Elder brother then,[442] and at least to some extent, this diminished killings of tigers. In any case, tigers were and are acknowledged as powerful, agential, intelligent, and respected kin, to whom the Nagas are intimately tied through their sense of cultural and spiritual identity.

4.2 Fear, Gratitude and Respect for *Terhuomia* and *Ruopfü*

> "Travel carefully Saab, the forest is dangerous to those who don't know it, but it can be kind to those who befriend it." (WTRS, 2014: 20)

As introduced, in Naga cosmologies, the forest is not only the abode of biodiversity, but also of a (related) diversity of spirits, among which many varied 'lower deities' called *Terhuomia* in Angami, who can be benevolent, ambivalent, but largely also malevolent to humans. As such, the forest indeed gains the agency of being kind or dangerous, and living well requires practices that show your respect for the forces (beyond your own effort) that allow you to prosper:

> "The village had never known a year of famine and want. That thought jolted Levi out of his reverie. So it was true what the elders said: If you honour the spirits, they will bless you, if you defy them, you will learn how mortal man is." (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 50)[441]

Boundaries needed to be established around villages (with such old (invisible) village boundary lines still executing power today[443]) and houses demarcated as places occupied by humans:

> "Bilie[...] hung a medium-sized piece of wood over the partially built house. 'What is it for?' Levi asked incredulously. […] Bilie scoffed, 'This is what comes of absenting yourself from the village for so long. Heed my words, Levi, this wood is your house-guardian in the night. It tells the spirits when they come and try to occupy the house, 'I am master, the house belongs to me.' (Ibid.: 64)

The understanding of land being originally owned by spirits, logically also affects how the taking and using of resources from the forest is experienced, as explained in WTRS:

> "It was true then what the old people said of the unclean forest. There were others who made it their home. He tried to think of the rules of hospitality. If he took firewood or gathered herbs from the forest, he should acknowledge the owners. What was it his mother used to say when they had gathered herbs so many years ago? *Terhumia peziemu*. Thanks be to the spirits." (2014: 80).

Speaking with Kire about these 'rules of hospitality', the spirit land owners, and resulting practices of thanking the spirits for foraged and harvested foods, she compares such a practice to

one she found in Northern Norway where she lives, and shares about the sequel to WTRS, in which the narration of spirits as land owners is further developed, as being territorial:

> "Our culture is so particular about etiquette. Even when you go to a forest, and, that is something that North-Norwegians also do, when you go to the forest and [...] take berries [...] you're always to tell the forest spirits, kan jeg fårlaner, can I borrow. [...] They will use it when you take anything, even a stone, and it's greatly connected to what Vilie says when he's in the forest, 'terhuomia pezieme', thanks be to the spirits, and I've written about that, in the sequel to this story, that [...] the spirits have different territories, marked out for them, so they are called territorial spirits and they have certain geographies. But if they would go beyond that, they could come into conflict with spirits of the next territory. [...] [When the River Sleeps] it's very much about finding connection with nature, and then, staying connected, and it's also kind of harvesting from nature and supernature, knowledge of how to live life."[444]

It becomes clear then, that all things harvested, or *received*, are really not under human's dominion or ownership - it is borrowed, or given, and an act of showing gratitude is in place. 'Nature' and 'supernature' are thereby the same realms, and 'knowledge of how to live life' means following an etiquette which makes sure that you stay in good relationship with both.

Success in the hunt was also rather *granted* by the realm of forest spirits *terhuomia*, namely by the protector or guardian of wild animals, *Chükhieu*,[446] who could either bless or ruin the success of your hunt. As such, hunters depended on a good relationship with *Chükhieu*:

> "They were young yet and their minds full of the mystery and beauty of the forests beyond their village world. Penyü, Levi's closest friend, was sometimes scornful of the stories. But Levi knew there was some truth to them. Hadn't his own father met Chükhieo on one of his hunts? Levi vividly remembered his father's account of the hair-covered wiry little spirit who he found in one of his porcupine traps. Spitting and hissing, Chükhieo was furiously trying to break free of the trap. Vicha, Levi's father, coming upon the struggling form, quickly realised that it was no animal, but the guardian of wildlife himself caught in his trap. He pounced on him and held him fast, even while the spirit guardian of wildlife tried to free himself. Vicha's mind raced. He had heard of hunters granted game by Chükhieo when they were fortunate enough to catch him. He steeled his heart and said, 'If you give me a deer to feed my family, I'll set you free.' The little spirit did not speak but nodded his head every so slightly so the hunter freed him. Chükhieo lithely stepped out of the trap and bounded up the hill. But before he was halfway up, he gave a shrill whistle and pointed his finger in the opposite direction. The hunter looked and was amazed to see a deer standing nearby, its ears pricked up stiffly. The deer had not seen him and he quickly threw his spear." (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 31-32)

Her two characters reflect the current contested nature of some of the stories, where Penyü is sceptical, but Levi believes. Yet, the passage demonstrates the wildlife guardian's prowess to command wildlife, and *Chükhieu* here grants a deer after the hunter indicates he needs it to feed his family, suggesting a type of hunting ethic. Niketu Iralu in our conversation also shared about a rock near Khonoma, which would be used by hunters to determine Chükhieu's favour:

> "We have in my village Khonoma, [a] prominent rock face [that] nobody can reach [...] hanging over the valley, [...] in a particular place you look at it, it looks like the face of a human being. And, he is… for centuries, he was given the name of the guardian of the wild animals, and traditionally if you're going hunting, [...] you have to look at [...] that rock face, and it's [...] looking at everybody, and that's way down from the valley [that] you have to look at it. If [there is] sadness [...] in the face of this rock face, no use going to the forest, you will not get anything. If he is happy, then you are allowed to have your share."[447]

As such we can see that the infusing of the land with spiritual meaning[448] guides behaviour, and that hunting success was determined by the wildlife guardian spirit, so that accordingly, hunting success was also conceived to be blessed by the guardian. But then still, as Niketu Iralu narrates it, this meant 'having your share'. With regards to hunters' experiences with other terhuomia, Easterine Kire furthermore shares to me in our conversation (2021) how hunters developed a type of whistling language to communicate while they are in the forest. This allows them to communicate over distance, but also prevents them from being 'spirited away', as spirits are believed to gain more power over a person's *ruopfü* once they've learnt your name:

> "Especially in a forest where they have never been before, and especially if it's like a virgin forest, they're very very careful, because they shouldn't call out each other by name. If they do, the spirits learn their names, and spirit them away. Because that has happened so often, [...] they whistle, and Tenyidie is a musical language, it's tonal, so it's possible to whistle somebody's name and the person would know. And it's also possible to carry out a conversation just whistling [...]. Then, there is just so many rules, with hunters, again, when they're hunting in new territory, they have to be so careful, that they don't get deceived by spirits pretending to be animals, because, there's a character of spirits who make animal calls and when people hear that, experienced hunters are careful, but inexperienced hunters go on, and they end up shooting their own friends. So, if you hear too many animals, animal calls, you just have to be very cautious. …Oh, I can't at the moment remember all the other things. It's a whole lot of things."

The development of such a whistle language as adaptation to the forest environment, is part of the type of embedded IEK that may be particular to hunters. Kire furthermore mentions all the types of rules they must consider, when hunting in new territory. She gives the example of not going after too many animal sounds, as it might be a trick; the spirits show themselves to be hunters, as well, with clever means. In that sense, to hunt is also to be prey. It is widely known and believed then, that a person risks losing their own spirit: "The spirit of man was easily lured away by spirits of the forest and spirits of unclean places for spirit will always hearken to spirit." (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 123) This is especially a risk when going to certain parts of the 'deep jungle' uninhabited by humans, as such avoiding incursions without reason. However even in less dense forests you have not been before, and on well travelled roads between villages, one could be at risk. Of such spirit attacks, Kire's books indeed abound with examples:

> "Vikhwelie came back six days after he went missing, bone-thin and near death. He had a terrifying tale to tell. Tall, dark creatures had carried him off against his will, keeping him for days altogether. When the search party came near, they covered his mouth so that he could not shout. Neither could he run nor move because his limbs obeyed their will, and they led him where they would. They travelled long distances together and went near wild animals. [...] the animals would suddenly turn away in fear of the spirit beings that held him in their power. When the whole village came out to search for him, he felt their power weakening and on the fifth night, he found the strength to start running. [...] Vikhwelie ran wildly through the forest paths with the spirits at his heels. They made horrible noises and sent trees crashing into his path but he ran towards the village and sanity. [...] When he reached the village path, he felt them retreating." (Ibid.: 37)

Spirits are therefore definitely not only benevolent - indeed, they were rather conceived of as dangerous and fearsome forces to be reckoned with. Here we again also see the type of spirit territoriality that Kire spoke of; only in this case it becomes clear how the village, and its

boundary lines, indeed form a type of protection from the spirits, as it is human territory. The spirits don't only chase or trick hunters with animal sounds, they are also believed to lure humans with songs: "beautiful long-haired girls playing and singing to each other in the forest [...] to enchant humans and draw them to the unclean forest so they would die and come to live with them there" (WTRS, 2014, p.76). After which the book *Forest Song (2011)* is also named:

> "When you hear a forest song, you should close your ears and begin to run from the spot. It's the song of the spirits of the forest and if you stop to listen, they draw you into the woods and they keep you there for days and days feeding you roots and worms." (FS, 2011: 9-10)

It seems that some of this spirit activity is because the spirits seek proximity to humans, and not all those whose souls are stolen may want to return, with the spirits of children being considered as especially ambivalent, as if not fully merged yet with their human host bodies:

> "The older men were familiar with this kind of search, for many were the men and women who had disappeared in like manner, and been found again by community searches on a big scale. Three children spirited away at different times had the most amazing stories to tell. The youngest was fed worms and roots of plants. He went missing for a week and when they feared they would not find him alive, a man was stopped in his tracks by the sounds of children's laughter deep in the forests. He stepped out of the path till the voices drew nearer. When they were in full view of the man, he struggled not to cry out for the child's companion was so fair, a creature so transparently beautiful he gasped inwardly at the sight. The pair went past him and as they rounded a corner, he shook himself out of the trance he had fallen into and rushed out after them. He pulled the human child aside and pushed away the spirit-child. […] To his horror, the human child struggled out of his grasp. When the man caught him again, the child bit his arm until blood came out. […] The boy's parents were overjoyed but he was sullen for many days, staring silently at the woods in the evenings for long periods at a time." (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 34 -36)

This speaks to the type of close relation that especially children may feel with the forest and its spirits. Also when children are born, it must therefore be assured that their spirits stay with them:

> "As the baby squealed into the world, Kovi quickly smeared saliva on his finger and touched it to his daughter's forehead with the words, 'I am first.' that ensured that the spirits could not claim the child before him. […] There had been too many deaths of newborns in the village because their fathers had not been alert enough to stake claim before the spirits." (Ibid.: 6)

In such an instance of spirit theft, when a person's *ruopfü* stayed behind in the forest for example, the person would get very sick, might go mad, and may even die. As already shared above, names seemed to hold a kind of magic, as it was believed to be unsafe to utter one's own name to prevent spirit theft, but even to utter the name of (word for) tiger in the forest, as this would anger tigers.[449] Yet, at the same time, in order to retrieve back one's spirit after having lost it - which is the only way to recover from the bodily illness caused from losing it - people themselves, or their relatives, would return to the place where the spirit might have stayed behind, calling the name of its owner, to entice the spirit back home to the body.[450] Even if the threats that exist(ed) from tigers could be argued to have given rise to the belief in spirit disappearances,[451] they are and can be differentiated between, so narrates Kire in the following passage:

> "The elders, keeping in mind Do-u's words, thought that Vikhwelie might have been killed by the tiger. But there was no evidence of a struggle anywhere and no tell-tale blood in the places they had so carefully scoured that afternoon. The seers were now consulted as they had not been consulted before. The seer of the Thevo clan said, 'He is not far from where you have been searching today. But his hands and feet are bound and his mouth too.' […] the Thevo elders explained his words to the younger men and said, 'It will not be by the hands of men. This is a clear case of spiriting and we must set off early tomorrow. But if he has been spirited away, there will be danger to the rest of us, beware!' The next morning they stuck bitter wormwood behind their ears before they reached the forests." (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 34 -36)

Bitter wormwood is a potent plant which was believed to ward off bad spirits. Both spirit activity, and the presence of wild animals, made the forest paths dangerous, then, and as such would be avoided especially at night:

> "They usually avoided being on the path so late in the evening. They had heard too many stories of spirits waylaying field-goers on their way home. [...] When they reached the junction, they looked back but saw nothing. The trees were emotionless, and the fields were very distant now. They were both relieved that they had completed their journey without encountering any wild animals or spirits." (DRML, 2017: 13-14)

Spirits were however also sought for protection, and the future glimpsed through rituals:

> "'Death stalks a warrior; can any mother be happy knowing that? But leave this talk. We must cast your fortune tomorrow. Let us not forget any ritual that will ensure your protection. The spirits are not malevolent to one who has performed the rituals.' The next morning, they killed a young rooster and noted that its right leg was crossed over the left in death. It was good fortune casting." (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 43)

As becomes clear through these passages, and as was also observed by Bhattacharya (2020) about Kire's stories, the spiritual connection to the more-than-human world of Naga cosmology is based more on fear and the appeasement of spirits -also to receive blessings- than on professions of love. The spirits that inhabit the world are most of all acknowledged as powerful, and deserving of respect. Regarding the spirits, ruopfü, of dead people, the books also offer some passages:[459]

> "I knew that I had really seen her. It was incredible that I did not feel any fear. [...] It is not unusual among our people to sight the dead a few days after they died. We say it is their way of bidding a last farewell to their loved ones." [...] "'[...] We say that spirits show themselves to stronger people, never to the weak-hearted, so you should be proud and happy that Grandmother chose to show herself to you." "But it doesn't mean that her spirit is not at rest, does it, Mother? What about the spirits of all the white soldiers from the war that we keep seeing around here? Don't people say they are unquiet spirits? [...]"" [...] (ATM, 2007: 290-1, 294)

> "'[...] But don't tell others about it. There is such fear of spirits among our people and we don't want anyone to spread a rumour that your grandmother has returned and is haunting her relatives." [...] Such families were called by a special name, "terhuo ze" which meant those who befriend spirits. [...] the most feared of spirits were those of old women." (Ibid.: 296-298)

Even ancestral spirits are here narrated to be feared, although they can also act as benevolent guardians. Ghost-like spirits, like those of white soldiers, are however narrated as actually dangerous, with a passage narrating a character falling in love with the spirit, and dying:

> "old women still said that it was not a good thing to go too early to the pond. The spirit of the white man was often seen there by early risers. In the years that he was sighted, young unmarried women died in great numbers." (Ibid.: 34)

The extent to which spirits are feared becomes especially clear when the young Lieno remarks about her journeys to the water source in the morning that: "Some mornings, drunks would be staggering home. I welcomed the sight of these men and blest them for going home so late. A real man, even if he were dead drunk, was preferable any day to a spirit." (Ibid.)

Kire's following passage seems to teach that the power of ambivalent forces or spirits has to be mediated by adhering to an ethic of maintaining good relations not only with the more-than-human, but also between humans;[452] suggesting a good conscience, as the highest form of (moral) protection:

> "The sleeping river is guarded by the widow women spirits. If you are protected they will not harm you, but if you are unprotected, you will be torn to pieces by them. You cannot go there ignorant of the rules." [..] "Any evil action of yours will weigh on your conscience, and make you vulnerable to their onslaught. It is an attack, there's nothing gentle about it. So your protection is your own good heart and your clear conscience. Harbour no evil against any man when you are going on this trip." (WTRS, 2014: 92-93)

Kire's *When the River Sleeps* (2014) is a story based on a hunting legend that was told to her, about a stone in the sleeping river that held magical powers, so that it was promised to bring prosperity.[453] Stones generally play a particular role in Tenyimia Naga spirituality, as some are believed to be possessed with certain powers, such as stones that will allow you to divine your future marriage partner in your dream after touching it or the outcome of the hunt, or stones that will cause rain or storms if touched, or stones placed by (malevolent) spirits:[455]

> "[He] narrated the strange tale of a night when the villagers of Khonoma had been kept awake by the ululating of men far into the night. […] When day broke, they found a rock newly erected at a place now known by the name of the stone, Terhuo tsiese, spirit-erected stone. 'Did you hear the chanting, Apfü?' Levi asked when Lonyü had finished. 'No, my son, I am old but not that old. This story was told me by my grandfather whose great-grandfather saw it.'" (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 31)

This passage also reflects how the stories about such stones, and other stories related to the land, were passed on over the generations through storytelling, as such connecting people to their ancestors as well as the land through stories. Hutton also observed that "Special stones are regarded as the abode of spirits all over the Naga Hills," (1921: 407)[456] Kire told me about stones which could cause storms, when we spoke of certain 'taboo areas' due to spirit activity:[457]

> "There are stones in and around Khonoma, and a woman showed me once, and it's taboo to touch those stones. So even if it is covered with weeds, you never clear the weeds, because when you do that, [...] when you accidentally touch the stone, it will cause a great storm" [...] "There is another village, [....] where there is a mother stone, and a smaller stone, and they believe it's the bodies of a woman who was sent away by her husband, and she was carrying a one or two year old child, and they went missing, and then many months after, they found these two stones, so, whenever the stones are moved, [...] the weather just drastically changes. So, there is a big taboo on touching those two stones. There is even a story that the Indian army, came to the village, and they wanted to set up camp, and they were trying to take the stones, and use them to set up camp, and the villagers would tell them, 'don't do that, it's not good,' they won't listen, and then *starts smiling* a terrible storm came"[458]

The land is therefore sentient and powerful, and comes with a complex set of trans-generationally transmitted rules of behaviour and storylines.

From all the afore-mentioned passages we have seen that spirits, of forest elements and of people likewise, have agency, make relationships across species 'divides', and are mobile. Besides tigermen, then, there were also other characters believed to possess specific powers that allowed for the gleaning of knowledge of, communication with, or indeed soul travel to the realm where human and spirits meet. Seers are presented as such characters that could read omens and divine the future:

> "The seer was very well versed in the things of the spiritual world, and whatever he had prophesied for the village had always come to pass. [...] [Seer:] "Sometimes the struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual powers which you would be quite foolish to defy with gunpowder."" (WTRS, 2014: p. 31)

Notably, there are also those skilled at dreaming practices, to divine omens or the future, or mediate with spirits: "Any young girl who received a proposal of marriage would consider her dreams, and give an answer depending on what she had dreamed of." (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 59-60) This 'dreamscience', as Hutton (1921) first called it, includes a lexicon of dream symbolism helping to interpret meanings of dreams: "'He's dead isn't he?' […] 'Roko, I dreamt I saw a great tree of the forest fall to the ground.'" (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 136)[460] Here, the symbolism of a big tree falling means that an important figure within the family or community, such as the head of the house or an elder, is about to die.[461] Or, in *ATM* (2007) when young *Pete* dies:

> "Father said that he saw Grandfather waiting outside our house and calling one of the boys out of the house. He saw that it was one of the boys, not me. Isn't is strange that dreams always come true especially if it is dreams of death in the family?" (p. 153)

Besides the interpretation of such dream lexicons, omens were furthermore read in all kinds of signs, with certain animals representing bad omens for example, such as the black slow loris.[462] Besides characters with such beneficial powers, some were believed to be possessed or cursed by certain powers, such as *Kirhupfümia*: "a minority group of women thought to have the power of maiming, blinding or killing people simply by pointing at them with their fingers." (WTRS, 2014: 244) This speaks to a type of 'witches', that do not choose such powers, but are overcome by it. Occurring again in SIMF (2018 [2003]):

> "as they set out for the fields, they chose a thriving young plant and the younger woman pointed at it with her finger. On their way home in the evening, they passed by the same plant and could not recognise it at first. Its flowers had fallen to the ground and the leaves were wilted, as though singed by bush fire, and the plant that was so verdant in the morning now stood lifeless, withered from the roots. The younger woman gasped in realisation: 'Ah! So that is it. That is the reason we will never wed. We are Kirhupfümia and what is born of us will never find life. Our destiny tends towards death and destruction, not life.'" (p. 51-52)

In conclusion, the acknowledgement of the presence of spirits in nature, both in biotic and abiotic parts of it, and generally forces beyond our comprehension, creates a complicated network of social relationships between humans and with their surroundings full of sentient subjects, that are based on respect for territoriality, fear of malevolent powers, acknowledgement of spirits' agencies (which includes animals' spirits), and human reliance on their blessing to survive. These gave rise to many varied rituals and taboo observances, like the tiger killing rituals, or those

mentioned with regards to stones, to alleviate the threat of such forces, appease them, read signs, or make sure they are respected and thanked diligently.

4.3 Taboos, Rules & Rituals: *Penyü*, *Kenyü* & *Nanyü*

Naga village life was and is ruled by customary law. Often this includes the involvement of the village council to deliver justice: "Prevented from killing himself, Penyü went away to the village of Bakieria, beginning the customary exile for seven years to atone for accidental killing." (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 139) Additionally, a complex set of 'taboo' practices, rituals and moral rules, regulated relationships in the social community of humans as well as beyond the human. Building on Fürer-Haimendorf and Mills (1926), Heneise (2019) explains that among Chakhesang Nagas, when the village head *Kemovo*'s eldest sons were to settle new villages, they would first have to negotiate with the *terhuomia*, or master spirits of the land, for example, which he calls a 'ritual pact', *nanyü*. A son would do so by making:

> "a fire with wood from his father's hearth, and lay down and dream. In his dream he would seek out the terhuomia or spirit masters of the land and negotiate for a new human settlement, use of the land and permission to hunt wild game. In exchange, the new village […] would agree to an annual village-wide public ritual. Therefore, in order to safely cultivate, hunt and engage in such things as drawing water from local water sources, there had to be an agreement of exchange already in place or the terhuomia would cause the settlers considerable harm." (Heneise, 2019: 6)

Land settlement thereby took the form of a type of spiritual legal settlement with the original owners, which included a promise of reciprocity, by way of thanksgiving rituals. Other ways by which master spirits' permission was gauged was through the behaviour of domestic animals such as cows, dogs, and roosters, that would be taken along when searching a place to settle (see e.g. Hutton, 1921: p. 258), so that they acted as translators of spirits' blessings and warnings. Sanyü's narration of Khonoma's settlement reflects that 'sacred chickens' were also used in village settlement rituals, and that they were also used to read omens (1987: 94-5). Also after village settlement, chickens or roosters feature distinctly in rituals of spirit appeasement:

> "On the decline of the full moon, Terhase would be held, the ritual of making peace with the spirits. It was at Terhase that the priest of the Thepa clan and Thevo clan each took a chicken beyond the village gate. […] The Thevo priest, an old man with fierce eyes, called loudly: Spirit Vo-o, we were wondering where you were but here you are. We have come to solicit peace between man and spirit. Let there be no destruction and calamity, no death and disease and plague. Who is honest, you are honest. Who is honest, I am honest. We will compete with each other in honesty. The chickens were released after this pronouncement and they went squawking and flapping into the woods nearby. […] If you break the taboos, you break yourself, her father had always said that and she had been an obedient daughter keeping her father's words close to her heart." (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 14)

> "'On the no-work day, Keviselie's household rose early and got ready as Keviselie brought out the chicken of sacrifice, an all-over red rooster. […] When everyone had touched the chicken, Keviselie took the chicken from his wife and spoke loudly: 'May the ceremony I am about to perform take place in the proper manner; may all the food prepared for the ceremony be abundant.'(Ibid.: 23)

Spirit is here conceived to live outside of the village gate, yet must be appeased so that misfortune like death and disease can be prevented.[484] Spirit is here spoken to as a person, and given a gift (the chickens). As we have seen above, the spirit world encompasses all that is unknown, and potentially dangerous, but through such rituals, rules and taboos, it is also clear that relations to the spirits were maintained to safeguard wellbeing, and speak to a clear understandings of ethical behaviour and rules of social conduct, including taboos, etiquette, or 'gennas', shaping both village and forest relationships:

> "[Stories about Kirhupfümia] and stories like it, Levi had given up on trying to understand. The village was full of them, the unclean places of the forest, the dark water sources which were death to bathe in; how stories nestled in them but would never be told for who would give up life to go near them and listen to their stories, no matter how sweet, how wonderful! There they stayed, dark brooding secrets each village hinted at but were powerless to disclose. There were the other things of the spirit, not strange, but clear truths with no mystery surrounding them, the truths that protected the people if they had lived their lives protecting those truths. Like the genna days—no one violates a genna day; they are told the story of Khriesenu and his lady-love by way of warning. Khriesenu, yielding to his love's request, took her to the forest on a genna day. She fell and broke her leg, and died." (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 51-52)

> "You should tell him it is a genna-day, and it is good for him to rest on a genna-day." "They probably don't do this anymore where he comes from but he is a wise one. I'm sure he will understand it is dangerous to travel on a genna-day." […] "Every time a person catches the sleeping river, we who live here observe a genna-day, a no-work day. The villagers here will not do any work in their fields today. They will not go fishing or go to look at their traps. It is a day of thanksgiving for delivered lives." (WTRS, 2014: 109)

Kire explains 'genna' in the glossary as: "Genna day: a day declared as a no-work day. It is a taboo to work on genna days and the cultural belief is that those who violate genna days are punished with injuries and accidents that have even resulted in death." (Ibid.) Here genna days (*penyü*, see below) are narrated as essential elements of a spiritually harmonious, and structured life, as Kire already mentioned when she narrated the creation story in ch. 4.1. Resting, from the otherwise hard labour, constituted a day of thanksgiving to all that was already given, and perhaps also gives rest to the more-than-human world from human toil. It thereby seems to speak to an ethic of balance, for a good life, aligned with the spirit world (that is quite counter to current ideas of 'progress' as never-ending growth).

However, as introduced in the context chapter, 'genna' lumps together three distinct taboo observance practices. In Tenyidie, these are called *Nanyü, Penyü*, and *Kenyü*. Following Easterine Kire's explanations of the concepts,[464] *Nanyü* is a ritual, for example in the context of a festival, or during important events such as village settlement, birth and death, which needs to be performed correctly for everything to go well.[465] *Penyü* and *Kenyü* have been used interchangeably by people, according to Kire, but are subtly different. *Penyü* is most often applicable to a taboo day, which usually means that certain things cannot be done by the whole community that day, such as working in the fields, and as such constitutes a rest day.[466] Sometimes such a prohibition is called kenyü, when it applies to individual conduct, while penyü

applies to the whole community simultaneously, according to Hutton.[467] *Kenyü,* according to Kire, furthermore includes etiquette rules, or refers to bad manners, for it speaks to rules of conduct and behaviour;[468] an example would be the rules guiding the behaviour of youngsters in relation to older relatives, making sure that they treat them with respect. It encompasses both 'magico-religious observances' and social etiquette, including concerning immoral acts as theft, greed,[469] waste (of food or other products)[470] or incorrect observance of traditions.

Greed and arrogance then seem to be generally looked down upon traditionally, as indeed would make sense in a community which depends on the collective good care of land. Therefore, the social structure was also organised alongside practices of communal work, food sharing and feasting when overly blessed, and avoiding excess or fame. Kire narrates such subtly in the next example,[471] which narrates how earned income of youth through community work, would traditionally be spent on shared feasts, but also in Lato's reaction to the idea of a new body-cloth:

> "'Apfü, our age-group has earned much this year,' said Lato. 'Excellent,' his mother replied, 'You will have a good feast then.' 'My first,' smiled Lato. 'Yes, your first. I think it is time to make you a new body-cloth,' his mother commented. The boy blushed a bit and spoke again, 'Nothing wrong with my old one, Apfü, I've barely worn it.'" (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 39-40)

Regarding the taboo on wasting food or other products, it seems deeply rooted, at least in Angami culture: "nothing whatever is wasted in an Angami household, not even the bad eggs" (Hutton, 1921: 39). We find several examples in Kire:

> "Nearly one third of the previous year's harvest had been spoiled by rain that had pelted down mercilessly on the final day as they were beating the sheaves of paddy to separate the grains from the stalks. Since it was taboo to throw away grain, they had brought it all inside, but the grain turned black within weeks and had to be used for chicken feed." (DRML, 2017: 2)

> "We rarely had leftovers in our kitchen. My aunt [...] threw away food because the children did not want to eat and she always made too much. Of course, she did not throw it away, as that would have been taboo, but she fed it to the pigs." (ATM, 2007: 2)

Thereby, Kire narrates and passes on such a taboo of, or ethical rule against, food waste. In our conversation, Kire said regarding the taboo on waste in her experience of growing up that:

> "Yes, it was very much there, even in my grandfather's time, they never like us to waste food. And, [...] if one of us spilled food, then my grandfather told us this story that, when he spilled his food, then his mother never gave him more food. [...] you grow up with that, being told stories like that, so you're very careful with food. And there are actual stories of [...] people being wasteful with food, and then becoming very poor, and having to beg, all because they were wasteful with food."[472]

This speaks to how when taboos were broken, punishment was expected to follow. Similarly she expressed regarding a taboo against arrogance:

> "People who meet premature deaths, sometimes you would hear other people say, 'he was arrogant.' So that is a quality that is really looked down upon, and they would find something to talk about, 'Oh, he didn't do that,' or '[...] He was disrespectful to so and so,' [...] that sort of thing. Just the fact of being arrogant can lead to disastrous consequences, [...] that's what is drilled into your heads as a child." (Ibid.)

Another segment brings both taboos on greed and arrogance together, as morals that were taught in the traditional dormitories:

> "[T]heir parent was saying something in great earnest. 'If you are at a community feast and take more than two pieces of meat, shame on you. Others will call you glutton, worse, they will think to themselves, "has no one taught this boy about greed?" This is the key to right living -avoiding excess in anything- be content with your share of land and fields. People who move boundary stones bring death upon themselves. Every individual has a social obligation to the village. When you are older and your hearts are strong within you, you will take on the responsibility of guarding the village while others will go out to earn a great name for our village. Your roles are different but each one is equally important. Never be arrogant, respect yourself sufficiently so that you can fulfil the responsibilities of manhood. It is one thing to be responsible and quite another to be arrogant. A real man does not need to roar to show that he is a man.'" (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 30-31)

We also find this narrated in part of the origin story, as recorded by Hutton (1921: 261-2), when cat goes to Tiger to ask for man whether he could leave some of the game he hunts, but miscommunicates, and tells Tiger to leave *all* the game he hunts for man, so that Tiger gets angry with Man's arrogance and greed, and leaves only fur instead.

Regarding the hunting, or eating of certain animals, there are also rules, notably with regards to tigers. As already exemplified with segments in ch. 4.1, Hutton also observed that "when a tiger is killed the village priest proclaims a non-working day (penna) for the whole village "for the death of an elder brother."" (1921: 92). Like the meat of tigers is forbidden, mostly for women, certain foods are also 'genna' (kenyü) for certain people, such as for young men, for women, or for children. Hutton explains such by the "idea that the properties of animals eaten are liable to pass to the eater" (1921: 92). Furthermore, the hunter traditionally would at first not eat the meat he himself hunted, hunting instead for the community rather than for himself, although regarding this Hutton said: "It is generally held to be genna for a man to eat game killed (by whatever means) by himself until he has killed 100 or 150 head, excluding little birds and quite small mammals." (1921: 84). However, he also observed that "It need hardly be said that this rule is not too rigidly observed." (Ibid.) The origin of the rule however speaks to a social rule of sharing, before taking profit. Nevertheless, we can also see how this sociality of taking care of the community, may also have enhanced the quantity of hunted animals.

When a taboo is violated or a ritual is not performed correctly, this is called *narü* or *natsei*,[475] and in the case of an important taboo, this would need to be counteracted by the observance of a collective *Penyü* taboo day, to make sure the consequences of the broken taboo -in some cases for the whole village- would be prevented. The taboos are therefore rooted in the tight social relations in the village:

> "If you did not heed the taboos, you could live on unharmed for some years, but the day would soon come when the earth would open up to receive you before your time. And then, when that day struck, you went without the compassion of the village. They would bury you but would murmur afterwards, 'Hei, he was a man who never heeded the taboos.' " (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 15)

The observance of penyü days functioned as rituals of appeasement, or ceremonies of thanksgiving, then, to the spirits believed to control all such forces. Specific taboo days with reverence to the force and threat of water, *dzü penyü*, or of fire, *mi penyü*, would mean that in this day respectively no water or fire could be used, so as to prevent disasters related to the element,

such as people dying in floods, or losing their crops in fires. Equally for the threat of animals to crops, there existed a penyü, as part of risks to sustenance that needed mediation:

> "'What is khunuo[476] lievi, Apfü?' he asked. Bilie patiently explained: 'It is a day on which it is taboo for us to work. If we work on this day, our crops will be damaged by insects, birds and animals.' […] There were more genna days before the festival came to an end. The care with which the genna days had been adhered to filled the elders with a sense of well-being. They had successfully held the genna to prevent the paddy dying, and another genna to prevent sterility of the soil as well as the genna to ensure the fertility of the soil. It should go well for this year's harvest, they said to one another." (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 56-57)

As mentioned in the introduction, such rituals with taboo observances occurred systematically during the celebration of important events in the agricultural cycle, currently called festivals. These were also moments to ask blessings for the crops, or show gratitude to the spirits for delivered blessings. Kire also makes reference to such 'festivals' in her books, thereby bringing the rhythm and knowledge contained in such agricultural calendars, and the associated rituals of thanksgiving, also to the awareness of readers of the younger Naga generations:

> "In another week, the genna days when no work was permitted would be declared, one each to prevent the field's failure to bear grain and failure to ripen. She had never violated a no-work day before and had no intentions of starting now." [...] "Two months from now is the feast of Terhünyi when we will bring in our harvests and praise our Creator for his abundance." (Ibid.: 14, 19-20)

Such ritual practices often involved members of several clans, that each had to perform part as descendents of the various original settlers - thereby linking the rituals to ancestors. These practices especially tied certain ceremonial leaders (usually children, or elders of both sexes) to the agricultural cycle - "The harvest in the village had been delayed by a week because the liedepfu, the ritual initiator of the harvest, had lain sick in her bed for a week." (DRML, 2017: 1-2) - and regulated social interactions more generally:

> "On the last day of the festival, two young children were appointed to perform the rhoutho ritual of seed-sowing. […] When everyone had congregated at the fields, the elder pronounced the blessing: 'My paddy may you grow up well, though the weeds are abundant, my paddy grow you around the tree stumps and boulders. It will be the food of generations, the food of wartime, grow bent over with full-husked grain.' […] Walking in different directions, the children sowed their seeds over the fields, trying to cover as much area as they could. […] the day continued to be a genna day, and the villagers returned home without doing any work in their own fields. […] The genna included a taboo on talking to outsiders. '[…] Ours was a good harvest and I am a fortunate woman, well provided for by the spirits. […] Let our visitors not think that we are rude, but let them understand that we have to honour the spirits, as they also do in the places where they come from.'" (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 81-83)

At large, the seasonal patterns were furthermore linked to the seasons of a human's life, in the same way that fertility was a quality of well being shared between the land and people, as exemplified by the Tekranyi festival of fertility for both soil and young married couples[477]:

> "Many were married now for the harvest was over and the marriage season had been utilised properly." [...] "We should let things go according to their appointed seasons. We are not in such a hurry that we should make a marriage season apart from that made by our ancestors." (Ibid.: 30, 59-60)

Taboos furthermore applied to certain places, forest areas, or landmarks. As we already saw with the prohibition to interfere with, and veneration of, certain special looking stones, or spirits associated with a specific river, this could also apply to other landscape features. An example being the following passage, where a tree is described as 'the gateway to the spiritual world'[478] giving a strong indication for some spaces being regarded as sacred:[479]

> "'Azuo, look!' Atuonuo shouted in relief. No one could mistake that gigantic tree, which stood at the gateway to the spiritual world, for any other. Its branches spread so wide that it could make a roof for five houses on either side. One could not see the top as it seemed to pierce the skies and disappear into the clouds. On the lower branches were ripe wood apples begging to be picked. 'Don't touch them. No one who picks the wood apples gets back home alive,' Visenuo whispered." (DRML, 2017: 83)

Kia also mentioned that certain parts of the deep forest uninhabited by people, may constitute taboo areas, where hunting taboos, *rüzhou kenyü* [*T*], may apply.[483] Furthermore, there were those forest patches considered 'unclean', which were avoided: "The rainforest was shunned by both villages and local hunters alike. It was indeed the *Rarhuria,* the unclean forest feared by all who knew of it." (WTRS, 2014: 50) As such, taboo areas also safeguarded some patches of forests from exploitation.

4.4 Practical Indigenous Ecological Knowledges

As Kire's books are predominantly rooted in lived Naga experiences, they also include many passages on practical knowledges related to sustenance practices, including agricultural methods, plants gathered, hunting techniques and crafts - indeed alongside the spiritual knowledges that accompany such sustenance practices. Through such narrations we gain insight into the immense body of knowledge that a local sustenance livelihood entails. The previously mentioned 'unclean' taboo areas, *Rarhuria*, seem for example to have been recognised to cause illness (ascribed to the invisible agency of a spirit, which indeed, a virus more or less is). As such rendering them taboo also constitutes a good method of preventing infection, and thereby likely a preventative measure against Malaria:

> "The interior of the forest was dark and dank. Those who unknowingly wandered in the Rarhuria complained of fever and headaches afterwards. There were enough cases of fever to warrant labelling the rainforest an unclean area in village terminology." (Ibid.: 50-51)

Nevertheless, if one would end up catching a fever, the body of traditional knowledges would allow one to heal oneself with the use of local herbs, so Kire continues to narrate, taking care to mention the local names where possible:

> "Vilie realised he had contracted a fever" […] "It felt like a malarial fever and it left him weak when it finally left him. He thought of the people from his village who used to fall sick when they wandered into the Rarhuria while out hunting or cutting wood. To cure them the seer would give them a drink made of ginseng and tsomhou,[487] the wild sour seed that grew on trees." (Ibid.: 52-54)

Kire's books furthermore provide an introductory guide to wild edibles that are collected:

> "On the branches of the tree he was resting beneath were stalks of jotho the soft-stalked herb that could be added to almost any broth. He decided he would first make a shelter and then gather some jotho for his pot. There were also young gara and gapa plants at the base of the tree. He would not want for food here." (Ibid.: 50)[488]

Speaking with Easterine (2021) about the use of Tenyidie names, in the books, she furthermore explained how they communicate the cultural relations to such plants:

> "I want to keep those native terms, it's important; if I just use the english word for it, I have put it in the glossary. Since I write for Nagas first, I want them to understand and relate to the herb, I want them to feel 'oh right it's this one,' and 'this is the way you cook it', and… if I use only the english name then that connection will be lost, and it's pointless to write about it like that"

In her books she furthermore shares about plants harvested for crafts, such as weaving[489] baskets:

> "Younger boys learnt to weave baskets. As they grew older, they became adept at weaving the carrying baskets the women used for carrying water and wood. [...] In the very finely woven baskets they carried grain, and the grain baskets were among the most intricate to make. Thus, basket weaving progressed from simple weaving for the kitchen's needs to the later stages which became veritable works of art." (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 10)

> "Barkweaving was a dying art and it pleased him to see the women diligently harvesting the nettle plants in to their baskets. […] "I learnt it from my grandmother and I am trying to pass it on to my nieces," the woman spoke" (WTRS, 2014: 33)

But also of other items, such as nets: "The warriors made crude nets of cane to hold rocks, and when they cut the cane, a volley of rocks fell upon the ascending soldiers, killing and wounding, and deterring any further attacks." (SIMF, 2018 [2003].: 104) As well as scarfs. Weaving being a highly respected form of art, therefore, as reflected here: "It is taboo to kill a woman while she is weaving, which is why we took out their looms." (Ibid.: 5) Kire furthermore narrates about various types of wood, and their various functions for building, or the art of making a good fire:

> "They ate well and the two men left for the forest, and in another three hours they were back, bringing with them cane to be split and used for binding a bundle of leaves, wood for constructing a hearth and phrie and kurhi wood. They also brought back segoprü, split bamboo to be used for making fire using friction. It was called segomi. Back in the house, one of the men deftly held a bit of wood between his toes, and rubbed the split bamboo across it swiftly. Soon there was smoke followed by small flames, and a fire was made in the new hearth." (Ibid.]: 21)

Such knowledge of plants and crafts also means the use of what we would now call renewable, sustainable materials, preventing non-biodegradable waste, with the above passage continuing:

> "'Keep the cane in a corner of the porch,' one of the men said to Megozoü. 'It's late today so we'll return tomorrow and weave it into baskets. They'll serve as your plates for the feast.' 'Couldn't we use leaves like everyone else?' Megozoü asked. 'No, it has to be cane baskets for this ceremony, especially for you and your husband.'" (Ibid.)

Indeed, Kire discusses the importance of such IEK, with regards to a Nepali family in WTRS:

> ""What could school possibly teach him [the baby] that his parents could not improve upon? They [Nepali couple] were rich in their knowledge of the ways of the forest, the herbs one could use for food, the animals and birds one could trap and the bitter herbs to counteract the sting of a poisonous snake." (WTRS, 2014: 15)

Among such knowledges, are furthermore also various agricultural knowledges, of which Kire shares bits and pieces of information in various books: "We left the dry leaves and plants in the garden to rot so they would give good manure for next year." (ATM, 2007: 300) And:

> "'Push the soil down like this with your finger,' his mother instructed. She pushed her index finger into the dark loam and deftly planted a paddy stalk in the hole. […] Lato tried to imitate his mother but he had difficulty in keeping the plant down. 'Don't worry,' she laughed, 'You'll soon learn.' " (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 12)

Here we also see her narrate how such practical livelihood knowledges were passed on through praxis. Such IEK furthermore includes knowledge of the agricultural cycle and the reading of the seasons through various signs, ranging from bird calls - "Morning came in the call of a thebuora." (Ibid.: 4) - to weather patterns:[490]

> "The early rain in the months of March and April was used for planting beans, pumpkins and any vegetable belonging to the gourd family. But work began in earnest only when the monsoon rains came to the ancient green valley, and farmers could flood their fields with sufficient water to plant rice" [...] "Cold weather had set in; the elders always took care to see that harvest was begun before the frost. Frost would ruin the harvest as surely as rain would if it was left too late in the fields." (DRML, 2017: 5, 21)

As introduced in the context chapter, these agricultural cycles are furthermore organised by festivals, which constitute ceremonies, and are planned based on understanding of lunar cycles:

> "'Three weeks to Thekranyi from today,' she announced to Lato. 'Really Apfü, how do you do it? How can you tell?' 'Silly boy, it's only a matter of counting the lunar cycle. Today is the first day of the new moon, that's how I know.'" (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 39)

Such food-related sustenance knowledges also pertain to what needs to be done with the harvest to maintain food self-sufficiency throughout the year, such as through preservation techniques:

> "Grandmother and Bano dried a great quantity of vegetables in season-yam leaves, mustard leaves and squash sliced into thin pieces. In the winter months, when we ran out of green vegetables in the garden they used these dried herbs alternately in the broth with dried pieces of meat." (ATM, 2007: 55)

The books thereby present the cultural wellbeing and ecological knowledges that Naga food cultures embody. Regarding self-sufficiency -though some characters in the books may face food shortage as a family- it is mentioned that the Kohima region generally did not experience food scarcity, especially thanks to the terraced fields:

> "The population did not suffer any of the severe starvation and scarcity that other areas suffered. This was because most people cultivated their terrace fields and stocked enough paddy to last them till the next harvest. Mother said even the very poor had grain so no one starved. It was only when the Japanese moved into the town and villages that people learnt what starvation actually was." (Ibid.: 186)

This speaks to the resilience of the traditional sustenance practices in those regions, that Kire may be reminding her readers of. Such IEK related to livelihood resilience, also includes information related to risks, like wild animals for storaged harvests, which may again become increasingly relevant with conservation efforts: "They walked out of the hut, pulled the door shut, and latched it. No one would steal their grain, but wild animals could break in if they didn't hear the sounds of humans for long." (DRML, 2017: 11)

Knowledge about animals and their sounds are of course essential for hunting: "'That's a *vüdie*,' Levi cried excitedly as a bird called from a tree above the field. 'I forgot to bring my catapult.'" (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 13) Hunting with catapult or slingshot is common among young

boys - in current times, increasingly as leisure and commercial activity: "We opened the little tin trunk where Pete kept his clothes and comic books and toys. There was a slingshot and two or three hardened mud balls. They often shot at sparrows with that." (*ATM,* 2007: 148). With *ATM* written about the post-WWII period, this segment indeed reflects how currently young boys often participate in over-hunting.[491] Various other methods of hunting are also mentioned by Kire, such as the knowledge involved in the building of various traditional traps:

> "Her younger son was a trapper of birds, getting up early in the morning to leave for the river and collect birds trapped in the water spots where he had smeared twigs with resin from tree juices. In the dry season, he set up his traps using young bamboo plants, which he knotted and pulled down to the ground in deviously laid traps. When the birds came to eat the grain seeds he left as bait, they found themselves springing the traps." (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 76)

Additionally, Kire reflects in our conversation (2021) about hunters that:

> "Hunters have all these little legends. They are the ones who travel out the furthest, so they are the ones that can map the land. And we still haven't mapped many of our forest areas. So they know, and they're the ones who have the strangest encounters and they bring back the encounters."

This hunting-derived intimate knowledge of the land allows for a mapping of both the geographical-ecological material and the spiritual 'infrastructure' or territories, then, bringing back hunting tales (upon which WTRS was based):

> "He didn't have a map but hunters in these parts did not use maps. They had mapped out the land in their heads. In fact, when an Australian researcher wanted to make a map of the Zuzie region, he used the hunters and their knowledge of places and place-names to construct a fairly accurate map." (WTRS, 2014: 16)

Also various fishing techniques are described, in this case as part of a festival, as one of the communal hunting activities, making also use of knowledge about plants:[492]

> "A few days later, Ngonyi began in earnest. All the men, all except the very old or the uninitiated ones, went to the river. The better part of the day was spent in fishing and catching crabs. The river echoed with the men's voices as their baskets filled up with more and more fish. Lower down where the water collected in a flat shallow section, some of the men had dammed the river and the young men darted in and out of the water, catching the trapped fish. They also used a certain herb, which they placed in the river water to stun the fish momentarily. […] Another group of men positioned themselves on the slopes and patiently waited with muzzleloaders at the ready. They were the hunting group. Soon, younger men drove up game from the lower slopes, shouting, clanging lids. The hunting dogs did their work well and chased a stag up a tree." (Ibid.: 54-55)

Yet, these practices are mentioned by Kire alongside a note that brings understanding of the fact that the game stock is not limitless, as the passage continues: "'A good catch,' one of the elders said, 'we shall feast our women and children very well tomorrow.' 'There was another stag, much bigger, but it got away.' 'Never mind, son, we have to leave some game for Terhünyi.'" (Ibid.: 55) Here we see how Kire might contribute an understanding of (the option of) hunting practices being tied to managing and knowing reasonable limits, to assure not only the wellbeing of the animal populations in question, but thereby also of the villagers across longer time scales. As communal hunting and fishing events operating on teamwork, Kire furthermore elucidates how these practices were tied in with community bonds, celebrated through feasts. How work, 'wealth' and abundance was organised and managed through social institutions and rules, in the

village, are important attributes of IEK systems, as theorised about by Berkes (1999). Kire in that vein, also narrates the work ethic found among villagers, and especially of women, thereby also pointing to how labour was and is divided by gender roles, as well as the ethic and societal expectation to help each other in times of hardship:

> "It was early yet, an hour or so to sunrise but most people in the village started the day at first light, working long and hard in the fields or in the forests, dragging firewood or cutting logs for new houses. [...] 'Have you forgotten we've not finished the field work?' […] 'It is not right to be weaving in the morning when the field is calling us.' [...] After her field work she would have to help her brother at his field. [...] he was disconsolate after his wife's death. She had been a good woman; not one to join the village gossips but keeping herself to her hearth and caring for her husband and children. If it was a day of community work, she would be seen at the most difficult portions, wielding a Dao as well as any man. She had completed much of the field work before she died. The womenfolk were used to being left to finish field work on their own, leaving their men free to go on raids." (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 10-11)

A bit after this segment, the importance of the agricultural work is once more highlighted - not only above weaving, but also above hunting, as a boy's leisure activity,[493] as it relates to the relationships with the spirits' blessings, as well as its vital importance:

> "Son, when our granaries are filled you may feel free to trap or shoot all the birds you want, but remember, a household is not worthy of its name if its granaries are empty. The sun and rain are the Creator's blessings. They rain and shine in turn for us to make our fields and get our harvests. War is part of a village's life but if we have grain, we can withstand war." (Ibid.: 13)[495]

In a sustenance system which faces many threats (floods, droughts, pests and conflict), any excess needs to be shared, to avoid turning the tide of fortune (granted by the spirits) against you, and to balance out the wellbeing of the entire village. So that, when asking for blessings, in Kire's narration such is done by tying one's own welfare to the welfare of the rest of the village:

> "They [...] pronounced this blessing on the new householders: 'This household will fetch and drink water from the water source as long as others are fetching and drinking from it. They will be able to make fire as long as other households can. Their progeny shall be numerous, As numerous as the progeny of spiders and crabs; They shall be blest with long life.'" (Ibid.: 61-62)

Wellbeing is therefore strongly rooted in a shared, communal wellbeing. The organisation of sharing such abundance and blessings, was expressed particularly through various rites of 'feasts of merit,' which would grant the feast-holder honour and reputation,[496] but would also be a way to express gratitude to the spirits:

> " The elders [...] declared the words: 'The spirits are blessing you, you must consider things.' It was their way of indirectly saying, it is time for you to host a Feast of Merit. […] '[…] It is true I have been exceedingly blessed by the spirits in these past three years, and I feel that to neglect to give a Feast of Merit would be an act of ingratitude on my part.' (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 19-20)

Through such 'title-taking' feasts, relationships between the village clans were also maintained, as a priest of each clan would have their role in ceremonies; as well as between kin in different villages, through invitations. Abundance was thereby also shared across wider areas (Ibid.: 19-21). The feast was also sponsored by relatives and friends of the feast giver: "Keviselie's kinsmen and friends had gifted him nine heads of cattle." (Ibid.: 27-28) In this way we see how the economy was organised by continuous reciprocal gifting and really meant to keep relations.[497]

The community structures around feasting also included smaller ones organised by the age groups of younger generations - who would for that purpose work in all the villagers' fields, as we saw. Also the festivals involved extensive practices of food gift exchange between relatives:

> "We have brought you meat and brew of Terhünyi,' […] Peno's mother lifted her daughter's basket down and set it on a bench. Peno proceeded to take out their shares of brew and meat. In return, her mother placed some packed shares of meat into her daughter's basket. [...] Carrying a share of meat and brew, Levi visited his maternal uncle Kovi. At the gate to Kovi's house, he met Lato carrying a similar gift. […] When Levi and Late returned home, they were both carrying ample shares of meat given them by their maternal uncle." (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 79-81)

More generally, maintaining good social relations meant sharing food with one another, as well as helping each other, and communal work was common. Yet this did not mean that life was easy, particularly as a woman, or widow, as this passage also reflects:

> "It was a hard life but it was the only one they knew. In the village, widows and their children had very few options. One could not give up working in the fields. […] "The widows in the village often received help from the others by way of a few days' free labour. Visenuo was grateful for Vilhu's offer but did not want to risk displeasing his wife." (DRML, 2017: 12, 24)

Kia in one of our conversations shared with me that such a sharing and helping ethic is still alive, also in the capital Kohima:

> "Here everyone is like family, even the neighbours, if something happen to us they will just quickly run and be like 'oh what happened, is there anything that we can help,' or […] for example we bought some vegetables, or any greens from the village, so we will just share to everybody, whoever it is […] if we don't have anything to eat, we will just go to neighbour's house and be like 'auntie! [...] Can you please give us some food,' [...] it's so normal for us"[498]

This sociality, ethics of sharing, and the social institutions and events that structure it, cannot be thought out of the sustenance and 'IEK' realm then,[499] as it is indeed the social fabric within which other ethics and values, livelihoods and knowledges, can exist and be maintained. We have seen that such social relations of reciprocity, beyond the boundaries of the village as well.

4.5 Cultural Change and the Meeting of Stories in Kire's Work

4.5.1 The Meeting of Spirits and Christianity

As Kire explains to her readers in the introduction of the book *Forest Song* (2011): "When Christianity appears in oral narratives, it is a nativised Christianity that fits into the native cultural backbone of the society. The creation god, *Kepenuopfü* is almost indistinguishable from the Christian God [...]" (FS, 2011: 3).[500] This interwovenness of the religions comes through in Kire's books; for example in the following character:

> "She has also upheld the good customs of our forefathers so that her children and grandchildren know their place in society and none has brought a bad name to our society. 'Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly [...]' (Leviticus 19:32). So we revere our mother today and pay tribute to the life she has lived. Her father was one among the first Christians in our village and he suffered great persecution for his faith." (ATM, 2007: 180)

But as introduced in ch. 1.2.2, Christianity did not only enter into Naga cosmologies, Naga cosmologies and practices also entered into Christianity. This is visible in how Christian celebrations today incorporate the traditional practice of feasts, and also some traditional games:

> "People who never attended church on normal Sundays would all show up on Christmas morning [...] the preacher did not preach a long sermon. He knew by now that people were impatient to start the feast. [...] After the feast [...] [t]here were games for the children." (Ibid.: 66-8)

Kire narrates in her book *Sky Is My Father: A Naga Village Remembered* (2018) specifically, how the conversion to Christianity was gradually accepted in Khonoma by an interlinking of the faiths, giving the example that chicken sacrifices, *Geisu ruotho* [*T*], to appease the spirits - for example in case of someone falling sick - were no longer necessary as Jesus had already sacrificed himself:

> "Now he no longer believed that the two religions were so diametrically opposed to each other. He thought of Isu on the cross as a chicken sacrifice much greater than all the chicken sacrifices the Angamis had made. Isu was the chicken being sacrificed, for man to be free from disease, and all the ailments the spirits could bring upon him. […] to be a follower of Isu—was to be bound by taboos similar to the old taboos, but by taboos that had meaning and, as in the old way, the breaking of taboos, old or new, would break oneself." (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 121-123)

Here we see that the old taboos are linked to new Chrisian morals or taboos, but nevertheless differentiated, with a somewhat negative gaze on the (irrelevance of the) old ones: 'bound by taboos similar to the old taboos, but by taboos that had meaning.' In WTRS (2014), the replacement of chicken sacrifices by the sacrifice of Christ is mentioned again:

> "A hundred years ago, the non-Christians customarily offered chicken sacrifices if anyone fell sick. They feared death so much that they would bring a chicken into the woods and proclaim, "Life for life" and release the chicken so that it cheeped all evening until it died or was eaten by a bigger animal. But no one did that now because the Christians taught that Jisu had been sacrificed for everyone's sickness so nobody needed to offer chicken sacrifices again." (WTRS, 2014: 54)

Yet we also start to see that Jesus' sacrifice made it less pertinent to heed old taboos as closely, and changed the relationship to (the threat of) forest spirits: "[...] the spirit of the man who followed Isu would not listen to the forest spirits." (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 123) We can start to understand how Christianity aeroded some of the belief and respect systems that existed. Nevertheless, the forces of the spirits did not suddenly disappear, so that the intermingling of the old religion and Christianity is also exemplified by the current use of Christian prayer to overcome the fear for forest spirits.[502] This comes through in Kire's books as well, here referring to the Angami creator deity as 'He' as merged with the Christian god: "I shouted to the spirits using - His name. […] But I know He helped me, the creator deity helped me. His name was my weapon." (WTRS, 2014: 197) As such Christianity does not necessarily contest the beliefs of the old religion, but rather presents a reply, or new 'tool': "the new religion was really a fulfilment of the old—answering the questions that the old was struggling with" (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 122-123). In the following we see how this plays out, as a British soldier is confronted by a spirit, from which he is then saved by the overpowering force of Christianity:

> "The soldier confessed to a nightly experience of seeing, near the water source, a spirit that grew larger and larger till he stood as big as a mountain before he disappeared from view. [...] The next night, when the soldier sighted the spirit, he woke Rivenburg and they walked to the water source together. The spirit showed itself again but this time, the spirit miraculously grew smaller and smaller till it disappeared altogether. The soldier was amazed by this and became a Christian thereafter. (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 117-9)

The very presence of spirits is furthermore also linked to, or explained through, the Christian 'cosmovision', as Kire narrates here, also with regards to punishments for wrong acts:

> "Even the old religion teaches that, those who live their lives on earth, defying the spirits and displeasing Kepenuopfü will go to a terrible fate after death. Are their shades not the shades that trouble us when we go beyond the village gate, and are they not the spirits that try to do us harm, when we go near unclean places?" (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 142)

It is furthermore interesting to note how Kire navigates the multiplicity of emotions attached to the (memory of) moments of conversion to Christianity, by having character *Sato* forced to initiate into the *old* ways against his will, rather than the other way around, before realising the two religions are complimentary:

> "Levi himself performed the ritual of pulling out the intestines from the dead chicken. Halfway through, the intestine broke in half, splattering the ground with its contents. 'It must be the white man's magic,' muttered Roko" […] Sato hated not being able to refuse to be initiated. […] But after the initiation, he felt an inexplicable peace enter him, a sweet calm." (Ibid.: 121-122)

This perhaps most of all speaks to the current moment, in which a majority of Christians, need to indeed rather navigate taboos *on* the old beliefs, where the books may help reconcile the two religions. Yet Kire also narrates the frustration or sadness older generations have felt, seeing their belief systems change:

> "He sang well and his young clear voice filled their house with the English songs of the Saviour, songs that had never been sung in their home before. His mother would say, 'How smooth-throated my son is, perhaps we'll hear you sing our songs at Sekrenyi" [...] "There was great hostility in the village community against the small band [of Christian converts]. Visited by elders who declared in no uncertain terms,'You must not live with us. It will displease the spirits,' the believers moved house to a site beyond the perimeter of the village. " (Ibid.: 120-1, 128)

Yet Kire makes a point of such characters realising the beneficiary gain of Christianity, here through the virtue of forgiveness: "Sato, I see the difference between you and your father, and, between you and your brother. You forgave them though their wrong against you was greater." (Ibid.: 143) This reflects the importance of Christianity for the Nagas, who amidst cascades of conflict had to recollect themselves, find hope, and reconcile differences. Christiniaty as a unifying force for the Nagas, perhaps also came through Christianity's teachings on forgiveness, and its offer of peace and certainity:

> "Our lot is not hardship and constant pain. That is what the old religion teaches you, does it not, Apfü? It says that life is unpredictable and hard, and man should harden his heart and bear all of his misfortunes with fortitude, does it not, Apfü? Well, Isu says that his followers are blessed with his protection—they are free from uncertainty and fear" (Ibid.: 144)

We can thereby understand the appeal of Christianity, that came as a welcome psychological release and consolation, as is also evidenced by the revival moments that occurred during the

heights of conflict with the Indian army. In everyday life then, the two religions indeed seem to be in a constant dialectic. Kire for example shared with me (2021) the story of a priest that guided a *Tekhumiavi* to get rid of his tiger, or tiger soul, as he considers the practice demonic, explaining that people become weretigers in search for supernatural power, but also mentioned that such powers allow *Tekhumiavi* to heal people. Such illustrates the tension of a still lived presence of *Terhuomia* and *Tekhumiavi* which don't fit the Christian canon, yet are mediated through Christian practices, with *Tekhumiavi* admonished for seeking spiritual powers that admittedly allow him to heal people.[505] The continuation of the passage about *tekhumiavi* in TWC shared in ch. 4.1, shows how the practice may have started to disappear:

> "Many in his family thought he would bequeath this strange legacy to his young son who was unformed but not much younger than Tsaricho himself when he became a tigerman. But he would have none of it. The lad attended the Mission School and sang the songs of the Lamb. It was not long before Tsaricho could tell that the boy did not have it in him to carry the spirit of the tiger." (TWC, 2001: 75)

Here the spirit of Christ is likened to the lamb, in strong contrast to the fearsome forces of the old religion's Spirit and Tiger. Most notably, the interweaving of Christianity with the old religion happens in *Son of the Thundercloud* (2016), an analogy of the story of Christ steeped in the tiger and spirit-inhabited world of the Naga hills, so Kire also told me in our conversation (2021):

> "In a small village of the Angamis, there lived an old woman. A tiger had killed her husband and seven sons, and she spent long, lonely days waiting for the hour when she would join them in death. One afternoon, a raindrop fell on her from the sky. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son…" [...] "A virgin shall conceive and give birth to a son, and he will save his people. Signs and wonders shall accompany his birth, and the land shall be rejuvenated." (SOTT, 2016: 39, 41)

The creator is both traditionally and in Christianity located in the sky; and from there, the life force is narrated to seep into the other beings of the world in the form of rain: "[H]e recalled his mother singing a song to him when he was small. *The river runs And it runs Into the sea And the sea runs And it runs Into the rain where it all comes from*" (Ibid.: 47). 'The Son Of The Thundercloud', allegorically represents Christ, and the raindrop, the water cycle, represents life: "A man came to me in a dream and told me to name him Rhalietuo, because he brings the rain that will end the drought and provide food for all the villages." (Ibid.: 50-51.) A passage before highlights the importance of the storytelling tradition, even within the context of Christianity:

> "'the other famine killed many more.' 'You mean the famine that took off the abandoned village?' 'No, I'm talking about the famine of stories and songs. They killed all the storytellers who tried to tell them about the Son of the Thundercloud. They killed hope.'" (Ibid.: 48)

This poetically narrates that we need stories as we need water - meaning and hope, as we need food. The drought is not just a material, ecological, drought then, but also a drought of culture, knowledge, meaning and spiritual connection. This links to our current ecological predicament, caused largely by a flood of stories about progress, growth and success, and the drought of stories about meaning, balance, relation, reciprocity and humility. We could say that the book is a dedicated interweaving of the two religions, then, and infused with the moral teachings of both,

while making reference to the pedagogical quality of storytelling. While the understanding of Kepenuopfü as birthing spirit is explained in the book, and while it brings understanding to the incorporation of the Christian religion in Naga religiosity, it thereby also equally explains the meaning and importance of the the old religion as parallel or complimentary: 'It's called birthing, headman. [...] The trees and rocks are the sons of the earth. Take care of them and they will take care of you and your children.'" (Ibid.: 46)

4.5.2 The Meeting of Pedagogies and Educational Systems

As explained in the context chapter, Christianity came with the introduction of 'formal education' in the form of mission schools. Kire's novels tell both about the introduction of such schools, as about the traditional educational institutions or sites, and their corresponding different pedagogies and educational content. In a context of a public school curriculum which does not teach about Naga's own histories (see ch. 1.2.3), Kire's books are furthermore clearly educational by narrating Naga history, including the experience of colonisation and resistance, conflict and resilience, from a Naga perspective - notably in *Sky is My Father: A Naga Village Remembered*.[508] Kire's books thereby constitute what Foucault called a 'counter memory', with the potential to resurrect 'subjugated knowledges' (1975-1976), and a positive sense of self:

> "G.J. Cawley, District Superintendent of Police and Assistant Political Officer, watched the advancing warriors with a sinking heart. […] Paradoxically, Cawley felt, too, the justness of the attack for they had occupied Angami lands, cut down their forests, taxed them and forced them into labour which they hated." (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 90-91)

Kire here also narrates that the British colonisers deteriorated forests, just as they had come to the region to exploit the tea export in the first place, thereby also providing an important piece of environmental history (and political ecology). With regards to Kire's narrations about incoming educational systems, she provides a multi-sided, and thereby nuanced consideration, of both 'new and old' through the experiences of her different characters. With regards to the traditional educational institutions morung, called the thehou/thehu[509] or Kichüki among Angami Nagas, Kire for example notes that they were (in that context) places for men:

> "Talk at the thehou, the community house, often centered around what was called man's talk. No women were allowed to come to the thehou or enter the male dormitories. Reminiscing about hunts and battles in the past made the thehou a place where any youth with a man's heart inside him would linger and listen or add his stories as well. But if the elders were there, the younger men listened closely without speaking much. They came to learn the stories of the village. It was good to be called a thehou no, a child of the thehou - it meant that such a person was well-versed in the stories and customs of the village." (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 7)

Nevertheless, avenues for girls to attain such knowledge about "the ways of the village" are also addressed, such as though the 'age-group houses', with Kire highlighting the storytelling pedagogy and the value of knowledge of and respect for both the natural and the supernatural:

> "That is what the age-group houses are for, to impart knowledge of the natural and the supernatural to you so that you go out into the world with knowledge of both, and not disrespectful of either world as some people are." [...] "Age-group house: the educational institution of the village whereby children of the same age are taught by an elder, known as a parent. [...] an actual house where they are encouraged to spend the night, listening to stories and learning the ways of the tribe." (WTRS, 2014: 28, 242)

And importantly, the educational space of the hearth:

> "Tuonuo, you are so good at making a fire,' her mother complimented her daughter. 'Your grandfather used to say that a house needs a fire. The smoke from the fires strengthens the walls and helps it stay in place for a longer time. When a house is abandoned, it falls apart very soon. [...]' 'You known so many things Azuo,' Autuonuo said. 'I wish I knew half the things you do.' 'Well, I only know the things that the village has taught me from childhood, and I try to pass them on to you. Do you know that some people are called thehou nuo?' 'What does that mean?' 'Since the thehou is the communal house where men spend their nights, thehou nuo means child of the thehou. The boys who have been brought up in that tradition learn things about our culture. They use it to guide them through life, and when people see them behaving in a certain way, people refer to them as thehou nuo. A girl can also earn such a title when people see that she knows the ways of the village.' "Then I hope I will become one too. Will it stop me being scared of spirits and dark places?' They both laughed. 'The thehou cannot help you to stop fearing the unknown. But it can teach you to be brave." (DRML, 2017: 18-19)

Here we also find an important reflection on the attitude towards the fear of spirits, and other threats or sources of fear we have encountered, as the traditional institutes were oriented at educating bravery; not only as a demonstration of muscle, but also mentally and spiritually - "Vilie suddenly remembered the seer's words. Let your spirit be the bigger one. They are spirits, they will submit to the authority of the spirit that asserts itself." (WTRS, 2014: 83) - and as virtue in service of the community:

> "'[...] When you are older and your hearts are strong within you, you will take on the responsibility of guarding the village while others will go out to earn a great name for our village. Your roles are different but each one is equally important. Never be arrogant, respect yourself sufficiently so that you can fulfil the responsibilities of manhood. It is one thing to be responsible and quite another to be arrogant. A real man does not need to roar to show that he is a man' " (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 30-31)

To 'be the bigger spirit' should be interpreted as a 'right' type of pride, not an arrogant one, but one that is rooted in a good conscience, as Kire wrote in WTRS. Bravery, along with the taboos on greed and arrogance reflect values important for community relations and the protection of the village. The segment above could furthermore be read as a commentary on contemporary topics like (harmful) understandings of masculinity and land disputes: "This is the key to right living -avoiding excess in anything- be content with your share of land and fields. People who move boundary stones bring death upon themselves" (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 30-31) Kire's storytelling re-inscribes older values with meaning in current contexts then, as indeed the craft of (oral) storytelling is all about. We overall see presented an IEK which envelops spiritual relations, practical sustenance and observation based knowledges and skills, social and pedagogical community relations and institutions, and the morals, rules, and ethics that accompany such.

With regards to the missionary schools, Kire offers a multi-sided perspective by narrating their role in the transcription of the oral Indigenous languages, besides teaching English:

> "Rivenburg's school was unconventional: he wrote primers in Angami using the Roman script. So Sato's first book was in Angami. Later he progressed to the higher class, where a very popular class was the 'Talking class.' In this class, Chaha encouraged his pupils to converse in English." (Ibid.: 117)

Yet, this passage continues to somewhat points to the power-relations inherent to such schools, through a passage describing a strictness bordering on aggression among some teachers:

> "Slowly, Sato lost his fear of the white man. […] But Sato remembered all the stories he had heard of Chaha, who was known to be so stern a teacher, that boys who talked in class often had wooden dusters thrown at them. Many times, students were picked up and 'expelled' for the day through the window. No one dared break school rules when they had been subjected to that kind of reprimand." (Ibid.: 118 -119)

Here the fear is lost by conforming to the rules, but also by Sato resonating with the teachings. The mission schools however thus took children away from traditional practices and pedagogies:

> "At the major festivals, Sato was away at school. Now Levi was growing impatient for him to be initiated at the coming festival of Sekrenyi. Sato did not like to think about his initiation. […] he knew Chaha would disapprove. […] Roko did not like the Mission school and he did not return after the break at summertime. […] Roko would scornfully say, 'Huh, you're learning book but no one eats book. Someday you'll wish you had learnt more of field work.'" (Ibid.: 119)

And again in *A Terrible Matriarchy* (2007), through the eyes of a grandmother: "People can't eat books," [...] "I really don't know what it is your generation sees in school. Your children are not being taught the skills of life because they are too busy studying." (2007: 35, 37). Yet, main character young *Dielieno* really wants to go to school, just like all her age mates. Her stern grandmother first does not allow it, as she is in strong support of the traditional divisions of labour and corresponding 'traditional education' of girls, in which getting married was pivotal:

> ""In our day," Grandmother began, "girls did not go to school. We stayed at home and learnt the housework. Then we went to the fields and learnt all the fieldwork as well. [...] They will always be busy at some work or other, too busy to get into trouble. It is all right if boys have a spot of trouble now and then, but with girls, it is different. You would never be able to get rid of her once she has caused trouble. I really do not approve of girls getting educated." (ATM, 2007: 23)

This points to the alternative ideals or possibilities that formal education has offered - especially to girls within a patriarchal society like in Nagaland, says the character of young *Dielieno:* ""I don't care about being a good woman. I shan't ever be a good woman, whatever that is"" (Ibid.: 39). Education also became more relevant within the towns, as no longer everyone had fields to work in, as the passage above continues:

> ""Mother," Father spoke for the first time, "You mustn't think we don't respect your views on this subject. We took this decision for Lieno because she is a bright girl and now that we no longer have the field, she will have the time to devote to her studies. Of course, she will continue living with you and helping you in your house." (Ibid.: 23)

This reflects that relevant knowledges change along with changing livelihood options. Nevertheless, Lieno ends up going to, and enjoying, school: "School was the best thing that could have happened to me." (Ibid.: 32) Kire thereby narrates several sides to the experience of

(mission) schools; notably also regarding the role such education played and plays, allowing for political engagement, reflected here relative to a village facing starvation after a failed harvest:

> ""The Government is saying that it will give grain to the villagers next year but they need someone educated to write the application. That's why I am here. [...]" I saw how much I could do with my education if someday I could learn to write applications. Maybe I could save whole villages if I learnt to do that." (Ibid.: 45, 46)

Nevertheless, Kire makes a clear note on the relevance of 'traditional pedagogy' without the need of educational institutes, in this passage in WTRS (2014) that we already saw in ch. 4.4:

> "What could school possibly teach him that his parents could not improve upon? They were rich in their knowledge of the ways of the forest[...] 'I guess he will go to the best school then'" (p. 15)

Some passages also reflect on changing economies, narrating how trade used to be organised, with different tribes producing different goods, as such complimenting each other's sustenance, and with prices having raised after WWII reached Nagaland (ATM, 2007: 184). The loss of such local networks of trade, also meant a loss of language knowledges and relationships:

> ""We are Zeliang and [...] I speak [Angami] because it was necessary in my day. Back then we traded with the Angamis and took their daos, spears and spades, and keshiini,[511] in exchange for our brine salt, pigs, dried fish and chilli. […] It's a great pity that barter trading has become obsolete." (WTRS, 2014: 35)

Kire expresses through the characters of the fragment, the regret at losing such practices. She also offers some passages reflecting on the diverging ideas of what constitutes 'a good life'[512] in *When the River Sleeps*, specifically regarding the drive towards wealth, as compared with the attainment of spiritual knowledge and good relations, through main character Vilie setting out on a journey to attain the first, but finding on the way that the latter is really what he needs:[513]

> "What joy will wealth afford you when you do not know the secret of living with peace and faith in your fellow men? It is not wrong to have wealth but your relationship to your wealth defines everything else. If you are grasping at wealth, you are going to lose something that wealth cannot buy for you. You will lose knowledge of the spiritual." (WTRS, 2014: 95-96)

As such it is a classic storytelling feat in which the hero seeks the imagined prize, yet through his hardships recognises what is truly of value: the spiritual knowledge that his journey granted him.[514] It also seems to constitute a commentary on different incentives that drive people today. Additionally, the forests of the Naga hills are no longer solely mediated by the agency of spirits, but also by the the State Forest Department and its conservation practices as new taboos: "The Forest Department asked if he would like to become the official protector of the rare tragopan that liked to nest in Vilie's part of the forest." (WTRS, 2014: 4) Vilie also goes through a transformative journey regarding hunting then, as the intimacy of life in the forest weds him to the forest, and then becomes her guardian. We witness Vilie navigating this role, distinguishing between good or bad hunting practices, with regards to protected species and hunting seasons:

> "Then the tragopan had kept him busy because they were being hunted by men from another village. [...] Apart from the hunting season, Vilie was kept busy by hunters who came during the off-season to fish or try illegal hunting. He never approved of it and tried as much as he could to catch off-season hunters before they went too far." (Ibid.: 220-221)

This passage reflects the challenges that conservation today faces, yet also narrates how it is often hunters that have the most intimate relations to the forest and are often those that become the forest guards of today. Amidst a storyline in which Vilie learns many (spiritual) lessons by living in intimacy with the forest, the thereby obtained environmental ethic avoids a conservation ethic that necessitates the removal of humans from 'nature'. The seeming paradox between hunting and conservation is thereby dissolved between the lines of a novel about spiritual knowledge.

Chapter 5. Analysis & Dialectic Discussion: Cosmological Storytelling as Biocultural Pedagogy

5.1 A Relational Worldview: Tiger, Spirit and Man

The Angami Tenyimia origin story, shared in ch. 4.1 through Kire's narration, illustrates how Tenyimia Naga cosmologies conceive of the ancestor of Man as related to the more-than-human world, as younger brother of Tiger and Spirit, born of the same mother (and father), the creator deity (or deities). Yet, the characters of Tiger, Spirit and Man are each described as being of different natures: Tiger wants to eat mother once she's dead, while Spirit's nature is to scare her and Man's nature and arguably responsibility, in the story, is to care for her. In some way, such could be read as initial instructions for the role of man, to the 'Earth my mother', while fostering acceptance for Tiger's nature to eat, and respect for Spirit's helpful wisdom, yet also fearsome power, so that despite those differences, the sibling relationship is honoured. At the same time this relationality avoids an 'anthropomorphising'[517] of tiger and spirit, instead acknowledging their different characters, abilities, virtues and 'negatives' and yet their respectful place in the world. The story furthermore explains why, at some point in the early times of creation, the three had to each go their own ways, not being able to live together in the same space anymore. In one version this split occurs after the mother dies, in another it is mother herself that is tired of the family squabbles.[518] They decide by a race whether Man or Tiger has to go live in the jungle while the other can live in the open space. Nevertheless, there was trickery involved, as is indeed a story trope we find across cultures: those with less physical strength or prowess need to be smart to survive. Spirit namely helps Man to outsmart Tiger, so that Man may live in the village/open space, by giving Men a tool[519] so that Man can hit the mark before Tiger reaches it. They were thereby each acknowledged their right to part of the world as their living space, as neighbours, yet without this meaning a complete divide. In Hutton's (1921) narration cat mis-translates a message from Man to Tiger, asking him to leave all what he hunts for Man. In response to this arrogance and greed, Tiger only leaves fur (in his faeces).[520] As such the story contributes to the taboo against arrogance and greed. Spirit is presented as the most clever of the three. It is Man's bond to Spirit that allows him to prosper, and this signals an important element of a Angami Tenyimia Naga cosmovision. Spirit's guidance to Man is what provides him with his agricultural livelihood practices: the soul of the more-than-human world teaches him how to thrive. Man, being disobedient to spirit's taboo or prohibition,[521] opened the pit with all the weeds and as punishment will spend the rest of time needing to labour with such weeds to make his agricultural plots. We see that the creation story thereby introduced the strong respect for prohibitions, as it is understood that such rules are met with strong consequences if disobeyed. Nevertheless, Spirit granted him all the necessary tools to do this labour, i.e., knowledge, skill, technology[522] and the rules to keep balance, in Kire's narration this included the gift of the agricultural days or calendar, including the taboo days. Taboos are thereby conceived of as spiritual guidance and part of Spirit's gifts, and their observance (spiritual knowledge) is directly

linked to sustenance success; signalling a balance of work (the calendar or tools) and rest (taboo days).[523] Spirit is thereby a character that helps Man live, cultivate, and establish his home, and mediate the prowess of Tiger. As such we see how the tale contributes to the keeping of good (sibling) relations. Man is furthermore considered the youngest brother, which, with age being a significant indicator of hierarchy in Naga cultures,[524] is relevant as it is indicative of the relation of respect for these elder brothers. Through the shared soul dimension of *ruopfü*, as much as the shared material dimensions, the human, 'nature', and 'supernatural' - as it would be divided in a 'Western' ontology - are therefore of the same family, and agential material-spiritual fibre.[541] This agency assigned to non-human subjects through the belief in *ruopfü,* and the earth at large, is a fundamental and necessary difference of perspective compared to the 'Western' ontology, in which humans are the only ones that know, feel, think, and decide. Building on Auge, Heneise also indicates with reference to such a cosmology that:

> "there is room to reflect on a form of ethics, and indeed a kind of politics that assumes a coextensive kinship with other persons, human and non-humans [...] that occurs at the level of the deepest being, of ruopfü, and indeed that this is an integral characteristic in the broader Angami philosophy of life." (2019: p. 74)

Characters like tekhumiavi, seers and others that are spiritually gifted, embody this kinship between the entangled material-spiritual realm, by living *in-between* or moving *across* the continuum of human and spirit realms, dream and wake time reality, human and other animals. With regards to Tekhumiavi's embodiment, it is noteworthy that the ruopfü not only 'travels' between bodies, but connects the bodies it inhabits, with tigermen's human bodies experiencing the sensations of their tiger, up to the point of death.[546] Through such embodiment, Tekhumiavi have reported that tigers have social structures, hierarchies and even political gatherings, i.e. the 'Council of tigers' (Sutter, 2008: 272), in which it is decided who gets to hunt where and what, and even people's harvesting success. From such 'perspectives,' a different understanding of, relating to, and respect for the animal kingdom beyond humanity, follows: decision making is not limited to the domain of humans - instead, other animals(' master spirits) maybe dictate for us.

Such a cosmology thereby links up with current post-human, new materialist incursions into a life beyond the Anthropocene. Although posthuman philosopher Braidotti, as part of her 'vitalist new materialism' stream of thought (2013), explores her concept of *zoe* as the *secular* life force inherent to all (agential) material, it is an invisible force, which communicates itself in various ways through materiality. As such, *zoe* is not too dis-similar to the Tenyimia Naga idea of *ruopfü*, although (the culturally based) *ruopfü* in many ways indeed 'transcends' Braidotti's *zoe,* as it is mobile and agential beyond material constraints. Yet, like *zoe* it engenders an inter-beings egalitarianism - in a world where spirit is within all beings equally - which is the point of post-humanists quest of such new concepts. Such philosophical shifts can provide an ethical soil on which legal personhood can be granted to such plural entities as rivers or mountains, allowing

for a consideration of the existence rights and needs of such entities, and the reciprocal responsibilities we have as humans to respect those, alongside our own needs.

As mentioned above, different territories are then also assigned to humans, tigers, and different spirits, and this also makes certain places, especially 'virgin forests', potentially dangerous to men, to be navigated (by hunters) with extra care. As Kire points out:

> "The forest is not your home, the village is your home, so you are going through a territory which has other owners, and you have to be respectful. And respect is central to our culture, you have to respect the human world of course, the animal world, the world of spirits, even vegetation, so, [...] if you want to live a good life, you're concentrating on paying… on being respectful to all these elements of life." (Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021)

This acknowledgement, of land belonging to other owners - some invisible, unknown, potentially dangerous - that need to be respected like you would any host, this non-ownership, could not only fundamentally inform conservation projects today (leaving the land to its owners), and potentially contribute to solving contemporary conflicts over boundary lines between villages, as Niketu Iralu has been contributing to. Re-storying this aspect of a Tenyimia Cosmology, could change the way the land is lived on, used and related to. Except for the village ground, or our homes, we must conceive that - we walk through an inhabited world, a world which has meaning to inhabitants other than human, a world we have no exclusive rights to, only collective accountability for. Perhaps unlike the image of 'the ecological native' would assume, the relationship between Man, Tiger, and the spirited world, is based on kinship ties, but notably also fear, trickery and competition. The acknowledgement of the world's forces give rise to a humble positionality and body of morals, driven by gratitude, fear and respect, alongside livelihood practices, skills, and knowledges, such as ways to manage human-wildlife interactions. Kire's narration of a Tenyimia Naga cosmovision thereby is rich in characters and stories that may inspire the 'West' with an agential socio-ecocentric worldview without falling prey to the 'Western' human-nature divide.[526] It could root conservation interventions in a clear sense of egalitarianism, spurring on a sense of responsibility through cultural ties to the land, even as it is acknowledged that Man is not in control over the rest of the creation.

Talking about cosmological kinship relations with Kire, she told me about her new book 'Earth my Mother', in which she elucidated the way the earth, the land, is considered feminine, and how this warrants specific knowledge and care 'of the feminine':

> "It's about a village of female seers, [...] and the cases and the questions that the male seers are not able to solve. [...] what I call the feminine questions, and they're all to deal with the earth. [...] And, so, when people have a problem with earthquakes, or land slides [...] the earth is angry, and they tell them what they've done wrong [...]. The soil around the village is just so fertile, that they have marvellous vegetables and fruit is available all the time; but, again, the whole principle of the spirit world and the human world aligning, coming into a perfect balance with each other, then it creates worlds like this, [...] in balance because the feminine has been attended to. [..] And when you don't, then things get out of alignment." (Ibid.)

This new storyline thus ones more presents a world vision in which human actions do not only have bearing on the world, but the world responds with actions that have bearing on humans -

explaining much of the way in which a relational worldview gives rise to an ethics of reciprocity, as it is understood that blessings, in the form of fertility for example, come from alignment with the spirit world, whereas when the earth is not cared for, people will equally suffer the consequences. This spirit world is fully merged with the material world, so that there are 'spirit territories', which humans have to tread carefully. It points us to an ethics of respect rooted in humility before the powers of the spiritual/material, and an understanding of ecological crises as signifiers of an imbalance created by human behaviour.

5.2 Easterine Kire's Literature as Contemporary Naga Storytelling Pedagogy

Kire's books were read and analysed for such eco-philosophical or eco-cultural narratives as discussed above, where, in my view, the root causes of local manifestations of the global ecological crises are challenged - notably greed, arrogance, a lack of humble respect for, and of a meaningful, place-specific connection with, the more-than-human world - and possibly remedied. Such highlights their resulting value as socio-ecological pedagogical narratives. They outline both practical sustenance knowledges (see ch. 4.4), and spiritual ethics, taboos, rules and avenues to mediate and communicate, appease and celebrate, the forces of, and relationships with the spirits of the land; giving rise to what we could call hunting and harvest ethics, and at the very least, relationships rooted in respect. This respect entails not only or necessarily love or admiration, but distinctly also fear,[525] and therefore a humble positionality as human. The folktales, people stories, and (ethnographic) descriptions of village life in Nagaland as encountered in Kire's books, however provide us with a more holistic perspective on Naga lives, histories and cultures. In that way, Kire's chronicles are of heightened contemporary relevance in the context of contemporary challenges of biological and cultural diversity loss both.

As contemporary novels, they however also go beyond, by narrating the complex layers of historical change, social relations, and new discourses and agents. Her novels offer a dialectic between traditional and new knowledges and pedagogies, as well as the old and new religion of Christianity; one in which neither takes the ultimate authority, yet where the invisible layers to the land, infused with ancestral meanings, become tangible, and are reinscribed with meaning. Kire's books therefore integrate the hybridisation or pluriversality of beliefs, influences and agents of the present. As we have seen in WTRS, rooted in a hunter's tale about a spirit encounter, its main character also worked for such a contemporary force as the Forest Department[531] while other work is infused with allegories to the story of Christ.[532] As shown in ch. 4.5, the narrations are descriptive of the multiple forces of change, notably through religion and education, or otherwise detail the historic encounter with coloniality, so that the transitions between 'traditional' culture and its current manifestations can also be understood through her books. As such, her storytelling offers not only an insight into 'the old religion', but also into current realities of such as interwoven parts of Christianity, and thereby offers us a 'third space'

or cultural synthesis, where the multi-layered-ness of current Naga society, all its influences and narratives, meet and converse. Indeed the books thereby embody cultural heritage as a dynamic of continuity and change. Additionally, it is imperative that a socio-ecological pedagogy would include a politically situated learning about the land and self; providing a critical understanding of why people have ended up overexploiting nature; the who of global climate change, the historical why of local excessive exploitation - what is missing to keep everyone in good relations, or where it went wrong. With Kire's storytelling contributing also to a political self-awareness, such facets about the history of environmental depletion may be easier explored (although they do not feature largely in her books). As pointed out in ch. 4.5, they make some incursions into current (imported) ideas of 'wealth', as compared to the spiritual wealth of living in good relationship to the world of humans and more-than-humans, thereby providing a soft counter-narrative to capitalism, besides the more overt and important historical counter-narrative about colonialism that especially stem from her historical books. In this way then, her books offer a multi-faceted pedagogy, as they indeed present holistic chronicles of naga lives.

5.3 Weaving Change & Continuity towards Biocultural Restoration: Relevance Today

5.3.1 'Traditional' & 'New' Conservation

The relevance of all the aforementioned philosophical understandings and taboos of a Tenyimia cosmology, seem in this current moment and context with 'Western' sciences narratives galore, to have boiled down to the following question: do they make up a 'conservation ethic' and feed into a conservation practice, or not? Though the question itself is largely a culprit of a 'Western' centred perspective, the enunciation of 'traditional conservation' seems to be the discourse in which the topics of this thesis meet. As such, before concluding on the importance and possibility of a plural, restory-ation of Environmental Education, this subchapter will consider such a 'traditional conservation' in Nagaland, through the varying opinions gathered around such a question. Official discourse, like the Nagaland State Forest Department in a video, does speak of such existing, mentioning that traditional conservation practices among the Rengma Nagas were called 'Runyinyi Chin' (2015). In the application for the biodiversity award 2020 published by KNCTS (2019), it is also stated that:

> "The most inspiring and the base structure to whom we owe all our success stories is the traditional Knowledge and practices which had stood the test of time. These are transfer to us by our forefather. Whose knowledge and wisdom transcend the branding of scientific innovation. A 'Green legacy' that can be match to any other forms of present day hottest topic like 'sustainability,' 'eco-friendly,' 'conservation,' […] From distribution of a small piece of meat on a public feast, systematic distribution of water for irrigation, land holding pattern, a sustainable pollarding alder based-cultivation, institutions and administrative set-up [...] consciousness for future generation are handed to us through oral communication or through practical knowledge [...] Managing and mobilizing traditional knowledge and wisdom to suits the case in a modern living is our sole contribution." (p.13)

The KNCTS indicates to be rooted in ancestral knowledges, for the current conservation initiative, as part of a wider sustenance landscape, making reference to the force of new 'green discourse', and pointing to some practical and socially organised ways to share resources fairly. They even state that mobilising such traditional knowledge is their 'sole contribution'. However, when I asked the current chairman of the KNCTS, Mr. Kezhasorie Meyase (2022), whether traditional practices or stories were used or referenced to, when he and the community first engaged with and learned about conservation in the late 90s, he laughed and observed that: "Our tradition and culture is more of hunting than conservation, so.. *laughs* So I think [...] there is not much correlation between our tradition and conservation."[550] Perhaps 'traditional conservation' is also part of such current 'green discourse' then, or at least it seems that the opinions on the existence or relevance of such traditional practices, vary. Asking Meyase about convergences between traditional cosmological beliefs and practices, among which the taboo practices *kenyü, penyü and nanü* or spirit beliefs, and current conservation practices, he furthermore opinionated that:

> "I don't think there is much relation between kenyü, penyü and all, for conservation. [...] If you say like, it is forbidden to cook and eat a certain wild animal, or a certain species, that is still relevant to our days, but I don't think.. [...] those penyu and nanyü are not related. [...] we used to believe that there is Chükhieu [...] the deity of wild animals, so whenever our forefathers, they hunt, some wild animal, they at least used to share a piece of meat [...] but these things [...] were also not very much related [...]" (Ibid.)

He reflected regarding the "belief that [...] they need to have relationship to the nature also, [...] not specifically tigers, but with the forest and wild animals" (Ibid.) - that he is not sure if it is still in practice, but that it:

> "creates some social etiquettes, the way that our forefathers practice. I think, if it is not obsolete [...] it is also very good to practise such kind of traditional values. It can be something very… meaningless thing to do also, but [...] it is at the same time very good to practise such kind of values, so that we create, or say like build our relation with the nature also" (Ibid.)

Even if the chairman acknowledges that such things existed, and recognises their value, he also seems unsure as to their link with conservation or their relevance today, mentioning that many such practices are obsolete today, and indicating that he is excited about integrating relevant aspects of 'modern' life or 'Western' sciences, in conservation as well as sustenance practices:

> "Actually many of our traditional practices are also very obsolete, very useless. They are something the way how we hunt, or the way we do farming, [...] those obsolete things, [...] we need to reject it; at the same time if there are some thing that is relevant and that we can pick up from the modern way of living, that should be incorporated into our traditional ways; so that is what we are looking for. [...] Incorporating Western science into our traditional practices, that will take time, but I'm very optimistic regarding this, the way how we hunt, like selective hunting, those things were very new terminology, and very much different from our culture. [...] this kind of traditional knowledge that has been practised by our forefathers, that should also have some scientific innovation, for example in our jhum fields [...] so that they have more harvest." (Ibid.)

Despite such ancestral practices that pointed to a reciprocal relationship with the world, then, it seems that the particular concept and practice of contemporary "conservation" is perceived as

something new and altogether different, as the chairman also stated: "Conservation is a very… new term for us, because we are from a hunting background."[555] His statement reflects how conservation is understood to be in opposition to hunting, which is no surprise when considering environmental education discourse,[556] as well as the current context of rapid biodiversity decline due to commercialised incentives to log and hunt. Speaking with Elder Niketu Iralu about the extent to which current conservation practices are rooted in older practices, he also remarked:

> "I think seeing the past, these issues were not considered as pressing issues. But I think in the changing, in the new situations that are coming to us rapidly, we are also realising that we have to learn to care for one another in a very new way. Say that there is enough water for everyone's need, enough timber for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed. [...] the common, you know, ethical fibre in each one, understands that."[558]

We see that a 'conservation ethic' as it is understood in the current context, is only pronounced when a need for such an ethic has arisen; ie.e. amidst a context or idea of abundance, an ethical relationship to the community of more-than-humans would not ask for a complete hunting ban. Indeed, hunting was not seen as something negative, but one of the ways in which humans participated in the world. Iralu thereby at once conceives of such conservation practices as new, yet finds them to resonate with what he terms 'a common ethical fibre'.

After having seen that greed was through various practices a considerable taboo, with excesses always needing to be shared (between humans, as well as with the more-than-human world, such as for example to Chükhieu), it seems curious that he would conceive of such care and anti-greed practices as new. At the same time, greed seems to have taken over the older practices, so that something that as 'ethical fibre' used to keep the community thriving, may among market influences have become something new. Niketu however also shared the story about the rock face of Chükhieu, shared in ch. 4.2. He continued to say about such practices:

> "that kind of spirit belief there is, you know in the forest, [and] the animals, in our culture, [they] are not in our control, it belongs to the spirit world, something like that. *We are beginning to see this again*. [...] That kind of belief that nature resources, animals, forests, [...] have to do what we like, that was not so natural, and [...] in a spiritual teaching, if you go and hunt and you kill an animal, you shouldn't say anything harmful to the animal, you should say, 'I'm sorry to kill you, because I had to feed my family, we have no other means.' [...] if you say anything arrogant, or you kick the animal's dead body with your foot, some serious consequences can [result] on your family. That kind of thing was very strong. Now, I think that's [….] one of the, you know, unintended consequences of Christianity coming. Now we can do as we like, the old beliefs, the old teachings, [...] have gone."[559] (emphasis mine)

Here Niketu Iralu succinctly points to various dynamics of continuity and change involved in the current drive towards 'conservation'. He points to one of the more important non-Anthropocentric qualities that we can discern from the outlined cosmology of spirit activity: humans are not the ones in control. Pointing out that this has been forgotten, or lost with cultural change,[566] he however indicates it is currently again being remembered amidst ecological concerns. This points to a different starting point for what we today call a 'conservation ethic' or 'ecological ethic', speaking of *remembering* rather than (only) learning something new.[561]

Niketu Iralu also refers to a 'hunting ethic', speaking of emotions of regret, respect for, and asking sorry to, the animal killed in question, needing to do so out of subsistence need, and considering that a lack of such an ethical attitude and resulting behaviour would result in serious consequences. When I asked Kire (2021) about these kind of 'hunting ethics' or 'forest etiquette' - of thanking for what is given, being mindful of taking, and wary of greed - that we have also seen in her books, she indicated that "they would be common of hunters, [...] hunter ethics and also the kind of conduct, that they pass it on [...] from one generation to the other"; asking whether she thinks the hunting taboos can be used for conservation, therefore, she replied:

> "That's an interesting aspect. Because there are so many hunting taboos, even though they go out hunting [...] it's a taboo to hunt in excess; so that is hunting controlling, or generating conservation, within its own practice; so, they have been never hunting more than what they need"[554]

The understanding that hunting success was granted by a wildlife deity, and not in human control, also *warranted* a basic form of respect - if not out of a sense of morality, then for survival - along with such taboos against arrogance, greed, and waste, as parts of a wider, complex system of taboos and rules, that shaped the relationships hunters had with animals, the forest at large, as well as with each other and the community of the village. Indeed, we have seen that forest etiquette links up with social etiquette of hospitality, and that social rules apply as much to village life as they apply to forest life;[535] to separate between 'social ethics' and 'nature ethics' then, is maintaining the human-nature divide.

Hunting bans and excessive hunting itself, then, are both reflective of the dynamics of continuity and change that permeate cultural heritage practices we call 'traditional', with both equally moving away from, yet building upon the culture. In this lies the key for synergy. The new conservation approach and the old values have something in common, which current excessive hunting practices do not. Nevertheless even amidst such a traditionally existing hunting ethic, the quantity of the hunt (that was granted to you) still used to speak to your merit and thereby social status. Although research by Naro, et al (2015) indicated that today, social status related to hunting is decreasing, it is thereby clear that also 'traditionally' paradoxes existed between the ethics of non-greed and gratitude, and the praxis of hunting. Indeed, the skulls on the walls of hunters' houses testify to this. Nevertheless, such ethics against greed and arrogance are likely to have come up precisely to keep a balance, just like the current 'conservation ethic'. When the social ecology is ruled by a complex, dynamic, and community controlled set of taboos, scarcity of game or other forest and agricultural resources would be automatically attributed to faulty human behaviour: some sort of disrespect to the multiplicity of spirits and agents ruling the land would have brought about such scarcity in retaliation. Nevertheless, this still means that there is no Naga ecological noble native, as 'the West' maybe would imagine him, underneath the layers of Christianity and capitalism, but there *is* a culture of relationality full of complex relations. A relationship marked by kinship, by fear, respect and humility, in which

hunting was and is one of the various ways by which people are tied to the lands. Yet in the same way that an informed and deeply relational harvesting ethic, like the one pronounced by Kimmerer (2015), which is considerate of the wellbeing of plants, can only be derived *from* the act of harvesting; the same applies to hunting. However, what has considerably changed with the input of current conservation values is that the wellbeing of a species is no longer measured only in local terms. Instead, vulnerability is relative to global levels.[567] This is at once where 'Western' Science comes in to further inform a local hunting ethic about species declines.

Besides hunting ethics, taboos applied to spaces as well. Kire for example shared (2021) about several 'taboo' stones, believed to be possessed with spiritual power (to create storms) around Khonoma, and when I asked her whether she thought that such taboo areas may have (unwittingly) constituted a type of conservation practice, she replied: "yes..! yes, yes, it is. Of course it can't be used widely, because there'd only be a small number of such stones", yet continued to share another anecdote of such a stone (see ch. 4.2).[572] Such beliefs were however not tied to the objective of conservation, as also Kire indicates that "there wasn't any need for conservation, then the population was smaller, there was more than enough land for cultivation" (Ibid.) Nevertheless, this points to the way that a storied landscape, in which certain elements are considered sacred, taboo, or in any case, sentiently powerful, would contribute to what we today call conservation, if indeed such stories would still be passed on, and such relations to the land would be respected. She for example also referred to a taboo area as 'sacred forest', that was nevertheless being destroyed, when I asked her whether she thinks it would be a good idea to re-story environmental education:

> "That would be wonderful because, I do have that very close to my heart; I see forests that I've known in childhood just being chopped down, and that's so sad, it's either logging, or, suddenly there's a road going into a forested area, which used to be [...] not just sacred, but, there's a particular forest that they call the way of the dead. [...] the forest of the dead, where the dead always come, after they die [...] it's like a passage way. And this place, now, a road is being built into this, so, that's going to destroy the forest, that's going to destroy the beliefs, it's just going to cause so much damage." (Ibid.)

This also points to how 'cultural preservation' would *entail* the preservation of certain forest areas and culturally important spaces, including those that might not appear in a biodiversity-mapping exercise, and similarly points to how certain 'ecological' preservation is also necessary to preserve the culturally imbued landscape. Indeed, also from the passages we've seen in Kire's books, it is clear that certain places would be avoided by humans because they were believed to be inhabited by spirits that did not want to be disturbed.[575] Also in Heneise (2019) we find accounts by informants of spirit-inhabited places that would harass anyone disturbing the peace (pp. 69-70). Also Kia, the youngest of my interview participants, despite indicating she thought 'sacred groves' are not a thing in Nagaland, shared about a forest area just around Khonoma, believed to protect the village from enemies with *mi kekuo* [*T*], fire power, so that it was designated a taboo area.[576] As such, even though the *reasons* for not venturing in some

areas, do not match those of biodiversity areas as habitat for certain animals today, such ancient ways respected the territories of the life forms that themselves indicated 'this is ours, don't disturb us', including animals, but notably, also (their) spirits. This ties in with the understanding of the spirits as the traditional land owners, and that village settlement was done through a ritual pact seeking the blessing of the spirit land owners.

Besides such areas inhabited by spirits (not necessarily 'good deities' so that Kia may still be right that 'sacred groves' are not a thing), practical versions of protected forest areas (that may have carried spiritual significance, though this is not known to me) also seem to have been prominent. Indeed, the CCAs of today, seem to be built *on* the traditionally protected areas near villages - according to Siddhart Edake of the TERI research about CCAs of 2015.[577] He shared how of the areas protected in the 407 CCAs they found, 84% contained primary forest. When they asked the villagers about this, they were told that this was because traditionally their ancestors had protected such areas, to stop deforestation, or the loss of wildlife - practically as breeding grounds.[578] Indeed, we furthermore see in the integrated landscape management or multiple land use of keeping forests atop the hills, below which the paddy fields and terraces and jhum lands are located, that traditionally, integrated and IEK informed sustenance practices consisted *of* integrated conserved forests.[579] As such, we see that old practices seem to have had multiple ways, and various reasons or motivations, for not using or interfering with certain forest areas from an eco-cultural perspective.

Through such areas, there were certain places in which an animal should not be hunted, and where habitat was not destroyed. In addition, certain species of animals, like the tiger, the tragopan, the Mithun, and in some tribes the python and the bear, are especially revered culturally. Furthermore, as some of such animals were understood to be e.g. half tiger, half human, people were prevented from killing them, and equally it was believed that such 'weretigers' could be persuaded to not kill the humans. A complex system of 'taboos' thus managed socio-ecological relations in Naga societies, with the example of the taboo on arrogance or greed. Additionally, hunting and harvesting practices come with a close monitoring of the species populations and their wellbeing, even as agricultural practices relied on the sound of birds to indicate the seasons. Especially through hunting practices, and the perspectivist abilities of tekhumiavi, wide ranges of forest could furthermore be observed. This then corresponds to at least three out of the four 'rules of thumb' that indicate a traditional conservation ethic, as theorised by Indian ecologist Madhav Gadgil through his studies on the conservation practices of tribal peoples in India specifically.[580] Indeed, the existence of such practices was also mentioned in TERI's documentation of CCAs, stating the negative effect of the loss of culture: "as cultural practices and taboos cease to be relevant, these checks and balances are eroded, making all wildlife „fair game‟." (TERI, 2015: p. 47)

Amidst commonplace references to the existence of traditional, conservation-related, practices in online conference talks and official discourse then,[581] it indeed seems that some forms of 'traditional conservation' existed, whether the concept of 'sacred grove', 'conservation', or current reasons for creating such, applied or not; meaning that it's rather the terminology and coinciding discourse', that is new. As the NSFD video (2015) also states then, the CCAs could be seen then as a contemporary version of the traditional taboo areas and seasons, however, of course, these bans[583] differ from the traditional taboos; in part, because they are not *only* rooted in the local culture, but also in a global, 'Western' Science biodiversity conservation discourse. The conservation ethic thereby no longer is solely based on an internal, socially and culturally embedded and community-wide structure of beliefs and relations, but also on external, global, educational narratives that are stimulated through the involvement of NGOs, translated into rules enforced by fines, and whose execution is guarded by community members who patrol and bring offenders to the tribal council court. Even though the rules necessitate patrolling and are not always adhered to,[585] the CCAs are still entirely built upon the social cohesion of a village and created by consensus as community efforts, with community and clan land. Furthermore, the protection of these forests and its species is often done with next generations in mind, who might otherwise never meet the wildlife their ancestors shared life with, as such centring the motivation for conservation also in a cultural-ecological heritage, as expressed by Niketu Iralu:

> "animals are becoming more and more difficult to find; they are in the deep forest. And, it means that we have to think of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow's generation also. If the birds and animals disappear, tomorrow's children will have no share of the beauty of our heritage. So, in this year, [...] from our village, we don't need to go to the forest to kill animals, to make money, to make livelihood."[586]

Even when part of the 'new taboos' seem counter to a central element of Naga cultures, hunting, they also are founded upon a cultural identification with the forest and its wild animals. As a large percentage of hunters however seems as of yet unwilling to give up the hunting practice,[592] re-engaging 'traditionally' informed hunting ethics, could be imperative to continue conservation alongside material and cultural survival. The conservation efforts then, are prime examples of cultures' continuity amidst, and through, change.

5.3.2 'Traditional' Pedagogy, Christianity & Science

In the differing answers regarding the existence of such 'traditional practices' we likely also observe the declining awareness of such traditional relations, taboos and stories, especially with the new discourse about ('Western') 'conservation' positioning itself solely in overt opposition to hunting. This then also speaks to the potential educative function of novels like Kire's that might bring back complexity into the traditional practice of hunting. As both Niketu Iralu[587] and Easterine Kire[588] spoke to - it is therefore imperative to reconsider and revitalise some of the old practices and stories, especially perhaps to reach those hunters that ignore the new

hunting bans out of cultural identification with hunting. Mr Khriekhoto Mor, the previous chairman of the KNCTS was quoted in an article for BBC (Hazra, 2018) to have said:

> "We don't want our folklore to become meaningless to our future generations as it has names of so many wild species of birds, plants, animals and wild flowers [...]. Our life, tradition and culture are very much dependent on nature and its habitats and we are determined to protect them."

Also the current chairman of the KNCTS Kezhasorie Meyase indicated the need to incorporate traditional stories in environmental education, yet while indicating he himself already hardly still knew such stories:

> "yeah that will be good, if we can know our traditional values that can be incorporated in educational textbooks, or anything like that [...] even though I'm not a very old person, the way how the traditional stories are told by our parents, and then with the coming of modern technology… Though I'm not very old, my memory is almost fading with such kind of stories, no? So it will be very helpful, [...] if we incorporate such stories in our textbook also."[589]

The seeming difference between two generations of chairmen speaks to the speed of the loss of such cultural knowledge. The current drive to conserve includes a type of 'moral rearmament' then, which could opt to be inclusive both of new narratives and old, and as such yet be rooted in a relationality that can prevent the trajectory of human as distant, divided and anti-ethical to the world, and moreover preserve the biodiversity inherent to specific biocultural landscapes; a conservation, which is adaptive, yet rooted in local livelihoods and knowledges as the KNCTS' statement for the biodiversity award (2019) proposed.

Speaking with Easterine Kire about what may be the added value of the traditional stories to the Western Science approach for environmental education, she similarly to Niketu Iralu reflects about the role of religion:

> "You know, talking to you like this, and then reflecting on it… Here, in this moment, in this hour, I see that religion has much to do with it. [...] I found the old religion so much more organic. People had a greater and heightened sense of spirituality. Maybe I'm too romantic. [...] there was such a connectedness, […] the sense that man is connected to the creator, and man is connected to nature, and he is in the middle so he is responsible for all the connections, and he strives to do his part; that is very much there in the old religion. […] initially, when [Christianity] came in through the missionaries, it was interpreted as giving up your culture. So we lost a lot of good cultural practices. Now there is kind of a renaissance, where people are realising, 'no, we can keep this, this is good, […] this doesn't come into conflict with Christianity.'"[569]

Here she points us to an element of the ethic that is derived from the old religion's relational cosmology, namely of man's role 'in the middle', where he is not only connected to both the natural and supernatural but "responsible for all the connections", as we also saw reflected in the origin story of Man, Spirit and Tiger, which designates Man's role as the one to take care of the ancestral birthing mother, even as Tiger mostly wants to eat her, and Spirit ends up scaring her. Kire and Iralu therefore both speak to the influence of Christianity, yet also hopefully about the remembrance and revitalisation that is happening, as Niketu Iralu further stated (2021) regarding the old values: "I think they are consciously being brought in again. We see that, really, Christianity did not teach us to be selfish, to be arrogant." Asking how such old values might

relate to his work with conflict resolution through Christian 'moral rearmament', Iralu brings the old beliefs and Christianity together, saying:

> "reverence for life, and all human beings, [...] that you must not show arrogance, [that it] is very disrespectful; it's in Christianity, it's in our traditional belief, and I mean for me, that's why there is fraternity, that is the best in my heritage, for me that is moral rearmament." (Ibid.)

It seems then that on the religious front, 'recapturing a humble 'fraternity' with the more-than-human world is perhaps underway, as the more-than-human world itself is being revitalised. Yet this does not mean all cosmological elements are again accepted, as despite Kire's character's pondering in WTRS (2014: 80) about tekhumiavi seeking to exactly recapture their fraternity with tiger, Kire expressed regarding tekhumiavi: "With Christianity the weretigers were seen as a kind of a demonic symbol, so, that is the attitude the people have towards it, that it's from the dark world. So, you shouldn't really have anything to do with it." (2021) This matched with an account Kia told me (2020) about a kid in her nephew's class being teased about his uncle being a weretiger, and having eaten all the chickens of the bully's family. When asking Kire if she thinks stories about tekhumiavi could still fulfil a function within a story-based environmental education, she therefore states:

> "No, I personally have my doubts, because of the way it's been symbolised. It's not a positive symbol. When you hear of a man who has become a weretiger, he becomes, not a social outcast, but, someone that everyone fears, and tries to avoid, so, he moves into another plane all together; socially, it can't be very nice… Other stories could be used I'm sure, for the purpose that you're talking about, but probably not the weretiger."

At the same time, this perhaps also gives more cause to tell more of such stories, to restore or re-story the understanding of the qualities of tekhumaivi as an inbetween agent.

Kire further elaborates on the disconnect that happened, pointing also beyond Christianity, however, to the role of education and 'modernity' regarding sustenance practices:

> "There was a break, that's why. When [...] people, or society, became a more modern society, and education was prioritised, people went to school, people held down office jobs, stopped going to the fields. The majority did that, that was when the break happened. So, I feel, that was when the connection with the earth was lost; when you stopped going to the fields"[571]

She thus illuminates the importance of the practical pedagogy and intimate relationship that comes about through local subsistence livelihoods. Kire's valuation of 'going to the fields' for an environmental ethics diverges from, and thus contributes to, the classic idea of 'Western' conservation's environmental ethic then: local resource use as an important aspect of a sustainable caring relationship with the land. This also speaks to the biodiversity we can find in biocultural landscapes[563] - exemplified by the varieties of rice grown in Nagaland - and how when traditional sustenance methods are abandoned, they may make place for cash cropping, thereby reducing agro-biodiversity. So long as the education system imposes an Indian or 'Western' based perspective rather than an education rooted in local knowledges, education may further such a process of biocultural erosion. This also applies to educational narratives used for conservation

initiatives. Asking Easterine Kire (2021) whether she at the beginning of the KNCTS heard of any use being made of traditional stories in the awakening of a conservation ethic, she responded:

> "No, no not really. No, there was news; they used science. They talked about the need to preserve forest and preserve animals, wildlife, but not so much stories. Yeah, but… That would have worked really… in a very different way, beautifully as well."

Asking whether she thinks it *could* have been used, she reflected: "Could have been used, yeah; at the same time, people being what they are now, there is so much exposure to the world outside, so, the appeal of science might be greater, than somebody talking from traditional stories" (Ibid.) This augments the importance of Kire's fiction format novels, which may help bring back the appeal to storytelling and folktale narratives.[591] Additionally, as expressed by Meyase, sciences as new narratives - with global leverage - may be more exciting or promising to people. Nevertheless, when I asked Iralu (2021) what might be the value of traditional eco-cultural teachings for the conservation movement, or how they might collaborate with 'Western' Science approaches towards such, he expressed:

> "You know we had some things very good in the past, [that are] all going away, and without realising the value of those ways of thinking, those cultural established ways of looking at our environment. We're discovering, I think, the Western program or fight for preserving the ecosystem, is making us realise what we had."

Reflecting again how the conservation movement may signal a *return* to an engagement with older values, reminding people of what was lost. Nevertheless, they at once may execute a type of eroding force, when it comes to the valuations of 'myths' and spiritual practices, as well as regarding Naga sustenance methods, specifically hunting. In a similar way then as the Christian narrative once came in to stipulate new wrongs and rights, conservation science and educational narratives seem to come in today. Like before with Christianity, people (justly) receive the new narrative as enriching, for the new possibilities it offers - with 'Western' Sciences brining new information, methods, networks and (technological) innovations. Yet, as this new narrative settles in amidst simultaneous efforts at revitalisation of culture and its stories, the quest would be to integrate such without allowing it to take over or negate Naga narratives. Like Christianity hybridised into what Kire termed a 'Nativised Christianity' then, perhaps the current incursion of 'Western' Sciences shall end up constituting a 'Nativised Conservation Science'.

In storytelling pedagogy, the land is furthermore not only subject to the narrations, but also itself the book of stories, with its multiplicity of beings representing parts of Naga identity, or recalling past legends or events, as exemplified in Kire's books through spirit stones. Heneise narrates such regarding the stretch of land between Kohima village and peoples' paddy fields:

> "Large stones, streams, sometimes trees and unusual features such as sudden protrusions in the earth that one visits over a lifetime on the long treks to and from the field, and in the fields themselves, conjure up passed down legends linking the landscape with ancestral kin and are left undisturbed as sacred places." (2019: 125-126)

Landscapes then become repositories of memory and meaning, mnemonic representations full of symbols that speak to ethics and relationships, past, present and future, operating as a conjurer of

stories and thereby as a teacher - which culminates in a sense of identity based on the land, as a central aspect to the drive to respect and protect it. This intimacy and identification with the land is, as also comes through in Heneise's quote, derived *from* sustenance use. This also means reading the land when it has been overly exploited, as Kimmerer narrates: "The story of our relationship to the earth is written more truthfully on the land than on the page. It lasts there. The land remembers what we said and what we did." (2013: p. 342) Environmental Education, may offer another tool to read the land, then, through detailed information about ecosystems' relative value to the global, and in a globally accepted language. These 'objective' Scientific knowledges and tools derived from a neutral, non-situated non-subjecthood, can however *not replace* the type of reading, listening, or knowing of the land, that was already there, nor the emotive relationality to storied landscapes. This pertains not only to practical information and methods already known in local terminology, but also in the way of coming to know: having learned not only *about,* but *from* other animals, forests and rivers.[536] A meeting of such epistemes allows for new knowledge hybridisation, and wider reach in raising awareness and appreciation of the biodiversity of Naga areas. Yet, in order to stir the drive to protect places, it makes only sense to *also* share stories that remind people of their local (ancestral) ties to those places, including interdependency through use-relationships. Allowing for that entanglement, would stir a re-engagement with the ways such sustenance practices can yet be ruled by ethics, and an awareness of the repercussions if the material-spiritual balance continues to be disturbed for local self-sufficiency.[537]

Ultimately, as De Sousa-Santos (2014) wrote, the 'Western' sciences with its secular ontology may lead to functional lives, but not necessarily meaningful ones, providing only limited answers to the depth of questions before us.[595] In the current context, we must however understand that the 'Western' conservation discourse provides a solution to the also 'Western' imposed way of regarding nature as a profitable resource; it endeavours to equalise the harmful side of its own coin. As the Indigenous Environmental Network's stated (1994): "Traditional care-giving responsibilities which maintained healthy land need to be expanded to include restoration. Ecological restoration is inseparable from cultural and spiritual restoration, and is inseparable from the spiritual responsibilities of care-giving and world-renewal." (quoted in Kimmerer, 2013: 336-7) This links to what Niketu Iralu expressed about current biological restoration practices triggering a remembrance of traditional values. Kimmerer goes on to point to the various meanings of, and relations to land, that EE and restoration efforts should foster: "Land as sustainer. Land as identity. Land as grocery store and pharmacy. Land as connection to our ancestors. Land as moral obligation. Land as sacred. Land as self." (Ibid.: 337) She goes on to call this "biocultural or reciprocal restoration" (p. 338), which thus is fundamentally rooted in relationship: "Restoring Land without restoring relationship is an empty exercise. It is relationship that will endure and relationship that will sustain the restored land." (Ibid.)

Chapter 6. Conclusion

> "I dream of a world guided by a lens of stories rooted in the revelations of science and framed with an indigenous worldview - stories in which matter and spirit are both given voice. [...] [W]hile scientists are among those who are privy to [the] intelligences [of other beings], [t]hey lack the fundamental ingredient: humility. [...] In the indigenous view, humans are viewed as somewhat lesser beings in the democracy of species. We are referred to as the younger brothers of Creation, so like younger brothers we must learn from our elders. [...] Language is our gift and our responsibility. [...] Words to remember old stories, words to tell new ones, stories that bring science and spirit back together to nurture our becoming [...]." (Kimmerer, 2013: 346-7)

6.1 Tying the knots: Relational Pedagogy for Biocultural Diversity

The bedrock of this research endeavour has been that culture and ecology are not separate realms, but indefinitely intertwined, and created in each other's image of interdependency: culture and ecology dialectically co-evolve, and currently, disintegrate. My liberation is tied up with theirs (non-human others included), as all our liberation is tied up with each others'. My grain of sand is that we need cultural diversity as much as we need ecological diversity, and that they are indeed inseparable, especially amidst the current globalised capitalist hegemony. Unfortunately, this diversity of knowledges, languages, biocultural landscapes, skills, relations, modes of thinking, and ways of living, is disappearing, along with biodiversity. Amidst a political environment in which knowledge about one's own (political) history and culture is hindered by standardised education curricula of public schools, constituting a serious alienation from cultural identity and belonging, the active incorporation and engagement with the various forms of IEK, including cosmological stories and relations, and the values and ethics which they teach, is pivotal. This would not only prevent further cultural alienation and erosion, but would also have much to offer in terms of a culturally informed path towards sustainability, addressing the causes of the socio-ecological crises, at the crossing points of the material and discursive realms.

Through Kire's stories we encounter a relational lifeworld in which human is not in control of, yet has become an expert at mediating, the agential forces of the more-than-human world through a complicated network of ritual observances, taboos and modes of inferring knowledge about and from the spirit world, as well as the material world. As storylines which integrate traditional values, like sharing etiquette, taboos on greed, and spiritual/cosmological relations with various entities of the forest, they hold a great potential for the teaching of culturally grounded 'environmental ethics', following Abram's understanding of such in his Alliance of Wild Ethics (2017; see ch. 3). 'Relationality' in Tenyimia culture is characterised by the ability of soul travel, giving rise to a plane of existence where differences meet, as especially symbolised by the character of the weretiger - currently rendered taboo by Christianity. Such therianthropy is possible due to partially being of a shared constituency: to be a subject, to have spirit. The valuation of certain species of animals and plants, forest patches, mountains or rivers, then include but also go beyond 'ecosystem services', as subjects, and as places inhabited (and originally owned) by spirit, but also as habitats of cultural stories - stories that are tied to a sense

of identity and belonging, and which could pertain to spiritual values, moral lessons, community relations, or historical relevance. Kire's books reflect a cultural landscape imbued with such stories, in which the forests and fields are still partially dictated by tigers and invisible agents, warranting our fearful respect, carefulness and gratitude, and including such patches of forest considered 'more than sacred' due to spiritual infrastructure,[603] or off bounds due to dangerous spirit activity. Such a narration of land and its many subjects, gives rise to its ethical protection, irrespective of whether this particular stretch of forest houses the most pristine, rare or largest amount of biodiversity. Such culturally informed values of and relations to the spaces around the village and certain animal species, such as tigers, we usually do not find in a 'Western' science based educational narrative, and are therefore inherently complementary to any such 'Western' discourse. The question of sustainable co-existence namely goes beyond conservation, towards sustainable sustenance relationships and ways by which our ontologies and epistemes either open or close the door to communication with the more-than-human, as their own subjects and agents, deserving of habitat, respect, and rights to life. Should the spirits of animals, forests, rivers, or the dead, have a say about which places should be left alone?

Cultural change is inevitable - including the adoption of 'Western' ways, techniques, or knowledges, indeed alongside cultural adaptations from elsewhere - especially in a globalised world. In many ways, these adaptations are markers of local resilience - to glocal climate change and ecological devastation, and colonial, military, political, religious, social and economic forces of oppression. The eco-indigeneity, sustainability and conservation narratives are also used in implicit ways for cultural and territorial Indigenous rights recognition at national and international levels and as economic leverage. As such, local conservation efforts navigate complex webs of global discourses even as they constitute local and pragmatic ways of mediating socio-political, material and cultural forces (of overexploitation, climate change, political oppression, tourism, desires to hunt, human-wildlife conflicts). These forces and discourses are perhaps like ambivalent spirits - so that the colonial gaze may slip unseen into efforts of environmental education (which was further explored, but had to be cut for reasons of space; see Geerling, forthcoming), or so that plastic waste of 'eco-tourists' may become a concern, for example. Nevertheless, the grassroots conservation is also built upon traditional precedents or common ethical fibres,[604] of which parts were explored through Kire's novels. In a context where some Elders still remain, yet find less opportunities to tell their stories to youth, the literary endeavours to narrate such cultural knowledge and other revitalisation projects that counter such loss and erasure,[605] become ever more valuable and important to keep alive a poly-culture of both minds and soils. I want to stress that this thesis has however not meant to discredit the 'Western' science perspective altogether, nor has this thesis sought to return to a mere 'traditional point of view', but rather to equalise the ground on which the narratives are allowed to meet (each as their own limited, culturally informed, situated bodies of knowledge, even if 'Western' sciences have

attempted to raise themselves to an unsituated overarching totality), in order to compliment and hybridise each other; Freire's cultural synthesis (1993 [1970]). Kire's books are furthermore reflective of the historic-to-contemporary realities of merging influences in which the various stories are told.

Opinions of several Naga authorities in their respective fields were sought, to further the dialogue on the meeting of such narratives. I have here mostly considered how the practices, values and relations, informed by intimate relationships with a more-than-human world -cultural diversity- may (in)form ecological diversity and its revitalisation or protection. However, influences and changes, like the income of Christianity and education curricula, do not exist in simple dualistic tension alongside a linear trajectory as is often imagined (like the concepts of 'tradition' and 'modernity' themselves); they rather move all at once, so that the moving towards 'modernisation' in the form of conservation for example, may signal, as Niketu Iralu observed, a re-membering - of values of the more-than-human world, the role of mankind, and the ways of the ancestors. Current eco-indigenism ideals, may equally stir such an investigation of those parts of 'traditional culture' towards a re-inscribing of old ways with new meanings in contemporary contexts. Ideals and values exist in always changing and new constituencies of collected storylines - currently including ideas of development, and modernity, including Western sciences, and potentially internalised narratives which don't do Naga cultures justice. For this very reason it is imperative to critically consider the storylines that are adopted as informed ones - the white lab coat of 'modernity' may make us trust the doctor, but it may turn out this doctor does not know the local plants available for healing. In the middle of the paradoxes itself it seems that we must seek diversity restoration and conservation in the den of the tiger: in the heart of hunting and harvesting ethics. Here the guiding quality is a humble intimacy of relationship with the world, in which unethical behaviour has its immediate (spiritual-social and material-ecological) consequences. Such ethics and relations of respect, combined with current 'Western' methods of informed studies about the wellbeing of population numbers and ecosystems at large, together may weave ways of living with (increasingly threatened) relatives. It is also important to consider that social ethics driving village/community living are not separate from nature ethics, especially in a relational worldview. If the social ethics or relations between humans are changing towards more individualistic, capitalism and 'Western'-informed (lack of) ethics, ideals and relations, it makes sense that this affects the social relations and ethics of care towards the more-than-human also. Yet we can also see that the social structure of community is still dominant - through CCAs, as well as through continued etiquettes around food sharing for example, as Kia shared with me. The 'new' virtue is starting to take the form of being a protector of wildlife, for the village, for future generations, and for the globe. From a social fabric based on taboos teaching non-greed, non-waste, non-arrogance, and ritual practices of sharing resources, we can thus understand that Niketu Iralu says that the 'new' conservation ethic, by stopping over-exploitation, is understood

by all through a common, older, ethical fibre. Conservation then really is the sharing of the life force of the forest equally - between humans (across time), as well as with other beings. Yet, this however also implies that the whole community must be taken care of - including hunters.

As Kire spoke to, this relational consciousness and the ethical practice of it, are however no longer the main influences that drive the average hunter, who now increasingly hunts for money.[607] This is no surprise, when the traditional pedagogical institutions, formal and informal, are no longer there to teach youth. Conservation has in that context seemingly been taken up as a 'new' thing which transforms the culture away from hunting. However, an engagement *with* traditional hunting practice, rather than *against* it, may still bring about a greater cultural resonance and social sustainability of the conservation movement. This would simultaneously counter the cultural erosion that is well underway, which comes with both a sense of cultural alienation, and a loss of a wealth of *difference* in philosophical thought that, as I have argued, the 'West' could also learn from. But most importantly, it would create a pedagogy which acknowledges the world as full of agential subjects, with whom humans must find ways of humble co-existence. A restory-ation of our minds, and lands, would tie us there between the roots of our own belonging, and restore not only biodiversity, but a cultural diversity which allows for reciprocal restoration. Stories are the pedagogic tools to weave the landscape into self, and the self into landscape. Sciences are the pedagogic tools to understand the details of the story. But the story must come first, because it gives meaning to the details. Kire's books allow contemporary readers to gain this cultural insight, which at once ties them into a relationship to land, and reminds of all the knowledges that are there to be revitalised. An integration of such traditional values, like sharing etiquette, taboos on greed, and spiritual/cosmological understandings of the forest as home to many entities with personhood or agency, with whom respectful relations need to be maintained, hold a great potential for the teaching of culturally grounded 'environmental ethics', for environmental education and conservation practice both.

6.2 Weaving forwards: Suggestions for Educational Policy

> "Stories are among our most potent tools for restoring the land as well as our relationship to land. We need to un-earth the old stories that live in a place and begin to create new ones, for we are storymakers, not just storytellers. All stories are connected, new ones woven from the threads of the old." (Kimmerer, 2013: p. 341)

Elder Niketu Iralu iterated in our conversation with regards to education, that the current education system is shallow in its content, and that when one controls a people's understanding of their own past, one also controls their present and future.[612] When I asked Easterine Kire if storytelling is still present in the current public education system, she pointed out that:

> "No, not in school [...] Children are fed a lot of facts. [...] the morung [...] building is still there, but it's not used, as it used to be off old. Again, there is a big culture loss there. [...] that's where everyone got their traditional knowledge. [...] the modern school can't give that, they have so much on their agenda, and where is the time to pass on traditional knowledge. And also, of course, it's the fault of the educationists, they have not seen the value. So now it's like, we are in the third, or fourth generation of educated Naga's, so, [...] now then, it's come full circle, and scholars of today are going back to the villages, to get data, because, people in the towns don't know. *smiles* So.. it's very sad as well, something we didn't have [...] the knowledge to take care of, in the previous age, is disappearing now, and it's only now that people are waking up."[608]

Thinking about ways in which this cultural loss may be counteracted, the first thought comes indeed to the morung, and other traditional institutes. But also those pedagogies taught outside of any formal learning spaces - pedagogies of the fields, of the forests, of the paddies, of the hearth, of the campfire, need revitalisation. When bringing them into formal education, as Kire indicates, they would need to co-exist with the current agenda of the school curricula. Asking her whether there is a tension between the different pedagogies, or if she thinks they could come together, she responded: "They could, they could. And the tension is not necessary" (2021), giving the example of Japfur college where such efforts are already underway, notably through teaching cultivation practices.[609] However Kire reflects that this marks a clear difference between public and private schools in Nagaland:

> "The advantage of having private schools is that [...] they can control their own syllabus, and [...] they've included [...] children books that I've written, they've included that. And some of the schools study also some of the underground, so they have this freedom and they exercise it."[610]

Also including Kire's books in the public curriculum, could be a beginning at restorating cultural knowledge and storytelling pedagogy, then. Kikon indeed concluded in her study of the Education System in Indian administered Nagaland (2003)[611] that "it is at the level of educational institutions and educational policies that the next phase of the Nagas' struggle for self-determination will be waged." (p. 247) The integration of oral pedagogy in schools may be hard to operationalise practically, due to the schooling infrastructures that are often away from small villages and thereby host students speaking a range of local languages.[615] Nevertheless, such problems could be accommodated by storytelling in Nagamese, or hhaving elders from several language backgrounds come in to tell stories, or alternatively by having 'school' days oriented at village-based education, ranging from sustenance and craft practices to oral history and cultural teachings, for example. Furthermore, Kire suggested that:

> "What some of the universities in Canada are doing, they have Chairs for Elders, so, the Elders are there and scholars are able to interview them and get their knowledge. And that is wonderful, that the university recognises the knowledge of the elders. We could easily do that, back in Nagaland."[616]

It is furthermore pivotal that local language knowledge is also stimulated,[617] as it plays a fundamental role in shaping diverse ways of understanding and relating to the world. Local language education can be an avenue through which place-specific specific knowledges and practices are preserved, and often imbued with culture-specific values and untranslatable cultural

meanings,[618] while solidifying social relations and group identity. The more local languages are (re)integrated in everyday life, the easier the learning and teaching of them becomes. EE may for example choose, like Kire's works also do, to use local names and concepts. This would at once demonstrate the already existing extensive body of knowledge of local taxonomy, previous to 'Western' influence. Of course, English[619] and Nagamese remain important languages to learn.

An Indigenised approach to EE - as a site of manifesting both socio-cultural and ecological change - would be achieved by taking cultural heritage as the starting point for a dialectic with 'Western' sciences, and tackling current over-exploitation within the heart of harvesting practices themselves, namely by stimulating and re-inscribing older values and hunting or harvesting ethics with their current significance. Through an EE (and resulting conservation) rooted in place-based storytelling and therefore cultural identification with the land, conservation ethics or 'taboos' would be fundamentally carried by the community's socio-cultural ethos, instead of having to be imposed as limitations to hunting culture. Re-storying (useful aspects of) traditional hunting practices, animal species, plants, or places, could stimulate an understanding of hunting limitations (or taboos) as a return to culture, rather than a move away from it (which is how it is presented in EE like UTC, 2009) - countering not the hunting instinct in its totality, but rather the instinct of greed, which has been promoted in capitalism. EE texts (and education at large) need to present a critical and politically informed narrative, that contextualises the ecological crises in the very real discrepancies of people's contribution to worldwide consumption and emission, without taking away from local responsibilities for local lands and wellbeing,[613] but also by allowing for an 'ecology of knowledges'[614] through a critical engagement with the politics of knowledge. Indeed education should aim to truthfully reflect reality. Internationally, this also means that funds available for the creation of EE, should critically assess the educational narratives of the funded materials. Although references to 'IEK' or 'TEK' and traditional conservation practices are often made in communication about biodiversity conservation today - likely also with the understanding of the social-political capital of such words in the international arena - the active integration of traditional practices, knowledges, relations or values in awareness raising and environmental education needs further attention and support. They would need to be integrative not only of practical IEK, but of traditional worldviews as they currently exist in their hybridised forms, to teach alternative philosophical approaches. It is not argued that they should promote any (return to a 'traditional') faith, but to present the philosophy of a relational cosmovision in which a multitude of subjects are acknowledged which need to be respected. Such ties in exceptionally well with current progressive discourses also within 'Western' academia, through interdisciplinary fields like the environmental humanities, as well as current global initiatives to grant legal 'personhood' and associated rights to existence and wellbeing, to elements of the more-than-human world. Pride in local sustenance practices and knowledges should therefore be

the discursive starting point towards stimulating local sustainability, as it indeed materially is. Conservation areas should be narrated as fundamental parts *of* such sustenance systems, as they indeed are in grassroots CCAs like KNCTS, and have 'traditionally' been. Culture, as the cultivation of 'ecology' through 'economy' - the art of meaning making through shared livelihood, in tandem with the logic of the home (*oikos logos*), resulting in management practices (*oikos nomos)* - gives rise to ethics. Ethics then simply speak to the right way of being a subject amidst a (more-than-human) community. Pedagogy should incorporate all such dimensions to living well that give rise to shared wellbeing. The normative function of EE texts then would be rather a return to such intimacy with the land, to inform such rules and ethics; instead of *only* bringing in a neutrally positioned, scientific positivist approach. Immersive learning practices should incorporate traditional modes of expression and engagements with place, such as through song, stories, dance, games as well as subsistence methods themselves. NEN's farm schools and Japfu college that Kire mentioned, are examples of current engagements with practical sustenance practices. The reintroduction of traditional festivals related to the reintroduction of millet as a climate-resilient crop, by Chizami's Women Society in collaboration with NEN, are important examples of revitalised biocultural practices that at once respond to the current context of climate change. Such can provide models for future efforts of biocultural revitalisation.

Hopefully, these thoughts can be threads that weave themselves into a wider re-evaluation of the importance of local knowledges and pedagogies like storytelling, without needing to fall into a 'tradition' *v.* 'modern' mindset. Indeed, as diverse narratives and knowledge systems in practice co-exist in Nagaland, through the dynamic dialectic of continuity and change, global and local, they could be represented in educational spaces, while giving credit and due importance to the informal educational spaces where such knowledge transmission also takes place. Through a restory-ation of environmental education, the land would again become a teacher to whom is listened, and its 'study' would result not only in information, but in meaningful relationships.

6.3 Loose Threads: Scope, Limitations & Suggestions for Further Research

Easterine Kire's books provided me with an entrance to a complex world of socio-ecological relations, but obviously, this is a limited sample. In its stead, other authors could have been considered, as well as entirely different expressions of folklore, among which song, dance, proverbs, crafts; each as containers and sources of ethno-philosophy. The scope and complexity -and especially the diversity among (Tenyimia) Naga tribes- of the beliefs and rules, taboos and knowledges is furthermore far out of the reach of the current thesis. Nevertheless, we have gotten a sense of the way forests are living places ruled, owned and inhabited by more-than-human agential subjects. Approaching the study of local relations with the material and immaterial (spiritual) layers of a place I never set foot, through predominantly digital, online, or text based research methods, has furthermore felt contradictory and resulted in a long delay of

the current work. I have attempted to take this Covid-19 induced limitation as an opportunity to question the role of 'the Anthropologist', and her methods: what if we take the anthropologist out of the 'field'? The distance forced me to rely completely on the research and voices of local and locally engaged people, so that Kire's narrations of both material and spiritual layers to Naga forest and village spaces took precedence. This perhaps aided in decentralising my outsider gaze, making sure I paid due attention to scholarly work by Naga researchers already conducted. Nevertheless, my interpretative reading -and voice, therefore- cannot be thought out of the presented work, and as an absolute outsider to the context of Nagaland, there are inevitably limitations to the observations I can make. Even as I criticise the limitations of the 'Western' ontology and its colonial axes of power, I am also still a beneficiary of their global dominance by giving me some sort of implicit legitimacy - a 'privilege' or hierarchy I seek to dismantle, as such is part of a decolonial praxis, yet cannot claim to have in practice achieved.

Analysis of the eco-philosophical content and inclusivity of knowledge systems in public education curricula would be an important endeavour of future research. With the prevalence of current conservation initiatives and NGO involvement, a cautious consideration of shifts in proposed socio-ecological relations and valid ways of knowing, is furthermore warranted in those contexts, to the extent they may therefore also constitute an erasure. Such was studied through the limited sample of an EE text applied in a local eco-club for youth, but did not fit the page limit of this MA thesis. Even then, further research should look at the implementation of such education material to see how such narratives are in practice taught, acted upon and potentially altered. Research focused on education policy would enhance our perspective on the possibility of integrating oral pedagogy and local Indigenous knowledges, and how they are currently represented. Furthermore, informal pedagogical spaces -such as the hearth or field- would be important sites to research current iterations of storytelling pedagogy. It has also been observed that the topic of gender relations was a recurring theme in Kire's books,[621] and although I theoretically rely on the work of various feminist philosophers, this research has not dived into the intersectional layer or question of gender relations to the subjects considered, which could be an interesting approach. Women as carriers and teachers of IEK and other cultural knowledges, make gender and place-specific pedagogies both important topics for further research. Potential research questions could then be: Have the Nagas indigenised the Western conservation discourse presented to them in Environmental Education on the ground (just as Christianity took the form of a nativised Christianity)? What is the role of informal and women-ruled pedagogical spaces or practices, in shaping more-than-human relations today (despite formal schooling narratives)? And, how could traditional stories, relations and knowledges (continue to) inform conservation thought, policy and practice? Despite these loose threads, I hope this thesis can contribute to a wider conversation on the plurality of knowledges and pedagogies, and the many ways to think, embody and ethically relate with a 'nature' which includes humans, in a sustainable way.

Bibliography

Abram, D. - (1996). *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World*. NY: Vintage Books.

- (2017). 'On Wild Ethics', *Tikkun 32*(1): 13–15. Retrieved at https://doi.org/10.1215/08879982-3769016

Abram, D., Milstein, T., & Castro-Sotomayo, J. (2020). 'Interbreathing ecocultural identity in the Humilocene', in Milstein, T. & Castro-Sotomayor, J. (Eds.) *Routledge Handbook of Ecocultural Identity.* UK: Routledge.

Adsit-Morris, C. (2017). *Restorying Environmental Education: Figurations, Fictions, and Feral Subjectivities.* US: Palgrave Macmillan.

AIPP & IWGIA (2014). 'Shifting Cultivation, Livelihood and Food Security: New and Old Challenges for Indigenous Peoples in Asia,' Chiang Mai: AIPP Printing Press. Retrieved from https://www.iwgia.org/images/publications/0694_AIPPShifting_cultivation_livelihoodfood_security.pdf [Accessed October 7, 2022]

Alaimo, S., & Heckman, S. J. (2008). *Material Feminisms.* US: Indiana University Press.

Angelova, I. (2017). 'Colonial Rule, Christianity and Socio-Cultural (Dis)contintuities among the Sumi Naga,' in Wouters, J. J. P. & Heneise, M. (Eds.) *Nagas in the 21st Century.* Print.

Ao, T. (1999). *Ao-Naga Oral Tradition.* Baroda, India: Bhasha Publications.

Aryal, K., Thomas, S., & Choudhury, D. (2019). '[Commentary] Shifting Cultivation Landscapes in Transition', *Mongabay,* November 28. Retrieved from https://india.mongabay.com/2019/11/commentary-shifting-cultivation-landscapes-in-transition/ [Accessed March 23, 2020]

Åhrén, M. (2016). *Indigenous Peoples' Status in the International Legal System.* UK: Oxford University Press.

Balipara Foundation (2020). 'Community for conservation: A Transition from community into hunting,' 8th Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics Forum, 1-5 December. Derived from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xICR33_tIUc [Accessed October 7, 2022]

Banerji, R. (2022). 'Visual Medium for Social Change in Northeast India Leveraging the Power of Youth in Conservation Action and Social Change,' in Kaushik, A., Suchiang, A. (Eds.) *Narratives and New Voices from India: Communication, Culture and Change in Asia, 8*: pp 153–166. Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-2496-5_10

Banuri, T. & Apffel-Marglin, F. (1993). *Who Will Save the Forests?: Knowledge, Power and Environmental Destruction.* London: Zed Books.

Baruah, S. (1999). *India Against Itself*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Bateson, G. (2000 [1972]). *Steps to an Ecology of Mind.* US: University of Chicago Press.

Berkes, F. (2008 [1999]). *Sacred Ecology* (Second Edition). New York: Routledge. Print.

Bhabha, H. (1994). *The location of culture.* New York: Routledge.

Bhattacharjya, D. (2001). 'The genesis and development of Nagamese: Its social history and linguistic structure' (Thesis). NY: City University of New York.

Bhattacharya, P. (2020). 'Reviving the Indigenous Knowledge of the Tenyimia Nagas in Easterine Kire's When the River Sleeps', *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews 8*(1), pp. 751-758.

Bhat, M. (2016). 'Niketu Iralu', in *UNSUNG-Extraordinary Lives 2*. Derived from https://www.unsung.in/unsung-volume2/niketu-iralu/ [Accessed April 30, 2021]

Bird-David, N. - (1999). 'Animism' revisited: personhood, environment, and relational epistemology. *Current Anthropology, 40*(SI), pp. 67-91.

- (2017). *Us, Relatives: Scaling and Plural Life in a Forager World*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Blenkinsop, S., & Egan, K. (2009). 'Three 'Big Ideas' and Environmental Education', in M. McKenzie, P. Hart, H. Bai, B. Jickling (Eds.) *Fields of Green: Restorying Culture, Environment, and Education.* US: Hampton Press. Pp. 85-93

Bolingbroke-Kent, A. (2020). ''I swapped my gun for binoculars': India's hunters turn to conservation.' *The Guardian,* March 10th, retrieved at https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/mar/10/i-swapped-my-gun-for-binoculars-indias-hunters-turn-to-conservation-aoe [Accessed March 16, 2020].

Bradfort, C. J. (2022, January). 'Responding to Ecological Imbalance [Commentary]', *Village under Forest,* Retrieved from https://villageunderforest.com/responding-to-ecological-imbalance-commentary/ [Accessed May 6, 2022]

Braidotti, R. - (2011). *Nomadic subjects: Embodiment and sexual difference in contemporary feminist theory.* US: Columbia University Press.

- (2013). *The Posthuman.* UK: Polity Press.

Bridgewater, P., & Rotherham, I. D. (2019). 'A critical perspective on the concept of biocultural diversity and its

emerging role in nature and heritage conservation', *People and Nature 1*(3), pp. 291-304.
Cairns, M. F. (2007). 'The Alder Managers: The Cultural Ecology of a Village in Nagaland, N.E. India,' Thesis submitted to the Australian National University.
CBD (2018). 'Long-term strategic directions to the 2050 vision for biodiversity, approaches to living in harmony with nature and preparation for the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework'. Note by the Executive Secretary. Available at: www.cbd.int/doc/c/0b54/1750/607267ea9109b52b750314a0/cop-14-09-en.pdf
CBD, Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (2000). 'Recommendation V/10 Ecosystem approach: further conceptual elaboration. Recommendations adopted by the SBSTTA fifth meeting, 31 January - 4 February, Montreal. Derived from https://www.cbd.int./doc/recommendations/sbstta-05/ full/sbstta-05-rec-en.pdf [Accessed May 28, 2020]
Celermajer, D. - (2020). 'Adam in the garden and Lear in the storm: the human amidst the animals', *Textual Practice 35*(7), 1163-1182, DOI: 10.1080/0950236X.2020.1734648
- (2021). *Summertime: Reflections on a Vanishing Future.* UK: Hamish Hamilton.
Celermajer, D., & O'Brien, A. T. (2021). 'Alter-transitional justice; transforming unjust relations with the more-than-human', *Journal of Human Rights and the Environment 12*(0), December: https://doi.org/10.4337/jhre.2021.00.06.
Census of India (2011). 'Nagaland Population 2011-2022.' Retrieved from https://www.census2011.co.in/census/state/nagaland.html [accessed April 30, 2022]
Chakrabarty, D. (2009). 'The climate of history: Four theses,' *Critical Inquiry 35*: 197-222
Chase, P. & Singh, O. P. (2014). 'Soil nutrients and fertility in three traditional land use systems of Khonoma, Nagaland, India', *Resources and Environment 4*(4): 181-189. DOI: 10.5923/j.re.20140404.01
Chilisa, B. (2012). *Indigenous Research Methodologies.* Los Angeles: Sage. Print.
Choudhury, A. (2001). 'Some bird records from Nagaland, North-East India', *Forktail 17*: 91–103.
Corlett, R. T. (2015). 'The Anthropocene concept in ecology and conservation', *Trends in Ecology & Evolution 30*(1): 36- 41.
Costanza, R. et al. (1997). 'The value of the world's ecosystem services and natural capital,' *Nature 387*: 253-260 .
Cover, R. M. (1983). 'Foreword: Nomos and Narrative' Harvard Law Review 97(4). Derived from https://openyls .law.yale.edu/bitstream/handle/20.500.13051/2047/Nomos_and_Narrative.pdf [Accessed February, 2023]
Cronon, W. (1995). 'The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature' in W. Cronon (Ed.) *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature.* NY: W.W. Norton and Company. p. 69-90.
Crutzen, P. J., & Stoermer, E. F. (2000). 'The 'Anthropocene'. *IGBP Newsletter 41*: 17-18.
Das, S. K. (2013). 'Chapter 4: Forest Rights Act, 2006', in S. K. Das *India's Rights Revolution: Has It Worked for the Poor?* UK: Oxford University Press. pp. 166–247
Datta, A., & Naniwadekar, R. (2019, November 14). 'Hunting for answers: the scale and impacts of hunting, and the importance of listening to hunters.' in *Mongabay*. Retrieved from https://india.mongabay.com/2019/11 /commentary-hunting-for-answers-the-scale-and-impacts-of-hunting-and-the-importance-of-listening-to-hun ters/ [Accessed March 23, 2020]
De Costa, R. (2015). 'States' Definitions of Indigenous Peoples: A Survey of Practices', in Berg-Nordlie, M., Saglie, J., & Sullivan, A. (Eds.) *Indigenous Politics: Institutions, Representation, Mobilisation.* UK: ECPR Press.
Deloria, V. Jr. (1999). 'Relativity, Relatedness and Reality', in Deloria, V. Jr (B. Deloria, K. Foehner, & S. Scinta (Eds.)) *Spirit and Reason.* Golden: Fulcrum, pp. 32-39.
Descartes, R. (2004). *The Treatise on Man* (Transl. by S. Gaukroger, in *The World and Other Writings.* Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press: 99—170.)
Descola, P. (2013, 2nd ed.). *Beyond Nature and Culture.* University of Chicago Press.
De Sousa Santos, B. (2014). *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against Epistemicide*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers. Print.
Dey, K. (2018). 'In Christian Nagaland, indigenous religion of pre-Christian Nagas withstands test of time', *The Indian Express,* January 7. Retrieved from https://indianexpress.com/article/north-east-india/nagaland /in-christian-nagaland-indigenous-religion-of-pre-christian-nagas-withstand-test-of-time-5010777/ [Accessed August 2, 2021]
Dusty Foot Productions (2021). 'Green Hub', see https://www.dustyfootindia.com/our-work-education-and-outreach-green-hub [Accessed May 6, 2023]
Dialogues/Classes on language with Rhovitono Yhome/Fifi, July - November, 2020, online
Dialogue/Interview with Easterine Kire, 2021, UiT, Tromsø
Dialogue/Interview with Elder Niketu Iralu, 2021, online
Dialogues with *Kia*, July - November 2020, online

Dialogues with Michael Heneise, 2020, UiT, Tromsø
Díaz, S., et al. - (2015). 'A Rosetta Stone for Nature's Benefits to People'. *PLoS Biol 13.*
- (2019, December 13). 'Pervasive human-driven decline of life on Earth points to the need for transformative change.' *Science 366*(eaax3100)
Du Bois, W. E. B. (1903). *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches.* Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co.
Ducarme, F., Flipo, F., & Couvet, D. (2020). 'How the diversity of human concepts of nature affects conservation of biodiversity,' *Society for Conservation Biology 35*(3), pp. 1019-1028.
Dundes, A. (1969). The Devolutionary Premise in Folklore Theory. *Journal of the Folklore Institute*, *6*(1), 5–19. https://doi.org/10.2307/3814118
Dussel, E. - (1993). 'Eurocentrism and Modernity (Introduction to the Frankfurt Lectures),' *Boundary 2 20*(3): 65. https://doi.org/10.2307/303341.
- (2007). *Anti-Cartesian Meditations: On the Origin of the Philosophical Anti-Discourse of Modernity.* (Tr. by G. Ciccariello-Maher). Derived from http://enriquedussel.com/txt/Anti-Cartesianmeditations.pdf.
Edake, S., et al. for Forestry & Biodiversity Group TERI (2015). 'Documentation of Community Conserved Areas of Nagaland,' submitted to Department of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, GoN. Derived from https://www.iccaconsortium.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Documentation-of-Community-Conserved-Areas-of-Nagaland-final.pdf [accessed May 7, 2022]
Environmental Justice Atlas, 'Kaziranga Conflict Rhinos and Poachers Assam India': https://www.ejatlas.org/conflict/kaziranga-conflict-rhinos-and-poachers-assam-india [Accessed March 07, 2021]
Escobar, A. - (1995). *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World.* Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press. Print.
- (2011). 'Sustainability: Design for the pluriverse,' *Development 54*(2): 137-140.
Estés, C. P. (1992). *Women who run with the wolves : Myths and stories of the wild woman archetype.* NY: Ballantine Books.
Fanon, F. O. (1967). *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press.
Fischer, J., et al. (2015). 'Advancing sustainability through mainstreaming a Social-ecological systems perspective'. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability 14*: 144-149.
Fleck, R. F. - (1978). 'John Muir's Evolving Attitudes Toward Native American Cultures', *American Indian Quarterly 4*(1): 19-31.
Forest Peoples Programme, International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, Indigenous Women's Biodiversity Network, Centres of Distinction on Indigenous and Local Knowledge and Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2020). 'Local Biodiversity Outlooks 2: The contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and to renewing nature and cultures. A complement to the fifth edition of Global Biodiversity Outlook.' Moreton-in-Marsh, England: Forest Peoples Programme. Available at: www.localbiodiversityoutlooks.net
Forest Survey of India (2021). 'India State of Forest Report.' Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, GoI. Retrieved from https://fsi.nic.in/forest-report-2021-details [Accessed 30 April, 2022]
Foucault, M. - (1975-1976). 'Society Must be Defended', Lectures at the Collège de France.
- (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison.* NY: Pantheon Books.
Freire, P. (1993 [1970]). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* New York: Continuum.
Fürer-Haimendorf, C. von (1946). *The Naked Nagas: Head-hunters of Assam in Peace and War.* Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co.
Gaski, H. (2019). 'Indigenous Elders' Perspective and Position,' in Brantly, S. & DuBois, T. A. (Eds.) *Scandinavian Studies - The Journal of the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study, 91*(1-2), pp. 259 - 268.
Ghosh, S. - (2018a). 'Two conservation communities from northeast India win biodiversity awards' in Mongabay, June 26th. Retrieved from https://india.mongabay.com/2018/06/two-conservation-communities-from-northeast-india-win-biodiversity-awards/ [Accessed March 20, 2020]
- (2018b). 'A Naga village's journey from hunting ground to safe haven for the Amur Falcon' in *Mongabay,* May 4th. Retrieved from https://india.mongabay.com/2018/05/a-naga-villages-journey-from-hunting-ground-to-safe-haven-for-the-amur-falcon/ [Accessed March 20, 2020]
- (2019). 'Are changing agricultural practices responsible for vanishing happiness in remote Tripura hamlets?' in *Mongabay,* September 25th. Retrieved from https://india.mongabay.com/2019/09/are-changing-agricultural-practices-responsible-for-vanishing-happiness-in-remote-tripura-hamlets/ [Accessed March 23, 2020]
Glotfelty, C. (1996). 'Introduction: Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis', in C. Glotfelty & H. Fromm (Eds.) *The Ecocriticism Reader*. USA: The University of Georgia Press.

GoI - (1972). *The Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act.* Ministry of Environment and Forests, New Delhi.
- (2006). *The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act*. Derived from https://tribal.nic.in/FRA/data/FRARulesBook.pdf [Accessed April 20, 2023]
- (2023). 'The Forest (Conservation) Amendment Bill, 2023'. Derived from https://prsindia.org/files/bills_acts/bills_parliament/2023/Forest%20(Conservation)%20Amendment%20Bill,%202023.pdf [Accessed April 18, 2023]

GoN (2012 (2nd version)). *Nagaland state action plan on climate change: Achieving a low carbon development trajectory.* Kohima: Government of Nagaland.

Graham, L. R., & Penny, H. G. (Eds.) (2014). *Performing Indigeneity: Global Histories and Contemporary Experiences*. University of Nebraska Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1d9nmw6

Haraway, D. J. - (1988). 'Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective,' *Feminist Studies 14*(3) (Autumn), pp. 575-599.
- (2004). *The Haraway Reader.* NY: Routledge.
- (2008a). 'Otherworldly Conversations, Terran Topics, Local Terms', in S. Alaimo & S. J. Hekman (Eds.) *Material Feminisms.* US: Indiana University Press. pp. 157-187
- (2008b). *When Species Meet.* The University of Minnessota Press.
- (2015). 'Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin,' *Environmental Humanities 6*(1): 159–165.

Hazra, S. (2018, September 10). 'The Indian tribe that gave up hunting to save forests,' *BBC*. Retrieved from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-45328322 [Accessed May, 2021]

Heise, U. K. (1997). 'Science and Ecocriticism,' *The American Book Review 18*(5), July-August.

Heneise, M. - (2016). 'The Naga tiger-man and the modern assemblage of a myth,' in Hurn, S. (Ed.) *Anthropology and Cryptozoology*, pp. 91-106.
- (2019). *Agency and Knowledge in Northeast India.* Edinburgh: Routledge.

Hutton, J. H. - (1921). *The Angami Nagas.* London: Macmillan.
- (1921b). *The Sema Nagas.* London: Macmillan.

ICORN - (2006, August 9). 'AUTUMN 06 Featured Writer: Easterine Kire Iralu.' Derived from https://www.icorn.org/article/autumn-06-featured-writer-easterine-kire-iralu-0 [Accessed May 15, 2021]
- (2012, January 14). 'Easterine Kire releases new novel 'Bitter Wormwood.' Derived from https://www.icorn.org/article/easterine-kire-releases-new-novel-bitter-wormwood [Accessed May 15, 2021]

Interview with Chairman KNCTS Kezhasorie Meyase, 2022, online

IPCC (2022). Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. UK: Cambridge University

Iralu, E. (2021, February 22). 'Why are Indians so preoccupied with what Nagas eat, whether it is dogs, bats or falcons?', *Scroll,* Derived from https://scroll.in/magazine/987259/why-are-indians-so-preoccupied-with-what-nagas-eat-whether-it-is-dogs-bats-or-falcons?fbclid=IwAR3pubxIDmtAQMwtzzC3PiYRhb60gIi3DsE-qNeNNZ1xw1ClUJE37wqhgSw [Accessed August 2, 2022]

IUCN (2022). 'Position paper for the Open-Ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (OEWG3),' *Convention on Biological Diversity,* 14-29 March, Geneva, Switzerland. Retrieved at www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/iucn_position_paper_resumed_cbd_sbstta24-sbi3-oewg3_.pdf [accessed 22 April, 2022]

IUCN & BirdLife International (2020). *Tragopan blythii*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2020. Retrieved from https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2020-3.RLTS.T22679163A177682428.en [Accessed May, 2022]

IWGIA (2020). D. Mamo (Ed.) *The Indigenous World 2020.* IWGIA.

Jensen, S.Q. (2011). Othering, identity formation and agency. *Qualitative Studies, 2*(2): 63-78.

Joshi, V. (2012). *A Matter of Belief: Christian Conversation and Healing in North-East India.* NY: Berghahn Books.

Kareiva, P., & Marvier, M. (2011). *Conservation Science: Balancing the Needs of People and Nature.* USA: Roberts and Company Publishers.

Karthikeyan, S. (2022, July). 'Explained | What India's Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill seeks to change', *The Hindu*. Derived from https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/explained-indias-wild-life-protection-act-features-shortcomings-recommended-changes/article65579474.ece [Accessed April 28, 2023]

Kashyap, S. G. (2017). 'Why Thuingaleng Muivah's new statement has dug up old fears, anger,' *The Indian Express,* March 27. Derived from https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/why-thuingaleng-muivahs-new-statement-has-dug-up-old-fears-anger-assam-manipur-protest-4590030/ [Accessed September 27, 2022]

Kenrick, J. (2020). 'Burning a home that "doesn't exist," arresting people who "aren't there": A

critique of eviction-based conservation and the Sengwer of Embobut forest, Kenya.' Chapter 10 in J. Bellie & J. Hays (Eds.) *Scales of Governance and Indigenous Peoples' Rights*. Oxon: Routledge. pp. 241 - 265

Khutso, R. (2018, February). 'History, Identity and Language: Tenyidie and Its Literary Networks', *Language in India 18*(2). Derived from http://www.languageinindia.com/feb2018/rikutenyidienetworks.pdf

Kikon, D. - (2003). 'Destroying differences, schooling consent: A critical analysis of education policy in Indian-administered Nagaland 1,' *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies 4*(2), pp. 232-248. DOI: 10.1080/1464937032000112971

- (2015). 'Fermenting Modernity: Putting Akhuni on the Nation's Table in India.' *South Asia Journal of South Asian Studies 38*(2). DOI: 10.1080/00856401.2015.1031936.

Kimmerer, R. W. - (2013). *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants.* UK: Penguin Books. Print.

- (2015, April 25). 'Living beings as our kith and kin - we need a new pronoun for nature', *The Ecologist*. Derived from https://theecologist.org/2015/apr/25/living-beings-our-kith-and-kin-we-need-new-pronoun-nature [Accessed November, 2022]

Kire, E. - (2001). *The Windhover Collection.* India: Steven Herlekar.

- (2007). *A Terrible Matriarchy.* New Delhi: Zubaan.

- (2011). *Forest Song.* Nagaland: Barkweaver Publications.

- (2012). http://windhoverlive.blogspot.com/p/books.html

- (2014). *When the River Sleeps.* New Delhi: Zubaan Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

- (2016). *Son of the Thundercloud.* New Delhi: Speaking Tiger Publishing Pvt. Ltd.

- (2017). *Don't Run, My Love.* New Delhi: Speaking Tiger Publishing Pvt. Ltd.

- (2018 [2003]). *Sky Is My Father: A Naga Village Remembered.* New Delhi: Speaking Tiger Publishing Pvt. Ltd.

Klepeis, P., & Laris, P. (2006). 'Contesting Sustainable Development in Tierra del Fuego', *Geoforum 37*(4), 505-518.

KNCTS (2019). 'Abstract submitted to the Department of Forest, Government of Nagaland in pursuance of National Biodiversity award 2020.' KNCTS.

Kohn, E. (2013). *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human.* US: University of California Press.

Kovach, M. (2009). *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations and Contexts.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Kronik, J. & Hays, J. (2015). 'Limited Room for Manoeuvre: Indigenous Peoples and Climate-Change Adaptation Strategies.' Chapter 14 in H. Inderberg, S. Eriksen, K. O'brien & L. Sygna (Eds.) *Climate Change Adaptation and Development. Transforming Paradigms and Practices.* London: Routledge.

Kuolie, D. (2013, July 6). 'A Rejoinder to 'Nagaland Tribes: The Latest Bone of Contention', *My perception and I* (Blog) at https://thohepou.wordpress.com/2013/07/06/a-rejoinder-to-nagaland-tribes-the-latest-bone-of-contention/ [Accessed March 7, 2023]

Latour, B. - (1991). *We have never been Modern* (C. Porter, Trans.). Harvard University Press.

- (2005). *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory.* Oxford: Oxford UP.

- (2017). *Facing Gaia: Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime.* UK: Polity Press.

Leopold, A. (1949 [1977]). *A Sand County Almanac: and Sketches Here and There*. NY: Oxford University Press.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1969 [1964]). *The Raw and The Cooked* (Transl. By J. & D. Weightman). NY: Harper & Row.

Longkumer, A. (2017). 'Who sings for the Hornbill?: the performance and politics of culture in Nagaland, Northeast India,' in J. J. P. Wouters & M. Heneise (Eds.) *Nagas in the 21st Century.* Kohima: Highlander Books: 107-116. Print.

Longkumer, W. I. & Menon, N. (2019). '*Return of the Spirits: An Interview with Easterine Kire*.' English: Journal of the English Association: pp. 1–12. Doi: 10.1093/english/efz028.

Longkumer, M. T., Raj, M., & Solanki, V. (2019). 'Impact of shifting cultivation on environment: an assessment on the behaviour of the farmers in Mokokchung Village,' *International Journal of Education 11* (May, 2019). Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/43147990/Impact_of_shifting_cultivation_on_environment_an_assessment_on_the_behaviour_of_the_farmers_in_Mokokchung_Village [accessed April 29, 2022]

Longkumer, Y. (2022). ''Racism against Nagas' - outrage over Bengali story depicting tribe eating own mother's flesh', *The Print,* October 5. Derived from https://theprint.in/india/racism-against-nagas-outrage-over-bengali-story-depicting-tribe-eating-own-mothers-flesh/1154051/ [Accessed October 20, 2022]

Longvah, S. (2017). 'Christian conversion, the rise of Naga national consciousness, and Naga nationalist politics', in J. J. P. Wouters & M. Heineise (Eds.) *Nagas in the 21st Century.* Kohima: Highlander Books: 133-150. Print

Lorde, A. (1984). 'The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House.' *Sister Outsider: Essays and*

Speeches. Ed. 2007. Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press. 110- 114.
Lugones, M. (2010). 'Toward a Decolonial Feminism,' *Hypatia 25*(4): 742—759.
Lyngdoh, M., Lepcha, R. P., & Talilula (Eds.) (2021). 'Special Issue: Indigeneity, Ecology, & Narrative,' *International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR) Newsletter 8.* Estonia: University of Tartu.
Mace, G. (2014). "Whose conservation?", *Science 345*: 1558-1560.
Maffi, L. - (2005). 'Linguistic, Cultural, and Biological Diversity', T*he Annual Review of Anthropology 29*: 599–617. Doi: 10.1146/ annurev.anthro.34.081804.120437
- (2010). 'Introduction: Why a Sourcebook on Biocultural Diversity?,' and 'What is Biocultural Diversity?', in Maffi, L. & Woodley, E. *Biocultural Diversity Conservation: A Global Sourcebook.* London: Routledge, pp. xix-11.
Malhotra, K. C., Et al. (2001). 'Cultural and Ecological Dimensions of Sacred Groves in India.' Retrieved from https://web.archive.org/web/20140808033418/http://himalayanconnections.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/Malhotra_2001_CultureEcologySacredGrovesIndia_IAS.pdf [Accessed March 22, 2020]
Maurstad, A. (2002). 'Fishing in murky waters - ethics and politics of research on fisher knowledge.' *Marine Policy 26*, pp. 159 - 166.
McKenzie, M., Hart, P., Bai, H., Jickling, B. (2009). *Fields of Green: Restorying Culture, Environment, and Education.* US: Hampton Press.
Merleau-Ponty, M. - (1962). *Phenomenology of Perception* (Trans. C. Smith). UK: Routledge.
- (1964). T*he Primacy of Perception: and Other Essays on Phenomenology, Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History and Politics* (Trans. J. M. Edie) Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
Mies, M., & Shiva, V. (1993). *Ecofeminism.* London: Zed Books.
Mignolo, W. - (2000). *Local Histories/Global Designs, Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- (2011). *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options.* Duke University Press.
Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005). Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Biodiversity Synthesis. World Resources Institute, Washington, DC.
Mills, J. P. (1973 [1926]). *The Ao Nagas.* Oxford University Press.
Moore, J. W. (Ed.) (2016). *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism.* PM Press.
Moquin, H. (2007). Postcolonial reflections on research in a Inuit community: Learning in community. Proceedings of the joint international Adult Education Research Conference and the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education, University of Glasgow, Scotland.
Morton, T. (2017). *Humankind: Solidarity with Non-Human People.* UK: Verso Books.
Morung Express - (2016, March 23). 'Nagaland joins effort to 'conserve' wildlife'. Derived from https://morungexpress.com/nagaland-joins-effort-conserve-wildlife [Accessed October 10, 2022]
- (2021, December 4). ''Nagas are making good progress in literature' Nagaland Literature Festival Concludes,' *Morung Express*. Derived from https://www.morungexpress.com/nagas-are-making-good-progress-in-literature [Accessed april 21, 2023]
Muir, J. (1912). *The Yosemite*. New York: The Century Co.
Murry, E. (1995). *Tribal Spirituality Reconsidered: A Psychological Study of Religion.* Delhi: Navdin Prakashan Kendra. Print.
Nahban, G. P. (1991). 'Restoring and Re-storying the Landscape', *Restoration & Management Notes 9*(1). Derived from https://er.uwpress.org/content/wper/9/1/3.full.pdf [Accessed April 30, 2023]
Nadasdy, P. (2005). 'The Anti-Politics of TEK: The Institutionalization of Co-Management Discourse and Practice.' *Anthropologica 47*(2), pp. 215 - 232.
Naga Heritage Centre (2016). Kire, A., & Rhako, M. V. (Eds.). *People Stories: Volume One.* Kohima: PenThrill Publication House. Print.
Nagaland Page (2021, January 11). '3rd Chengu Festival: Special focus on traditional agriculture'. Derived from nagalandpage.com/3rd-chengu-festival-special-focus-on-traditional-agriculture/ [Accessed March 17, 2023].
Nagaland State Forest Department (2015). Film '*Nagaland is changing, but…'*, directed by Sapa, G., at https://youtu.be/ZBXE8Cyekhw [Accessed November, 9, 2020]
Nagel, T. (1974). 'What Is It Like to Be a Bat?' *The Philosophical Review 83*: 435—450.
Nakata, M. N. (2007). *Disciplining the Savages: Savaging the Disciplines.* Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press.
Nakata, M. N., et al. (2012). 'Decolonial Goals and Pedagogies for Indigenous Studies.' *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society, 1*(1), 120 - 140.
Naro, E., Molur, P. B., Et al. (2015). 'Project Hunt: An Assessment Of Wildlife Hunting Practices By Local

Community In Chizami, Nagaland, India', *Journal of Threatened Taxa 7*(11): 7729–7743. DOI: 10.11609/JoTT.o4219.7729-43

National Geographic (Ed.) (2014). 'Tiger Hunting in India 1924: American Brigadier General William Mitchell hunts tigers with an Indian maharaja in 1924'. *National Geographic*. Derived from https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/140803-tiger-hunt-1924-india-maharaja-safari [Accessed 14 April, 2023]

Niebuhr, B., Wosniack, M., Santos, M. et al. (2015). 'Survival in patchy landscapes: the interplay between dispersal, habitat loss and fragmentation,' *Scientific Reports 5*(11898). https://doi.org/10.1038/srep11898

Nolan, J. M., & Turner, N. J. (2011). 'Ethnobotany: The Study of People–Plant Relationships', Chapter 9 in E. N. Anderson, D. Pearsall, E. Hunn, and N. Turner (Eds.) *Ethnobiology.* US: Wiley-Blackwell.

Nongbri, T. (2006). 'Culture and Biodiversity: Myths, Legends and the Conservation of Nature in the Hills of North-East India', *Indian Antrhopologist 36*(1/2): 1-21.

North East Network (NEN) (2015). 'North East Network Annual Report 2014-15,' derived from https://northeastnetwork.org/annual-reports/

Nuh, V. K. (2002). *The Naga Chronicle.* New Delhi: Regency Publication.

Olsen, T. A. (2018). 'Privilege, Decentring and the Challenge of Being (Non-) Indigenous in the study of Indigenous Issues,' *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education 47*(2), pp. 206-215. https://doi.org/10.1017/jie.2017.16

Oppitz, M., Kaiser, T., Stockhausen, v. A., & Wettstein, M. (Eds.) (2008). *Naga Identities: Changing Local Cultures in the Northeast of India.* Gent: Snoeck Publishers.

Ortega y Gasset, J. (1987). *El Tema De Nuestro Tempo.* Madrid: Alianza.

Patel, F. (2017). 'Deconstructing Internationalization: Advocating Glocalization in International Higher Education', *Journal of International and Global Studies, 8*(2), 4. Doi: https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/jigs/vol8/iss2/4

Paul Harris, A. (2008). 'The Wisdom of the Body: Embodied Knowing in Eco-Paganism.' PhD for the University of Winchester. Derived from: www.academia.edu/90611869/The_Wisdom_of_the_Body_Embodied_Knowing_in_Eco_Paganism [Accessed April 25, 2023]

Plumwood, V. (1993). *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature.* London/New York: Routledge.

Poe, M. R., et al. (2014). 'Cultural dimensions of socio ecological systems: key connections and guiding principles for conservation in coastal environments.' *Conservation Letters 7*(3): 166-175.

Pongener, M. (2011). *Morung speaks: cultural values and elements for the enrichment of Naga Christian community*. Jorhat: TDCC Publications.

Posey, D. A. (Ed.) (1999). *Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity: A Complementary Contribution to the Global Biodiversity Assessment.* London: UN Environmental Program (UNEP), Intermediate Technology.

Quijano Obregón, A. - (2000). 'Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America' (Transl. by Ennis, M.), *Nepantla: Views from South 1*(3): pp. 533–80.

- (2015). ''Bien Vivir': Entre el 'desarrollo' y la descolonialidad del poder,' in Bialakowski, A. L., Cathalifaud, M. A., & Martins, P. H. (Eds.) *El pensamiento latinoamericano: diálogos en ALAS: sociedad y sociología.* pp. 360–76. Buenos Aires, Argentina: Teseo.

Rabasa, J. (1993). *Inventing America: Spanish Historiography and the Formation of Eurocentrism.* USA: University of Oklahoma Press: p. 180.

Rangarajan, M. - (1996). *Fencing the Forest, Conservation and Ecological Change in India's Central Provinces, 1860-1914*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

- (2005). *India's Wildlife History: An Introduction*. Delhi: Permanent Black, The Ranthambhore Foundation.

Rao, K. (2013). 'How three Indian villages saved the Amur falcon: A new grassroots conservation model takes root,' *The Guardian,* November 12. Derived from www.theguardian.com/environment/terra-india/2013/nov/12/amur-falcon-saved-by-indian-villages [Accessed October 10, 2022]

Raven, M., & Robinson, D. (2017). 'Identifying and Preventing Biopiracy in Australia: Patent landscapes and legal geographies for plants with Indigenous Australian uses.' *Australian Geographer 48*(3), pp. 311 - 331.

Regino Montes, A. & Torres Cisneros, G. (2009). 'The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: The Foundation of a New Relationship Between Indigenous Peoples, States and Societies', in Charters, C., & Stavenhagen, R. (Eds.) *Making the Declaration Work: The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Copenhagen: IWGIA.

Reiter, B. (Ed.) (2018). *Constructing the Pluriverse: The Geopolitics of Knowledge.* US: Duke University Press.

Ripple, W. J., Wolf, C., Newsome, T. M., Galetti, M., Alamgir, M., Crist, E., Mahmoud, M. I., Laurance, W. F., &

15,364 scientist signatories from 184 countries (2017). 'World Scientists' Warning to Humanity: A Second Notice,' *BioScience, 67*(12), December, pp. 1026–1028, https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/bix125.
Rotas, N. (2015). 'Ecologies of Praxis: Teaching and Learning Against the Obvious', in N. Snaza & J. A. Weaver (Eds.) *Posthumanism and Educational Research.* NY: Routledge.
Roudometof, V. (2016). *Glocalization: A Critical Introduction.* London: Routledge.
Sahapedia (2018). 'Customs and Beliefs of Angami Nagas: In Conversation with Methaheto Chase'. Derived from https://www.sahapedia.org/customs-and-beliefs-of-angami-nagas-conversation-methaheto-chase [Accessed March 17, 2023]
Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism.* London: Vintage Books.
Saikia, A. - (2009). 'The Kaziranga National Park: Dynamics of Social and Political History', *Conservation and Society, 7*(2), 113. https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A216465914/AONE?u=anon~846c7f43&sid=googleScholar&xid=62ffa320 [Accessed May 2022]
- (2011). *Forests and Ecological History of Assam, 1826–2000*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
Sanyü, V. M. (1987). 'The history of village formation among the Angami Nagas: a case study of Kohima and Khonoma villages', North-Eastern Hill University. Derived from http://hdl.handle.net/10603/61577 [Accessed March, 2022]
Sanyü, V. M., & Broome, R. (2017). *A Naga Odyssey: Visier's Long Way Home.* Monash University Publishing.
Sawe, B. E. (2019, March 27). 'Wettest Places On Earth By Annual Rainfall.' Retrieved from https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-ten-wettest-places-in-the-world.html [Accessed March 23, 2020]
SCERT Nagaland Heritage Films (2022, September). Retrievable at https://youtube.com/@scertnagalandheritagefilms2650 [Accessed April 21, 2023]
Schneiders, L. (2006). 'Is Wilderness racist?' *Chain Reaction, 96*, May, 25-7. Derived from http://web.archive.org/web/20110313053635/http://www.foe.org.au/resources/chain-reaction/editions/96/is-wilderness-racist/ [Accessed March 7, 2021]
Seed, J., Macy, J., Fleming, P., & Næss, A. (1988). *Thinking Like a Mountain: Towards a Council of All Beings.* US: New Society Publishers. Print.
Sekhose, J. L. (2012). 'The idea of Evil and Fear of the Supernatural among the Nagas with Special Reference to Angami Tribe.' In P. Biswas & C. J. Thomas (Eds.), *Constructions of Evil in North East India: Myth, Narrative, and Discourse* (1st ed., pp. 128-131). Sage Publications.
Sharma, D. (2020). 'Negotiating Ecological Crisis in North-East India : An Ecocritical Reading of Select Literary Texts', *Drishti: The Sight, Volume IX, Issue I, May 2020 - October 2020,* pp. 14-20
Shiva, V. - (1993). *Monocultures of the Mind. Perspectives on Biodiversity and Biotechnology.* UK: Zed Books.
- (1997). *Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge.* Boston: South End Press.
- (2011). 'Equity: The Shortest Way to Global Sustainability,' in C. C. Jaeger, Et al. (Eds.) *European Research on Sustainable Development.* Berlin: Springer-Verlag: 23-27.
- (2014). 'How Economic Growth has become Anti-Life,' *Green Social Thought 64*: *A Magazine of Synthesis and Regeneration*, Spring.
Shohe, L. (2020). 'Naga Indigenous Religions: Reconstructing its Nomenclatures', *Panjab University Research Journal (Arts) XLVII*(2): 10-27.
Short, J. R. (1991). *Imagined Country: Environment, Culture and Society.* Routledge: London.
Sinha, B. (2009). 'Community Conservation Initiatives in Nagaland: Opportunities and challenges'. ICETER, New Delhi: NISTADS. Derived from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269961518_Community_conservation_initiatives_in_Nagaland_opportunities_and_challenges [accessed Mar 06 2021].
Sissons, J. (2005). *First Peoples: Indigenous cultures and their futures.* UK: Reaction Books Ltd.
Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples, 2nd ed.* London: Zed Books.
Smith, E., & Wishnie, M. (2000). 'Conservation and Subsistence in Small-Scale Societies', *Annu. Rev. Anthropol. 29*: 493–524.
Snodgrass, J. G., & Tiedje, K. (2008). 'Guest Editors' Introduction: Indigenous Nature Reverence and Conservation - Seven Ways of Transcending an Unnecessary Dichotomy,' *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture 2.1*, pp. 6-29. doi: 10.1558/jsrnc.v2i1.6
Spence, M. D. (1999). *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks.* New York: Oxford University Press.
Spivak, G. C. - (1985). 'The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay in Reading the Archives', *History and Theory, 24*(3), 247–272. https://doi.org/10.2307/2505169
- (1988). "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography." In R. Guha & G. C. Spivak (Eds.) *Selected Subaltern Studies.* New York: Oxford University Press.

STEDT (2013). 'The Sino-Tibetan Language Family', Department of Linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley. Derived from https://stedt.berkeley.edu/about-st.html [Accessed March 7, 2023].
Sutter, R. (2008). 'Shadows and Tigers: Concepts of Soul and Tiger-Men', in M. Oppitz (Ed.) *Naga Identities: Changing Local cultures in the Northeast of India*. Gent: Snoeck Publishers. pp. 275-292.
Tachine, A. R. (2018). 'Story rug: Weaving stories into research', in Brayboy, B. M. J. (R. S. Minthorn & H. J. Shotton, Eds.) *Reclaiming Indigenous Research in Higher Education.* Rutgers University Press. pp. 64-75.
Taskin, B. (2020, July 4). 'Nagaland bans sale of dog meat after incidents of pets being 'shot at sight' spark outrage,' *The Print.* Derived from https://theprint.in/india/nagaland-bans-sale-of-dog-meat-after-incidents-of-pets-being-shot-at-sight-spark-outrage/454322/ [Accessed August 2, 2022]
TEBTEBBA (2012). 'Indigenous Peoples Contributions to Sustainable Development. Baguio: Tebtebba.' Available at: www.tebtebba.org/index.php/content/209-indigenous-peoples-contributions-to-sustainable-development
TERI, Centre for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Forestry and Biodiversity Division (2017). 'Conserving with communities in Zunheboto, Nagaland'. Retrieved from http://nagalandcca.org/about-us.php [Accessed March 23, 2020]
The Constitution of India (1991). New Delhi: Universal Law Publishing Co. PVT. LTD
The UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, *Study of the Problem of Discrimination against Indigenous Populations*, UN Doc E/CN.4/Sub.2/1986/7 & Adds. 1–4 (1986).
Thomas, J. (2015). *Evangelising the Nation: Religion and the Formation of Naga Political Identity.* London: Routledge India. DOI: 10.4324/9781315686059-3
Thong, T. - (2012). 'Civilized colonizers and barbaric colonized: reclaiming Naga identity by demythologizing colonial portraits', *History and Anthropology 23*: 375-397.
Tohring, S. R. (2010). *Violence and Identity in North-East India: Naga-Kuki Conflict.* New Delhi: Mittal Publications.
Tsing, A. L., Deger, J., Keleman Saxena, A., & Zhou, F. (2021). *Feral Atlas: The More-Than-Human Anthropocene*. Stanford University Press. Accessible at https://www.feralatlas.org/ [Accessed August 3, 2022].
UNCBD (1992). Retrieved at https://www.cbd.int/doc/legal/cbd-en.pdf
UNCED Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (1993). 'Agenda 21: programme of action for sustainable development;' *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.* United Nations Dept. of Public Information.
UNDESA (2017). *The State of the World's Indigenous Peoples: Education.* Derived from https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2017/12/State-of-Worlds-Indigenous-Peoples_III_WEB2018.pdf [Accessed March 13, 2023]
UNDRIP (2007). UN General Assembly "Resolution 61/295: Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" UN Doc A/61/67, Annex (13 September, 2007)
UNEP (2007). Global Environment Outlook: Environment for Development, UNEP, Nairobi.
UNPO (2019, April 26). 'Nagalim.' Retrieved from https://unpo.org/members/7899 [Accessed April 30, 2022]
Ura Academy (2016). https://uraacademy.nagaland.gov.in [Accessed March 15, 2022]
Vázquez, R. - (2011). 'Translation as Erasure: Thoughts on Modernity's Epistemic Violence', *Journal of Historical Sociology, 24*(1), pp. 27-44
- (2012). 'Towards a Decolonial Critique of Modernity. *Buen Vivir,* Relationality and the Task of Listening.' in *Capital, Poverty, Development,* Documentation des XV. Interationalen Seminars des Dialogprogramms Nord-Süd, Mainz.
Virtanen, P. K. (2017). 'The Death of the Chief of Peccaries: The Apurinã and the Scarcity of Forest Resources in Brazilian Amazonia,' Chapter 6 in V. Reyes-García & A. Pyhälä (Eds.) *Hunter-Gatherers in a Changing World*. Switzerland: Springer International Pub- lishing. pp. 91 - 105.
Viveiros de Castro - (1998). 'Cosmological deixis and Amerindian perspectivism. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 4*(3), pp. 469-488.
- (2004). 'Perspectival anthropology and the method of controlled equivocation. *Tipiti, 2*(1), pp. 3-22.
Walsh, C. (2014). 'Pedagogical Notes from the Decolonial Cracks', *E-misférica, 11*(1).
Wangchuk, Norbu R. (2019, February 6). 'A Good Celebration: Naga Tribe's 100% Biodegradable Festival Has Lessons For All', *The Better India*, at www.thebetterindia.com/171698/nagaland-zero-waste-konyak-mon-ips-festival/?fbclid=IwAR2FjFQznkNQUGkIW0-J1Ji5W-yzx0YKmk8MOQOFBKdaddazhOKPFPPmaDU [Accessed March 17, 2023]/
Weinzettel, J., et al. (2013). 'Affluence drives the global displacement of land use', *Global Environmental Change 23*: 433-438
White, L. Jr. (1967).'The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis' *Science 155*(3767): 1203-1207.
Wijunamai, R., & Menokhono (2020, July 14). 'Reading the Dog Meat Ban in Nagaland,' *RAIOT: Challenging the*

Consensus. Derived from https://raiot.in/reading-the-dog-meat-ban-in-nagaland/ [Accessed August 2, 2022]
Wildlife Conservation Society - India (2021). 'Nagaland - Conservation and Livelihoods,' *Programmes,* Derived from https://india.wcs.org/Programmes/Nagaland-Conservation-Livelihoods [Accessed October, 8, 2022]
Willerslev, R. (2004). 'Not Animal, Not *Not*-Animal: Hunting, Imitation and Empathetic Knowledge among the Siberian Yukaghirs', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 10*: 629 - 652.
Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*. Manitoba, Canada: Fernwood.
World Indigenous Peoples' Conference on Education (1999, August 6). 'The Coolangatta Statement: On Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Education'. Derived from http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/IKS/cool.html [Accessed March 13, 2023]
Wouters, J. J. P. - (2019) *Nagas as a Society Against Voting and other Essays.* Kohima: Highlander Books.
- (2019b, October 14) 'The Pitfalls of Codification,' *The Statesman.* Derived from: www.thestatesman.com/supplements/north/the-pitfalls-of-codification-1502809875.html [Accessed april 14, 2021]
Wouters, J. J. P. & Heneise, M. (Eds.) (2017). *Nagas in the 21st Century.* Kohima: Highlander Books. Print.
Wouters, J. J. P. & Tunyi, Z. (Eds.) (2018). *Democracy in Nagaland: Tribes, Traditions, Tensions.* Kohima: Highlander Books. Print.
Wulf, A. (2015). *The Invention of Nature: Alexander Von Humboldt's New World.* UK: John Murray. Print.
Zhimomi, I. (2020, June 4). 'Nagaland needs to revive traditional conservation practices,' *The Morung Express*, Retrieved at https://morungexpress.com/nagaland-needs-to-revive-traditional-conservation-practices [Accessed May 24, 2022]

Appendix 1 - Endnotes

1. Image at Saraja Antique Textiles, Derived from https://pin.it/5P1tbm6 [Accessed May, 2020]
2. Anonymised name of conversation partner.
3. Referring to the way global forces (like capitalism) manifest themselves in locally diverse and specific ways (and perhaps vice versa) (Roudometof, 2016; Patel, 2017: 66).
4. See notes on terminology.
5. See notes on terminology.
6. Upon India's independence from the British empire in 1947, the Naga territories were forcibly included within its drawn national borders, despite pre-independence petitions of the Nagas to the British colonial government that sought to safeguard the recognition of their continued territorial independence after decolonisation; they were therefore not as such 'colonised' but nevertheless invaded by military.
7. I will use quotation marks, as the concept of 'nature' implicitly constructs a mental divide of humans from the world. Indigenous languages often do not have a distinct word for 'nature', including in Angami Naga Tenyidie (Dialogues/Classes with Fifi, 2020; Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021). Translated equivalents often rather mean 'world' or are adopted from another (hegemonic) language and culture (Ducarme, Flipo & Couvet, 2020).
8. Nagaland State Forest Department, 2015; Ripple, et al., 2017
9. The Research by TERI (2015) found a third of all villages in Nagaland to have set aside a piece of land for the purpose of conservation with varying measures.
10. For example, the Yaongyimchen Community Biodiversity Conservation Area (YCBCA) in Longleng by the Phom tribe won the 2018 India Biodiversity Awards (Ghosh, 2018a), notably protecting the globally endangered migratory Amur falcon population, so that Nagaland was considered the falcon capital of the world (Ghosh, 2018b; Rao, 2013). The village of Khonoma has reached the status of 'India's first Green Village' and won the Biodiversity Award of 2021, especially through their effort with the Khonoma Nature Conservation & Tragopan Sanctuary (KNCTS).
11. Bolingbroke-Kent, A. (2020): ' 'I swapped my gun for binoculars': India's hunters turn to conservation.'
12. See notes on Terminology.
13. Her first book of poetry, Kelhoukevira from 1982, and her first novel 'A Naga Village Remembered' (later republished as 'Sky My Father') are said to be the first Naga book of poetry and novel to be published in English (See Kire, 2012). Additionally, she has been awarded with numerous prizes and recognitions, such as the Governor's award for excellence in Naga literature, 2011; The Hindu Literature Prize, 2015; and by the Indian National Academy for Letters Sahitya Sabha in 2018 for best English language book, among others. See http://www.kireediting.com/ for more on her work. Moreover, she is widely read by Nagas, and as such somewhat of a household name (known to all people I interviewed, for example).
14. Originally from Kohima herself, she has written specifically about Khonoma, a Western Angami village.
15. Abram, 1996; See ch. 3.
16. See chapter 4 for the presentation of data.
17. See notes on terminology.
18. Bird-David, 1999; See ch. 3.
19. For more on the conceptual difference between a cosmology and an ontology, see ch. 3.
20. See notes on terminology.
21. See notes on terminology.
22. As appearing in Kashyap, S. G. (2017, March 29), *The Indian Express*.
23. As an ethynonym under which a great diversity of tribes unite. It is estimated that there are between 66 – 88 distinct Naga groups depending the author (Oppitz, et al. (Eds.), 2008; Nuh, 2002; Tohring, 2010, as found in Heneise, 2019), of which 35 are recognised in India by the GoI as 'Scheduled Tribes' (of which 17 in Nagaland, 15 in Manipuar and 3 in Arunachal Pradesh) (Ibid.). Different accounts exist as to the origin and meaning of the word 'Naga'; however the term has been found in pre-colonial written chronicles ('Buran-jis') of the Ahom rulers of Assam, to describe people who live in the hills (Kikon, 2003). The diverse tribes started self-identifying under the umbrella term 'Naga' after mass conversions to Christianity, as well as through the shared political project towards recognition of their (territorial) rights and cultures in the face of the colonial process outlined below. This has been termed 'strategic essentialism' by Spivak (1988), which helps to create (and reflects) solidarity across heterogenous ethnic groups.
24. Often referred to as 'the seven sisters'; since 2002 a group of eight states: Sikkim, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura, and Mizoram. This region is a landlocked isthmus of the Indian subcontinent, connected to the rest of India by a thin slip of land between Bangladesh and Nepal. The area borders Nepal to the North-West, Bhutan and Tibet (China) to the North, Myanmar to the East, and Bangladesh to the South/West. The states are home to a great diversity of ethnic groups (about 220), with a great diversity of different tribes yet within those groups. Within the context of India, the North East contains the biggest concentration of IPs, and is part of the so-called 'central tribal belt' (IWGIA, 2020).

25. UNPO, 2019
26. Before arriving in this territory, most of the Nagas are said to be of Tibeto-Mongoloid origin, yet several oral migration epics describe a journey through South-East Asia (Longvah, 2017; Sanyü, 1987). At the same time many Naga tribes trace their origins to one village, *Khezhakenoma*, in Phek district near the border with Manipur (Ibid.).
27. IWGIA, 2020. See Fig. 1 on the previous page.
28. Due to Kire's origins from Kohima and work based on Khonoma, Western Angami territory. I have also attempted to learn some words in Tenyidie, the Angami Naga language, alongside Nagamese when receiving language classes from Fifi, and my interviews were also all conducted with people from the Khonoma region. See ch. 2.1 and 2.2.
29. According to Easterine Kire there are 9 tribes that are part of the Tenyimia language group (2014), which is echoed by Khutso (2018) who states the Tenyimia's comprise of the Angami, Chakhesang, Rengma, Zeliangrong, Mao, Maram, Poumai, Memai and Pochury tribes, spread over the districts of Kohima, Phek, Dimapur and Peren in Nagaland, Tamenlong and Senapati districts in the state of Manipur, and North Cachar and Karbi Anlong in the state of Assam. Wijunamai & Menokhono state that the Tenyimi Nagas comprise more than ten tribes (2020). Besides belonging to the same language group, these tribes share traditions, myths, customs, agricultural practices, and beliefs (ibid.). According to Dr. Kuolie (2013) 'Tenyimia' originates from the name of a common ancestor 'Tenyiu'. However, it is mentioned by Khutso (2018; and in Wouters & Tunyi (Eds.), 2018) that Tenyimia as a shared language and culture group were not as defined historically as today, but rather constructed from various dialects during colonial administration and the missionary effort of linguistic standardisation. Sanyü refers to the unification of tribes under Tenyimia as a type of 'confederation' (1987: 45).
30. After the Anglo-Burmese war of 1824, British control over the Indigenous territories on the east of Assam could function as a strategic 'buffer' area from Burma, notably after their discovery of tea (1823), coal and petroleum (1825) (Kikon, 2003). Seeking a route between Manipur and Assam, the first contact with the Nagas was in 1832 in Angami territory (Ibid.).
31. The presence of the American Baptists was supported by the British, because missionary work -and the 'education' that came with it- could be useful to them as part of a 'civilising' effort sought to subdue resistance; based on racist notions of the Naga tribes as "savages". Kikon (2003) quotes Major Jenkins as having said: "the influence of persons skilled in the languages of these tribes and devoting all their time and attention to humanise these rude races could not fail of being useful to us and to them." (p. 235)
32. Heneise, 2019
33. The Angami-led Naga Club submitted a memorandum to the Indian Statutory Commission of the British Parliament, requesting self-independence. See Thomas, 2015; Kikon, 2003
34. Derived from Nagaland GK (2017) 'Tribes of Nagaland and districts' at https://nagalandgk.com/ [Accessed April 5, 2023]. N.B.: This map is old, and does not indicate the newer districts, and fails to indicate the localisation of the Rongmei, who live just below Wokha district, in their own district of Tseminyu since 2021. Furthermore, the indication of the distribution of tribes serve only as an approximation of the main inhabitants, as there are some tribes which are also found in multiple districts.
35. The state is located between 25°10' N and 27°4'N Latitude and 93°15'E and 95°20'E Longitude, with a total geographical area of 16,579 km² (GoN, 2012).
36. The Government of India (GoI) did also vote for the adoption of the UN Declaration of Indigenous Rights (UNDRIP, 2007), yet on the condition that all its citizens are considered Indigenous (IWGIA, 2020). As such it does not officially grant the rights of the declaration to specific groups. Nevertheless, the Indian constitution in its 5th and 6th schedule acknowledge some land and self governance rights of 'Scheduled Tribes' and 'adivasi's' in central and North-East India respectively. Within the Indian Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) defining criteria of STs, we can still see a pejorative, colonial gaze on IPs: "'primitive traits, distinctive culture, geographical isolation, shyness of contact with the community at large, and backwardness'" (De Costa, 2015: p. 51). Adivasi is the term commonly employed to refer to IPs in India. The GoI has in recent times been progressing in its terminology, referring to the IPs in the North East as "Indigenous populations of North-Eastern States" which is of significance considering that such terminology links to international law like the legally binding ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal peoples (IWGIA, 2020).
37. The Indian census of 2011.
38. Heneise, 2019
39. Including the Kuki and Dimasa Kachari which generally do not self-identify as 'Naga' (Heneise, 2019).
40. Some tribes that are recognised as Nagas by the GoN might not be recognised as such by other Naga tribes because of kinship relations elsewhere, notably the Garo (in Meghalaya), the Kachari (in Assam) and the Kuki (in Assam, Manipur and Mizoram) (Longkumer in Wouters & Heneise, 2017). According to Longkumer (Ibid.), this relates to the political necessity to be recognised under the unified 'Naga' fold. This again links to what has been termed 'strategic essentialism' by Spivak (1988).
41. The state is home to about 90 different Tibeto-Burman languages or dialects in the Kuki-Chin-Naga language group (STEDT, 2013).

42. For more information on Nagamese, see Bhattacharjya, 2001.
43. Wouters, 2019
44. Datta & Naniwadekar, 2019
45. According to Choudhury (2001), dense forest cover (Canopy cover of >40%) constituted 42.8% of the total geographical area between 1972–1975, but was only 29.8% by 1980–1982, and further declined to 21% in 1995 and <20% in 2000, constituting a decline of more than 50% over a 25 year period.
46. Ibid.; Furthermore, the effects of overhunting and deforestation reinforce each other, as the hunting of herbivores and seed dispersers such as birds plays an important role in governing plant community structures, and deforestation also means habitat loss for wildlife (Datta & Naniwadekar, 2019).
47. GoN, 2012; Forest Survey of India, 2021
48. Hutton (1921) already observed as much among the Angami:
49. The previously mentioned project to construct a road connecting Assam and Manipur to the British colony of Burma, is what started the major battles between the British and the peoples of the Naga Hills. Visier Sanyü (2017) narrates that up to that point, they had effectively been left alone. Later, according to Kire, roads were built during the second world war, and otherwise for purposes of transporting timber out of the hills (Dialogue with Kire, 2021).
50. Population numbers started rapidly increasing from 1951 onwards, peaking in 1961, with an average increase rate of 56.78% per 10 years until the year 2001, while 2011 saw a small population decline (Census, 2011). Although no census has been undertaken since, the census 2011 webpage projects that since 2011 the population has nearly doubled, see https://www.census2011.co.in/census/state/nagaland.html [Accessed April 20, 2023].
51. Despite neighbouring North-Eastern state Meghalaya hosting the wettest place on earth, with an annual rainfall of about 11,871 millimetres (Sawe, 2019), water scarcity is a challenge in the wider region in certain seasons.
52. GoN, 2012
53. ES are defined as "the ecological characteristics, functions, or processes that directly or indirectly contribute to human wellbeing: that is, the benefits that people derive from functioning ecosystems" (Costanza, et al. 1997, MEA, 2005). By constituting water catchment areas, forest ecosystems can prevent floods as well as droughts, regulate temperature, and prevent soil erosion during heavy rains.
54. Such as in 2003, see https://moef.gov.in/en/wildlife-wl/wildlife/ for an overview of the various amendments. The latest proposed amendment bill of 2021 seeks to give more authority to the central government to create conservation reserves and "lists 131 mammals, 112 birds, 43 birds, 26 fishes, 63 insects, 388 corals under schedule I and 41 mammals, 864 birds, 12 reptiles, 58 insects, molluscs, and sponges under schedule II. A separate schedule for plants is also listed." (Karthikeyan, 2022) The degree of punishment depends per species under the different schedules, corresponding to the status of vulnerability.
55. The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Rules. See the FRA and rules here: https://tribal.nic.in/FRA/data/FRARulesBook.pdf [Accessed April 20, 2023] For a detailed discussion of the FRA see Das, 2013.
56. https://prsindia.org/files/bills_acts/bills_parliament/2023/Forest%20(Conservation)%20Amendment%20Bill
57. Which also means (planet) earth and soil (2020). Besides that, no concept for 'nature' or 'environment' exists in Tenyidie, according to Kia. Regarding a word for 'nature' in Nagamese, she indicated that one may use *Jaga,* which also means 'place' (though as English is part of the creole mix of languages in Nagamese, 'nature' may be incorporated in Nagamese speech). Additionally, Heneise (2019) indicates the word *Urra* [*T*], meaning our land, or our community, placed within land. Ura Academy, oriented at the proliferation of the Tenyidie language, makes use of this word (2016). See note 109 on the prefix 'U' in Tenyidie.
58. When I asked Fifi (2020) if they had a word for something akin to 'wilderness', she said it would be *ketsa kesou.* Just as 'ocean' is *dzü keza* (with *dzü* meaning water), and with ketsü meaning small, this rather means big forest.
59. GoN, 2012
60. Anonymised name of an Angami Naga woman of about my age (in her twenties), who is living in the capital of Kohima, with roots in the Khonoma region, whom I spoke with repeatedly in preperation for my research.
61. Dialogues with Kia, July 2020
62. Ibid.
63. Dialogues with Kia, October 2020.
64. Heneise, 2019
65. In other words, spirit appeasement; more on 'the old religion' below.
66. The mithun are somewhat revered, and in the Western Angami areas allowed to roam freely in the forests and grazing lands near the village. In 'Eastern Angami' (Chakhesang) villages, according to Hutton (1921: 79-80), they are kept in front of the house.
67. Some dogs are kept for hunting, others are eaten. Hutton observes that the hunting dogs were regarded and treated differently, so that rituals needed to be observed if a hunting dog was killed, including a village wide *penyü,* a no-work day (1921: 81).
68. Such is observed by Hutton among the Angamis (1921: 83).
69. Predominantly in Angami Naga areas.

70. Rice constitutes a staple food of the Angamis, with regards to which Hutton remarked that "thanks to the terraced rice fields, scarcity is seldom felt in the Angami country" (1921: 93). The ownership of these terraces were observed by him to be individual, not communal - with complicated arrangements as to structure the rights to water, especially following division between heirs or sales (1921: 8, 73-4).
71. Hutton, 1921: 77
72. Ibid.
73. Hutton mentioned as principle vegetable crops two varieties of beans, tomatoes, a local variety of spinach *karela* [*T*], and pumpkins, alongside staple foods like rice (1921: 93).
74. Hutton further noted the high amount of wild edibles collected, such as various species of wild spinach, yams, turmeric, sorrel, nettle, ginger root, ferns and mushrooms (1921: 93).
75. To cut solely branches of trees, instead of the entire tree (Ibid.: 77).
76. Cairns, 2007; Dialogues with Kia, 2020; Interview with KNCTS chairman Kezhasorie Meyase, 2022
77. See for example Longkumer, Raj, & Solanki, 2019; However, according to the AIPP & IWGIA (2014) this negative view on shifting cultivation came partially about by an uninformed study report of the FAO in 1957.
78. Aryal, Thomas & Choudhury, 2019; Ghosh, 2019
79. Chase & Singh, 2014
80. AIPP & IWGIA, 2014
81. The State Agriculture Research Station (SARS) at Mokokchung, has identified 867 different traditional species of rice, mostly grown in jhum plots.
82. See Naga Heritage Centre compilation (2016) pp. 109-115 for example, and of Kire's books specifically *When the River Sleeps* (2014) which is based on a hunting tale that was developed into a fiction story (Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021).
83. Hutton (1921) describes the old hunting method, using hunting dogs and spears, based on eastern villages where guns were still scarce during the time of his writing, on pp. 85-86. Such hunting operations were done by the whole male population, or at times by smaller companies, but always collectively.
84. Hunting by traps was gauged as the most profitable by Hutton (1921) and he outlines various designs of snares among the Angami on pp. 87-89.
85. Traditionally, Hutton reports that fishing was done using poisons of "roots, stem, leaves, or fruit of certain plants, the juice of which when beaten into the water intoxicates or stupefies or even kills the fish"
86. Dialogue/Interview with Elder Niketu Iralu, 2021
87. Naro, et al., 2015; Dialogue/Interview with Easterine Kire, 2021
88. Which was established by the British administration in 1923, though it grew over the years, and in 1993 the GoN 'upgraded' the wildlife sanctuary to a national park.
89. Edake, et al. [TERI], 2015; In the case of Nagaland, they can also be termed Indigenous Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs), but the regional terminology is CCA and as such this is followed here.
90. "For time immemorial, Naga tribes have been conserving a part of forest around their villages where no hunting, fishing and cutting down of old trees was allowed. These forests had different names in different tribes. Rengmas used to call them Runyinyi Chin. In the modern times, these forests are called Community Conservation Areas or CCAs." (NSFD, 2015, Film 'Nagaland is changing, but…', 0:16 min).
91. A more elaborate discussion on the conservation movement in Nagaland and conservation as something 'traditional' and/or new had to be cut due to limits of space.
92. Malhotra, 2001
93. Edake, et al. [TERI], 2015; see for example the article titled 'Nagaland needs to revive traditional conservation practices' written by Ivan Zhimomi, the team leader of the Tizu Valley Biodiversity and Livelihood Network (TVBCLC), which unites a group of villages collaborating to protect biodiversity in Zunheboto district in Nagaland, published in the Morung Express (2020, June 4).
94. Edake, et al. [TERI], 2015
95. An Indian research institute working in the fields of energy, climate and biodiversity with a regional cell in the North-East.
96. Edake et al., 2015
97. They visited all 1428 villages in Nagaland for this study, and determined a CCA by compliance with at a minimum the two criteria of being managed by local communities, and by enforcement of management practices such as bans and regulations (2015: p. 10).
98. Multiple answers were possible in the survey, as such the numbers add up to more than 407.
99. See https://ccaforumnagaland.blogspot.com/
100. Officially also known as the GoN Department of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change (see https://forest.nagaland.gov.in).
101. Again, the numbers add up to more than 100, because in the survey multiple answers were possible; see Edake, et al. [TERI], 2015: Documentation of Community Conserved Areas of Nagaland.
102. Sinha, 2009

103. TERI, 2017; Dialogues/Interview with Niketu Iralu, 2021, Interview with Chairman KNCTS Kezhasorie Meyase, 2022

104. Edake, et al. [TERI], 2015; The TERI study furthermore reported that 59% of VCs mentioned issues with incursions by timber mafia into their CCAs, or by poachers from neighbouring villages. Another issue is that the CCAs don't necessarily interconnect, and as such form what conservation literature would term patchy, or fragmented habitats for wildlife, with lack of connectivity (Edake to Balipara Foundation, 2020; see also Niebuhr, et al., 2015; Kareiva & Marvier, 2011), although there are also several examples of conservation collaboration between several villages. A project between Wildlife Conservation Society India (WCS-I), Wildlife Conservation Society Myanmar (WCS-M), and Nagaland Wildlife and Biodiversity Conservation Trust seeks to restore the continuity of habitat across the Myanmar border - at least for tigers (The Morung Express, 2016; WCS-I, 2021).

105. *Alnus Nepalensis,* locally called *Rupo* [T]: "The tree plays a very important role in the economy of Khonoma. It has a unique capacity for regeneration." (Sanyü, 1987: 89, note 10). The Angami cut it in such a way that it grows many small branches in its place, to be harvested for firewood 3 years later, and the trees provide the soil with nitrogen and a layer of topsoil through the decomposition of its leaves (Ibid.). The other trees can in this way be left alone, according to Kia (Dialogues, Sept. 22, 2020). Furthermore, it restores soil fertility during the fallow periods (Chase & Singh, 2014). Chairman of the Khonoma Nature Conservation and Tragopan Sanctuary (KNCTS), Kezhasorie Meyase, indicated this practice as one of the traditional knowledges which Khonoma has shared to other places to make sustenance practices more sustainable. See Cairns (2007) for a dedicated overview of this practice, its role in challenging criticism of jhum, and its promise for the wider Eastern Himalayan region where similar swidden cultivation practices face pressures of intensified land use and shorter fallow periods.

106. A comprehensive overview of a Tenyimia Naga cosmology is out of the scope of this thesis. The following is predominantly based on the Angami, although few references will be made to similarities or differences among other Naga tribes, to give a sense of the scope of certain beliefs, as well as variability. The current overview will be complemented in chapter 4 with the excerpts from Kire's books.

107. Often juxtaposed as *old* relative to the 'new' religion of Christianity, see for example Kire (2007) *A Terrible Matriarchy*: p. 91: "She spoke with knowledge of these things because she was not a Christian [...] Those who remained still clung to the old religion." The terminology is however risky in that it seems to represent one coherent belief, while differences between and among tribes of such traditional beliefs must be considered.

108. Which does not fit well within animism; See Longvah in Wouters & Heneise, 2017

109. Hutton's explanation of the Angami language (1921: 300) notes that any noun that expresses relationship must be preceded with a possessive pronoun, so that e.g. the word for father 'po' cannot be used by itself, as a father is always someone's father. 'U' as a prefix is used when the noun is undefined to belong/relate to someone in specific. This explains that 'Ukepenopfü' and 'Kepenopfü' are used both, with the former indicating an unspecified relationship (to all).

110. Heneise, 2019 (p. xiv, 12); The suffix 'pfü' denotes a female gender, though it may at present not be readily recognised that Kepenuopfü is female. Hutton observed that "The conception of Kepenopfü in the Angami mind is apparently at present undergoing a process of change from female to male, and indeed the word is used by Christian converts for their anthropomorphic conception of God the Father." (1921: 181). Nevertheless, "when made to reflect on the point, most Angamis admit Kepenopfü to be a female being" (Ibid.). Indeed, when after some classes with Fifi in Tenyidie it occurred to me that the suffix usually denotes a female gender, and I asked whether this meant Kepenuopfü was female, Fifi also expressed that it hadn't occurred to her before, but that it might be so (Dialogues/Classes with Fifi, 2020).

111. The nomenclatures differ amongst tribes - e.g. *Alhou* among the Sumi, *Kahwang* or *Gawang* among the Konyak, *Lijaba* among other names, among the Aos - but also characteristics, notably that the Supreme deity is male in other Naga tribes, with some of the names translating to 'great father' (Shohe, 2020; Murry, 1995; Fürer-Haimendorf, 1946).

112. With such a gaze on 'animism' being prominent during the conception of the term, see Bird-David, 1999

113. Food taboos related to one's origin, being often associated with totemism. For example, the Tsoboi clan among the Lhotas traces its descent to a hornbill who impregnated a weaving woman by dropping a tail feather in her cloth, so that some of the clan and allied clans do not consume Hornbill meat. Also the Wozakumrr kindred of the Ao Pongen clan are noted for having said they descend from the Hornbill, though the story is different. It must however be noted that Hornbills are generally venerated by the Nagas, with the Sema generally abstaining from eating its flesh, and that, according to Hutton's accounts, such stories of origin are looked down upon, and have even led to killings, so that totemism seems unlikely to have been a widely accepted or common religious ontology (at the time of Hutton) (1921). Nevertheless, also Fürer-Haimendorf reported that the Konyak Nagas believed their "ancestors were born of the giant bird Yong-wem-ou-niu" (1946: p. 196).

114. Heneise (2019) differentiates in his analysis between Ruopfü (capital R) and ruopfü, with the first referring to 'supernature', "the life giving force animating animals, forests, rivers and all of the natural world" (p. 12) and ruopfü meaning someone's soul or spirit, which could refer to a living person's spirit, an ancestor's spirit, but e.g. also a river's spirit.

115. With those *ruopfü* from people who died '*apotia'* [*Assamese*], 'unnatural' deaths called *sesho* [*T*] - such as by suicide, during child birth, at the hand of an enemy or evil spirit, by drowning, or by wild animals - being called *temi,* known to threaten and scare people, though they do not possess the power to kill (Hutton, 1921: 183, 229 note 2). The bodies of such *sesho* deaths are furthermore traditionally buried outside of the village grounds (Ibid.).
116. Heneise, 2019: glossary; Importantly, the existence of such human ancestral spirits signifies the belief in the immortality of the spirit or soul. Shohe (2020) notes ancestor spirits as entities that could also give blessings, make people ill or whose appearance would be read as a bad omen (pp. 15-16). Heneise (2019) furthermore relates how ancestral spirits still exercise power in contemporary boundary politics and landscapes, as well as through dream-scapes.
117. Such lower deities are also prevalent in other Naga tribes, and are for example called *Tsungrem* among the Aos, *Yaha* among the Konyak, and *Tughami* or *Aghau* among the Sumi (Shohe, 2020). Shohe also indicates another category of entity, 'Sky Spirits', with whom humans would sometimes develop love relationships and marriages - although such has also been recorded to occur with other spirits.
118. And "renders them senseless, though if their relations succeed in finding them again they recover consciousness" (Hutton, 1921: 182).
119. Hutton (1921) refers to her as the "Angami goddess of fruitfulness" (p. 182)
120. Hutton: "Few men see her, but sometimes her tracks are seen like little human footprints in the stored paddy or on the dusty floor" (1921: 182).
121. Second spelling I derived from Kire's books (e.g. 2018: 31-32); in Hutton written as 'Chikeo' (1921: 182, 266).
122. This is prevented by making sure that a killed tiger or leopard cannot tell Tekhu-rho who was the killer, by "wedging open the mouth of the dead tiger with a piece of wood and putting the head into a running stream at some distance from the village. When the tiger tries to tell the Tekhu-rho who has killed him, all that the spirit can hear is a meaningless gurgle in the water." (Hutton, 1921: 182). See also chapter 4.1.
123. Hutton explains such as a "species of spirit, which inhabits stones" (Ibid: 183).
124. Murry (1995) for example mentions another 'low deity', *Jüpvüo* among the Kyong Nagas, who is the lord of waters, and therefore also of fish, rain and floods (p. 62).
125. In addition, many more will be unknown by name, so that the scope of the world of Terhuomia cannot be clearly specified, constituting "vague inhabitants of the invisible world" (Hutton, 1921: 183).
126. Such is done by the terhuomia called *Telepfü*; see ch. 5.2.
127. Therianthropy - from the Greek '*therion'*, meaning wild animal, and '*anthropos'*, meaning human being - refers to the ability to turn into other animals through spirit mobility, and is reported among various Indigenous peoples globally, especially in hunting societies (Willerslev, 2004 on the Siberian Yukaghir when hunting dear; Kohn, 2013 on the Runa-Puma in Ecuador; Viveiros de Castro, 1998, 2004 on such practices in the Amazon rainforest, referring to them as 'perspectivism'). It is also recorded among other Indigenous peoples of North-East India, such as the Khasis and Gharos of neighbouring state Meghalaya, and the Chins in neighbouring Myanmar (Heneise, 2016).
128. Literally it means 'man in the shape of a tiger' (Heneise, 2019: 12), though the word is used for those turning into both tigers and leopards. They are currently often referred to as 'weretigers' (Dialogues with *Kia*, 2020).
129. It is mostly men that are Tekhumiavi, although reports of women turning into tigers also exist (Heneise, 2016; Fürer-Haimendorf, 1946 among the Konyak Nagas). It must furthermore be noted that "Lycanthropy is believed in but not practised by the Angamis" (Hutton, 1921: 243). As such, *tekhumiavi* appearing in Angami folklore mostly relate to people from neighbouring tribes; notably the Sema, according to Hutton (Ibid.).
130. Kire shared with me (2021) some anecdotes from close relations, of people having to reconcile their disbelief with the realities of tekhumiavi encounters:
"People are divided. There are those who believe, and there are those who just cuff at it, and they are a bit embarrassed by it, but I'm a believer. *smiles* I've met many people who told me stories of their relatives, or just people they knew who were weretigers, and my pastor said he met a young man who was a weretiger, and he was dying, so the pastor said, 'stop this, and turn from this practice, and become a christian.' And every time the pastor said this, the man would say 'yes' and then he would be revived. But, the spirit of the tiger would return and take him away and he would be on the point of death. He even died once. [...] And how they prayed, and he came back to life, and as soon as he came back to life the pastor said, 'you have to stop this, you'll die, [...] we won't be able to resurrect you again,' and finally he did, finally he stopped. That is one story. There is another story from a student, that her grandmother and a friend were studying in a school for girls, they lived in a girls' hostel quite far from the village, but [...] her friend's father died, so they had to return to the village, crossing the woods, and it was quite a distance, so they travelled, by foot, and all along the way they kept hearing an animal… The padding of an animal's feet, close by them, or the wind would just rush, and the grasses would be pressed down. And this kept happening, throughout. So when they reach the friend's house and she went to her father's funeral, the girl told her grandfather, something was there, there was a presence, throughout, and the grandfather said oh nothing to worry, I sent my tiger to keep you company *laughs*"
> "Wow… that's amazing" <

“Yes! When you hear stories like that, it’s difficult not to believe. And another one was my own grandmother; there was a young man working in her house, who said he was a were tiger, and my grandmother said, I don’t believe that sort of thing, I don’t believe you’re a weretiger; then he said, ‘alright I’ll show you,’ and the next day, there was something in the garden, her garden, and she went to look from a distance, and it was a tiger, and the man said afterwards, did you see, I came in the afternoon to show myself to you *we both laugh*”.

131. Hutton, 1921: 261; Heneise, 2016, 2019. Within the Zeme creation story, the python is the last born child, and therianthropy happens rather with pythons than with tigers (Moon-Little in Wouters & Heneise (Eds.), 2017). An Ao Naga version of the creation story includes bear as a fourth brother (Shohe, 2020). Fürer-Haimendorf (1946) furthermore relates a sung poem from the Konyak Nagas in which tiger and man are mentioned as sons of two brothers (p. 195).

132. Hutton, 1921

133. With the right over the left leg signalling a good omen.

134. Hutton, 1921; See also the Sahapedia interview with Methaheto Chase, 2018

135. Hutton, 1921

136. Though Hutton (1921) mentions that some forms of ‘witchcraft’ or ‘magic’ practice are open to be used by everyone - such as with “a wooden or clay figure into which thorns or bamboo spikes are stuck”, in his example used to curse an unknown thief - he continues to say that “there are, however, forms of divination and witchcraft demanding more specialised knowledge, the people who practise them being private practitioners and not public functionaries.” (p. 242)

137. Hutton observed among the Angami that “of all forms of second sight dreaming is the favourite and the best,” referring to it as “almost a science of dreaming” (1921: p. 246), with regards to a near lexicon of dream symbolism with set meanings. He observed mainly old women performing dream practices as a service, referring to them as ‘dream-women’ (Ibid.). See Heneise (2019) for a dedicated overview of dream (*mho* [*T*]) practices among the Western Angami in Kohima, and of how it continues to constitute an avenue through which to negotiate uncertainty, glimpse upon the future, receive messages from ancestors, and communicate with more-than-human spirits.

138. Meaning ‘god’s bridge’ (Hutton, 1921: 245-6), or ‘bridge of spirits’ according to Heneise, who explains such persons as being “inhabited by multiple spirits” (2019: 12).

139. Heneise, 2019: 12-13; Their powers, which varied considerably per person, emanated from being possessed by a *terhoumia,* according to Hutton (1921: 242).

140. Heneise, 2019: 13

141. As deriving from the Angami ‘kenna’, more correctly spelled as *kenyü* [*T*], and meaning “it is forbidden” (Hutton, 1921: 189-90). Hutton uses it broadly to refer to “acts of worship” or “the various incidents of a magico-religious rite” (Ibid.) However, the system of such ‘taboos’ is more complicated, and his use of ‘genna’ lumps together three concepts: *kenyü*, *penyü*, and *nanü*, which will be explained in chapter 4.3.

143. An Angami Naga who was one of the last of his village, Khonoma, to convert to Christianity in 1978. He shares about some of the (pre-christian) customs and beliefs of Angami Nagas in an interview with Sahapedia (conducted in 2017, published in 2018); viewable at https://youtu.be/PxXpOyAGV-k [Accessed March, 2022].

144. The whole celebration lasted up to 10 days originally, with the object of the preservation of health for the entire village the coming year. Many dogs were therefore consumed, as their flesh was considered medicinal as a tonic by the Angamis (the Lhotas described a different reason, namely that the sacrifice of dogs, as cunning animals, was preferred by an evil spirit *Tsungram* which they sought to appease) (Hutton, 1921: 196-7, 204). Sekrenyi furthermore functioned as the moment of a rite of passage for boys - those old enough to perform their own sacrifice of a cock (one of the genna practices during the festival) could no longer sleep with their mother. This is tied to the ‘genna’ practice that men need to eat separately and avoid women during the first two days of the festival. Celebratory gennas which confer social status, namely feasts of merit, were also organised during Sekrenyi (Ibid.: 230-33).

145. It is thereby also an indicator for the moment from which people can start watering their (dry) fields, and plays a role in the management of water distribution (Sahapedia, 2017).

146. Hutton (1921: 201-3) gives an account of the origin of this celebration following a folktale, in which the spirit Zisō tricked an old woman into letting him marry her daughter, after which the woman asks for a small basket as a gift from Zisō, after her daughter’s advise. This basket contains all the animals, and Zisō thus warns the old woman to only open it when she arrives home. Taken by curiosity, the woman opens it shortly on the way, however, and all those animals that can run quickly or fly, escape, so that the animals left, which were brought to the house, are the mithun, pig, cow, dog and fowl. Hutton further calls these “the woman’s share” as these can thus be inherited from father to daughter, unlike land, whereas the wild animals that ran are supposedly the “men’s share”. Zisō instructed to hold a feast in his name each year to thank him for the cattle and domestic animals, as such giving rise to Terhumyi.

147. Which took the form of an elaborate ritual, which involved throwing a field mouse out of the village gates, while the whole village made a lot of noise to scare the mice away (Hutton, 1921: 208-9).

148. See Hutton, 1921: 199. The Semas furthermore seem to relate the toad with the spirit responsible for the rice harvest, Latsapa.

149. Hail is a serious threat in the higher ranges of the hills; the genna prohibits any white goods (such as salt, cotton or rice), and trade in general, to pass through the village (Hutton, 1921: 200, 210).
150. Hutton, 1921: 196-204
151. The Hao Nagas in Manipur; Mawon indicates the sowing festival (*Luirą*) as the most important one, and describes the feasts, dances, music, games, collective work (*Khą Sit*), taboos and related ritual observances such as animal sacrifices, that are part and parcel to the festivities (In Wouters & Heneise (Eds.), 2017).
152. Longkumer, 2017; see below for a short account on the nation-wide famous Hornbill festival.
153. See for example: Wangchuk, Norbu R. (2019, February 6). 'A Good Celebration: Naga Tribe's 100% Biodegradable Festival Has Lessons For All', *The Better India*.
154. The 3rd Chengu festival was organised in 2021 by the Tizu Valley Biodiversity Conservation and Livelihood Network, with funding from the Japan Fund for Global Environment, and sought to shed light on the practice of shifting cultivation (*Nagaland Page,* 2021, January 11).
155. See Dey, 2018 for an interview with elder Yose Chaya, the adviser to the All Nagaland Indigenous Faith Council, from Vizwema, a Southern Angami village near Dzukoü valley, who still practises the old religion. As he can be seen participating in a tree planting event organised in Viswema in the run up to celebrating 100 years of Christianity in the village in 2028, it shows that this organisation does not exist in opposition to the dominant religion of Christianity. See https://youtu.be/1_En8b_KX7c (EastMojo, 2022, May 4th).
156. As per the 2011 Census, when Nagaland had a population of 1,978,502, 87.93% identified as Christians, most of them Baptist (Dey, 2018). When considering only the Naga population of Nagaland, the average percentage is higher (around 98.5 %) except among the Kachari - which are often not considered 'Naga' by Nagas (2011 Census).
157. Besides the Baptists, Nagas identify as Revivalists, Catholics, and Pentecostals. A precise overview of the differing practices within the Christian Faith in Nagaland, is out of the scope of this thesis.
158. Longvah in Wouters & Heneise (Eds.), 2017
159. Angelova in Wouters & Heneise (Eds.), 2017; Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021
160. Thomas, 2015; Angelova and Longvah in Wouters & Heneise (Eds.), 2017; The political fervour in associating with the Christian god is for example expressed in a statement of Phizo, one of the more important political leaders of the Naga independence movement through the Naga National Council (also called the father of the Naga Nation), who stated "We do not take Christianity as foreign religion any more than we consider the light of the sun as foreign origin from outer world" (as cited in Nuh, 2002: 118, as found in Khutso in Wouters & Tunyi (Eds.), 2018). It may be argued that Christianity as a 'Western' cultural attribute, has come to constitute a sphere of resistance to the claim of India to be 'one nation, one people' - especially as India sought to reject (parts of) the 'Western' colonial legacies in its nation building effort (Kikon, 2003). This unfortunately (and still increasingly) takes the form of 'Hindutva' (lit. 'Hindu-ness'): the ideo-political stream of Hindu nationalism striving for Hindu supremacy. In that vein, there have also been attempts of bringing Hindu missionaries - 'The Ramakrishnia Mission' and its affiliated schools - into the Naga areas (Ibid.).
161. Heneise, 2019
162. Angelova in Wouters & Heneise (Eds.), 2017; In some Angami villages, citizens and pastors may nowadays attend Sunday mass or Christian celebrations in traditional attires for example, and church spaces may be used for traditional practices, such as communal dream sharing and interpretation (Heneise, 2019).
163. Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021
164. Dialogues with *Kia,* 2020 and Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021; See also Heneise (2019) who -amongst other accounts- quotes one of his informants as saying that "[even today] the spirits demand respect and enact harsh punishments on those who are careless and don't follow the ancestral laws'" (p. 13).
165. Notably the tigermen (Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021).
166. The British left the creation of educational institutions entirely to the missionaries at first, until they saw benefit in creating secular institutions so Naga men could fulfil roles in the colonial job market; in 1913 mission institutions were transferred to them, but financial aid lacked until shortly before 'decolonisation' (Kikon, 2003).
167. With a diversity of functions, but which also functioned as traditional educational centres - they often particularly raised boys into manhood, through knowledges and stories pertaining to becoming good warriors and hunters - with one of its more important functions having been the guarding of the village (Pongener, 2011) - though alongside more general social and spiritual etiquettes and rules. The Morungs also functioned more generally as gathering places for men, and particularly also in fulfilment of taboos and rituals related to war - for example to sleep in before or after a raid, as they could not stay at home at such times (Tinyi in Wouters & Heneise (Eds.), 2017, regarding Chakhesang Nagas). Among some tribes they were used by both sexes, however, such as recorded by Hutton among the Memi (1921: 49), and in other tribes separate dormitories existed for girls. 'Morung' is an Assamese word adopted in Nagamese, with tribes each having their own names, and the importance and use of them differing (Ibid.).

169. Graham-Bower's ethnography relates as much, writing about Zeme communities near a British station that "split between Christian and Pagan… their morungs were decaying" (1952: p. 58, as cited in Moon-Little, in Wouters & Heneise (Eds.), 2017: p. 41). The gradual decay of the morung was possibly also linked to the British prohibition of headhunting (Angelova in Ibid.), though this can be seen in relation to the increasing conversion to Christianity.
170. Heneise's ethnography with the Angami in Kohima (2019) centres around the hearth as 'a horizontal space' that is removed from ''clan laws and surveillance" (p. 86) and in the domain of the whole family, but particularly under the leadership of women (as opposed to the public spaces, which are ruled by men), particularly as it relates to the sharing of dreams. One could argue that the pedagogical space of the dreamworld - as sites in which ancestors can send messages, and the dream self or spirit can visit other places - especially in its wider dimensions including the communal (wake-time) interpretation of dreams, must also not be overlooked, in which specialised dream-interpreters could be said to function as pedagogues.
171. In Wouters & Heneise (Eds.), 2017
172. Kuokkanen, 2000; Sissons, 2005: p. 86; World Indigenous Peoples' Conference on Education, 'Coolangatta Statement', 1999; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), *State of the World's Indigenous Peoples: Education*, 2017. In the latter, it is noted that the main trend regarding education for IPs, also in Asia, remains: "(a) Limited access to formal education, due to geographical as well as political marginalization; (b) Absence of recognition of, or respectful reference to, the identities and cultures of indigenous peoples in national education systems and curricula; (c) Inadequate provision of supplies in schools in areas inhabited by indigenous peoples; and (d) Absence of sufficient numbers of teachers who speak indigenous languages." (p. 80). Nevertheless, Mizoram, Nagaland and Meghalaya are mentioned in the report with regards to exceptionally high literacy rates relative to other scheduled tribes in India.
173. Recently this became visible in an attack on food-culture in Nagaland by an Indian media-outrage over the practice of eating dog meat. The response of the GoN, to ban the sale of dog meat, speaks to the relations it seeks to maintain to the centre. For some insightful takes on the event, see Taskin, 2020; Wijunamai & Menokhono, 2020; and Iralu, E., 2021. Food culture is entwined with livelihood practice, knowledge and cultural identity, so that the power to condemn another culture's food practices, speaks to a type of hegemonic (in this case, hindu-centric) gaze. Earlier in 2007, the practice of making fermented foods like *Akhuni* (fermented soy beans) had already led to conflict in New Delhi due to complains over its smells, so that the Delhi police issued a handbook to defer migrant students and labourers from the North East or Eastern Himalayas to cook fermented foods (Kikon, 2015). The judgement of the Naga food culture is only part of a more general denigrating glance that became especially palpable in a thriller by a Bengali author that narrates a tribe eating their own mothers, placed in Nagaland. The author excused her depiction by calling the work fictional, but later agreed to take mention of 'Nagaland' out of future editions. This type of narrative plays on existing misinformed, racist stereotypes about Naga culture. See Longkumer, Y. (2022).
175. Baruah, 1999; Kikon, 2003
177. Kikon refers to documentation of Deputy Commissioners in 1908, where it was observed that many Nagas responded to education with scepticism as to its usefulness: "*What is the use of education? I want my boy to work in the fields with me, I want him to work in the house, to draw water and to cut wood; if he goes to school he cannot work for me, and what will be gained afterwards?'* (2003: p. 236). The 'Gaonburahs' were however ordered to maintain strict attendance to the schools, and so the villages would compensate the parents of children that had been forced to attend (and thereby could not partake in agricultural work) (Ibid.).
179. The quote comes from his most well-known book *1984* (1949). George Orwell however also spent time in Burma from 1922 to 1927 while it was colonised by the British, as part of the Indian Imperial police, and wrote his first book based on that experience called *Burmese Days* (1934), serving as an account of, and also critique to, the British colonial project.
182. See ch. 3.3 for a short discussion of the qualities of (oral) storytelling pedagogies.
183. R. Luikham in his compilation of *Folk Lore and Tales of The Nagas* (1987 [1983]) also stated: "With the introduction of western education, traditional storytelling in homes and dormitories has, in a way, been adversely affected. Original folk tales and folk lore are therefore fast disappearing, and the time when nothing can be retrieved is fast approaching" (p. 8).
184. The academic wing of the Department of School Education, with the main function of bringing about qualitative changes in the field of school education, especially through the training of teachers. See https://scert.nagaland.gov.in/
185. There are videos about architectural heritage, terraced rice cultivation, traditional games, food culture, and 'the megalithic culture of the Nagas', with each video description stating: ""our culture is our identity." We need to uplift, preserve and promote our rich cultural heritage. These films aim to encourage Naga students to know about their roots and be proud of their cultural identity and heritage." (September 23, 2022) Their channel states that "The short films are based on customs, practices, values and different aspects of Naga culture [...] from all the Naga tribes [...] in a world where they are exposed to many different cultures." See the SCERT Nagaland Heritage Films channel, at https://www.youtube.com/@scertnagalandheritagefilms2650/about [Accessed April 21, 2023].
187. See https://northeastnetwork.org/nenterprise-chizami-weaves-a-sustainable-livelihood-project/ (2022)

188. Initiated in 2014 by Dusty Foot Productions in collaboration with NEN (2015), The Green Hub project is oriented at empowering youth through film as a visual storytelling device, especially as it relates to raising environmental awareness, and spurring conservation action and social change. The produced videos by youth document the efforts of their communities to change unsustainable practices, while also showcasing traditional cultural practices. As such, the project creates a digital resource bank of stories concerning wildlife, environment and Indigenous knowledge. See https://www.dustyfootfoundation.org/green-hub and https://www.greenhubindia.net/. See also Banerji, 2022 to read more about the project's incentives.
189. For example, the folk-fusion band 'the Tetseo Sisters' from the Chakesang tribe reached national fame performing their heritage of musical storytelling *Li*: traditional singing (now done partially in English and partially in their language Chokri) often accompanied by *Lohbi*, a one string traditional instrument, but now also guitar. You can find their music on youtube.
190. Through new media projects where bits of folklore are collected and shared, such as the Washidi project (see Lyngdoh, Lepcha & Talilula (Eds.), 2021) and videos uploaded on youtube and instagram under the name 'Naga Local Production' by Athizo Swuro since 2017.
191. First organised by the Naga Peoples Movement for Human Rights (NPHMR) and the Naga Students Federation (NSF), in 1993 as 'Naga week,' coinciding with the International year of the World's Indigenous People, it functioned as a peace brokering event between two underground factions of the Naga movement in conflict, while bringing together 27 different Naga tribes from the cross-border Naga region under a 'one Naga' identity. As such it started out as a solidarity and peace building gathering, but currently it has gained traction mostly as a commercially lucrative festival, focused solely around the 17 tribes of Nagaland state. See Longkumer (2017) in *Nagas in the 21st Century* (Wouters & Heneise, Eds.): "[T]he wilder you are, the more tourists you attract." (p. 113).
192. Local newspapers and social media engage in yearly debates surrounding questions of authenticity, and appropriateness with regards to Christian morals. See both Angelova and Longkumer in Wouters & Heneise (Eds.), 2017. However, it should not be disregarded that such crafts are important examples of IEK as livelihood practices that includes knowledge of local plants to weave and dye with.
194. Ibid.; Such performative demonstrations of culture as a tool for political recognition within the international arena are more wide-spread among IPs; see Graham & Penny, 2014.
196. At the United Nations Decade for Women Conference in Nairobi. Watson is a Murri Indigenous Australian visual artist, activist and academic. She has however expressed not feeling comfortable taking credit for the statement individually, as it was thought of communally in co-creation in an activist 1970s Aboriginal Rights group, in Queensland; such explicates further the Indigenous perspective on knowledge creation.
197. A complexity that is due to the historical and present facts of Indigenous cultures and the knowledge systems having first been oppressed and rejected, to later be exoticised and exploited. Research into Indigenous knowledge systems has as such often been extractivist, so that Smith also referred to 'research' as 'the dirtiest word in the dictionary' for Indigenous peoples (2012). This makes it a delicate field to tread, especially as outsider and non-Indigenous.
198. This grounding within the context of global crises will be further elaborated on in ch. 2.4 below.
199. Mignolo, 2000
200. Nakata, et al., 2012; for a discussion on their comparison and potential synergy, see ch. 3.4 and 5.3.2
201. Though not originally from Nagaland, he lived there for several years and made his family there, besides setting up the independent research institute of The Highland Institute, and doing his own ethnographic research in the area.
202. He suggested back in 2019 that my research interests into Indigenous Ecological Knowledges could be a welcome addition to the existing body of research in Nagaland.
203. Besides the official state language of English, one of the *lingua franca* of Nagaland, that as a creole language contains elements of Hindi, English, and local Indigenous languages.
204. Organised through my collaboration with THI, I followed approximately weekly classes from mid-July until the beginning of December 2020, in the creole language Nagamese.
205. She also goes by the name of Fifi, which is how she introduced herself to me, so that I will refer to her as Fifi from now onwards.
206. Sharing approximately the same age (late twenties), and the same gender (female), it was easier to build a trust relationship and we quickly got along well. This reciprocal sharing about our lives in our distinct realities was free of the formal type of discourse (and opinions) that sometimes hamper the depth of information shared in interviews. For such reasons she has also been anonymised with her consent.
207. Towards a 'relational research' in which we hold ourselves accountable to such relations, as suggested by Deloria (1999), Wilson (2008) and Kovach (2009).
208. She was born in Kohima in 1959, studied her MA at North Eastern Hill University and holds a PhD in English literature from Pune University, and currently lives in Tromsø, Norway. She for a period taught a course in post-colonial poetry at the Arctic University of Norway (UiT), and is a founding partner of the independent publishing house Barkweaver, which focuses on publishing Naga folktales and people stories, as well as children books. See http://www.barkweaver.com/p/about.html

209. Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021
210. Chillisa, 2012
211. A book of poetry, *Kelhoukevira*, published in 1982, about which Kire states that "the main poems mourn the warriors of Nagaland killed in the Indo-Naga conflict" (ICORN, 2006). Her novel 'Sky is My Father' was the first novel by a Naga author published in english in 2003 (Kire, 2012). Dr Shürhozelie Liezietsu, on the other hand, is the pioneer of Naga literature written in Tenyidie.
212. Personal email communication after the meeting, 2021
213. Several of her books and poetry have been translated to other languages like Catalan, Croatian, Uzbek, Norwegian and Nepali, and notably 6 books were translated to German. Because the original language of her books is English, the work generally has been able to spread internationally, receiving international awards such as the Catalan PEN International Free Voice Award, Barcelona in 2013, as well as national and regional awards, such as the Governor's prize for excellence in Naga literature in 2011, and the Lit for Life Hindu Prize in 2015 for When the River Sleeps (Zubaan, 2014), which in 2019 additionally won the inaugural Gordon Graham Prize for Naga Literature. Son of the Thundercloud (Speaking Tiger, 2016) was awarded both the Tata Literature Live Book of the Year Award in 2017, and the Bal Sahitya Puraskar in 2018.
214. More recent works, such as *A respectable woman* (Zubaan, 2018), *Journey of the Stone* (2021), a sequel to *When the river Sleeps*, and *Spirit Nights* (2022) based on the lives, knowledges and tales of the Chang Nagas, have unfortunately not been considered, due to limitations of space and time.
215. As is written in the prologue of Forest Song: "[a]ll the stories […] are based on true stories of people narrated to the writer personally or through oral narrators." (2011: 3)
216. Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021
217. Narrating the resistance against British colonisation by the Angamis of Khonoma, and based on interviews with oral narrators of Khonoma. Other books by Kire, that I unfortunately haven't read, are also historical narratives from a Naga perspective, like *Mari* (2010) -set during the second world war, it narrates a woman's experience while her fiancé fights in the British army, based on the story of her aunt- and *Bitter Wormwood* (2012), about the violence of the Indian-Naga political conflict and the in-fighting between underground factions, or as Kire puts it in its introduction "the ordinary people whose lives were completely overturned by the freedom struggle", based on the lived experiences of relatives or acquaintances of Kire (Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021; Longkumer & Menon, 2019; ICORN, 2012).
218. And of which Kire specifically notes in our conversation that some of the spirit encounters narrated therein are based on real experiences from close relations (2021).
219. To the story of Christ.
220. 'Don't run, my love' (2017) accounts of a tragic love story in which the lover turns out to be a tiger, and attacks the girl when she no longer wants to marry him. Here it is used as an allegory to the sometimes harmful passions in love relationships, perhaps reflecting on the violence some women bear by the hands of their lovers or husbands.
221. Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021
222. Dialogues with Kia, August 25, 2020
224. Regarding form, Kire mentions in our conversation (2021) that the way she writes English reflects the syntax of Tenyidie. Freire also refers to this as 'the very structure of thought' (1993 [1970]: 84).
225. Not counting my language teacher Fifi, or supervisor Michael Heneise, though on a few occasions I refer back to conversations with them.
226. Kire came to Norway as self-exiled political refugee in 2005 during the India-Naga political conflict through the International Cities Of Refuge Network (ICORN), and wrote most of her works from Tromsø (ICORN, 2006). I have had the luck to be able to organise our meeting in the beautiful Sami cultural space 'Árdna' run by the Centre for Sámi studies at the Arctic University of Tromsø. This circular space is made in wood, and allowed us to meet around a central fireplace - arguably the most appropriate place for conversing about storytelling. Easterine told me afterwards that the woodsmoke brought her memories of Nagaland (Personal email communication, 2021).
227. Through joining the 'Moral Re-Armament' movement, he had first worked internationally towards peace, as part of the Christian, yet multi-faith 'Initiatives of Change', which seeks to bridge divides across the world. In 1995 he returned to the North East with his Australian wife and children. Niketu Iralu worked as director of MRA in India, and as part of the Khonoma Public Commission contributed enormously to conflict resolution among the Naga underground factions and clans.
228. Before my conversation with Niketu Iralu, he had suggested me that I should speak to Visier Sanyü, who was then also invited to join our conversation, but unfortunately could not make it at the time.
229. Who had been fulfilling this position since 3.5 years at the time of our conversation (May 31st, 2022)
230. With the organising help from Kevingunuo Savino (Kevi), and the technological help from Lanuakum Aier (Lanu), from the Highland Institute, who were present with the chairman during the interview, for which my sincere gratitude.

231. Such was sent to Easterine Kire, Niketu Iralu and the coordination team of THI - notably Kevingunuo Savino who I consulted to simplify the language of my research questions - with whom I collaborated, had provided it to Kezhasorie Meyase, the chairman of KNCTS. The questions were adapted to the persons' expertise or life experience. It may be considered that sending the questions influences the conversation, and such has been taken into account when gauging responses. Nevertheless, I have chosen to send them so that the respondent had the chance to think about the questions, as well as decide for themselves which things they wanted to speak to, and which not. In the cases of the repeated dialogues with Kia similar questions were asked, or themes addressed, but in the completely organic, non-planned order that our conversations would take us, as spread out over the weeks in which we met. A consent form was neither sent before each meeting with Kia, but rather with overall reference to our various meetings, though explicit consent was asked orally each time beforehand in case of recording of the conversation, with the initial conversations not having been recorded.
232. What Olsen (2018) refers to as "the reproduction/reconstitution of dominant identities" (p. 210).
233. I did not feel such a power dynamic was very present as I mostly spoke to people older than myself, so that a more pronounced relation of respect existed. Especially also as the two 'Elders' I spoke with, author Easterine Kire and Niketu Iralu, had worked in international contexts, with Kire living in the same city as me. Also the Chairman of KNCTS, was in a position of authority and older than me. The conversations with Kia were very lighthearted so that we reached the point of simply talking with each other as two young women in their own particular realities.
234. In my conversation with Easterine Kire for example, I asked her which terminology she felt comfortable with regarding the 'traditional stories' or 'folktales' and when explicitly asking her feedback at the end of our talk, she cautioned me to not be uncritical of the extent of ecological degradation that is still an issue in Nagaland, despite conservation efforts. She also shared with me her dislike of being theorised by some as an ecofeminist author.
235. I originally based my analysis on a comparative reading of Easterine Kire's books and other sources describing Naga livelihoods and cosmovisions, to a contemporary Environmental Education text used to train locals to teach children about wildlife conservation. For reasons of space this analysis has not been included in the current paper.
239. Boréus & Bergström mention that it is usual that several interpretive strategies coincide in practice, and especially so with the producer-oriented strategy and the discourse-oriented strategy (2017: 14-15).
241. Foucault's 'countermemory' (1975-1976); mentioned by Braidotti (2011) as: "resisting assimilation or homologation into dominant ways of representing the self." (p. 60) This was also expressed to me by Kire (2021):
"With [*A Terrible Matriarchy*] and with *Sky Is My Father*, and the WWII book, I wanted to write a Naga-centric history -*Bitter Wormwood* as well- because, we've been written about, but we haven't been writing ourselves. And that's so important, we've had the Eurocentric gaze for a long time because of anthropologists coming, and working and recording and.. we are very grateful for that, but of course you're always come across...derogatory terms *laughs* the savage things that we used to do [...] I found some instances of those writers referring to Naga culture as a barbaric culture, so they never saw beneath the headhunting, which is why I wrote the first one: 'Naga village remembered,' which now is 'Sky is my father' [...] - just to give a picture of Naga village life, because that's the best way to show the culture, how people care for each other; they are not just occupied with cutting off heads *laughs* and also the place of honour in the society, at that time. Which is not.. not gone away, but it's reinvented itself. So, the British soldiers coming in [...] sending expedition after expedition, and just trying to suppress the village of Khonoma. This was seen very differently by the people of Khonoma; it was a matter of their property being taken, houses burnt down, and men being imprisoned or sometimes executed… So, they saw them as the aggressor, not as the government [...] and it is important to write about that."
243. Including in education, as introduced in ch. 1.2.3 through the work of Naga scholar Kikon (2003).
244. As is evidenced by several readings of other scholars from the field of ecocriticism literary studies, of which some will be referenced in my analysis.
245. The imaginative power and pathos generated by her stories about a partially past cultural life within a contemporary setting in which such cultural practices (and the ecologies on which they are based) are disappearing and changing, must not be undervalued, as they may function to reinscribe value or affinity to certain beliefs and practices as sources of self-identity.
246. A revitalisation which may be said to look to the past, in order to look to the future - thereby not simply constituting cultural 'preservation' but also cultural change, through a re-interpretation or re-invocation of past cultural practices for example.
248. See Glotfelty, 1996. Here it must be highlighted that the books could be read and interpreted highlighting different themes or topics, as the novels themselves present more holistic representations of Naga lives and society (of which sustenance methods and spiritual relations are of course a big part, but not total).
249. As part of an Indigenous research paradigm; see Smith (2012).
250. Specifically, she lamented that the Christian aspect was often left out by reviews of her work by mainland India, which signifies the political dimension of Christianity within Nagaland, which is looked down upon by a nation-state government which is explicitly Hindu, and in a political project of 'Hinduisation' ('Hindutva').
255. Corlett, 2015; IPCC, 2022

256. Such as the concentrations of greenhouse gases (Co2, but also the much more harmful methane), the climate, ocean acidity, nitrogen cycles, the proliferation of invasive species, and the extinction rates of others, as well as entire ecosystem collapses, or the creation of novel ecosystems (Cumming, 2017).
257. Corlett, 2015
258. Ibid.; Braidotti, 2013
259. Ibid.
260. Moore (Ed.) 2016
261. Which is not always obvious due the displacement of land-use (Shiva, 2011; Weinzettel, et al., 2013). Those are usually also not the ones suffering the brunt of the (early) consequences, with those most vulnerable and on the frontlines of climate disaster, usually emitting the least (Ibid.)
262. After which deep ecology named itself, as opposed to 'shallow ecology' movements.
263. "Reversal of recent declines - and a sustainable global future - are only possible with urgent transformative change that tackles the root causes: the interconnected economic, socio-cultural, demographic, political, institutional, and technological indirect drivers behind the direct drivers" (Díaz, et al., 2019: 1).
264. Gramsci, 1975
265. As the system of advanced capitalism is currently widespread and definitely a culprit, I will continue to fall back on it, though I want to mention here that this is not to suggest the often assumed only other possibility, of a socialist regime, for one because past attempts at such a regime proved their treatment of "nature" to be equally destructive (Mies & Shiva, 1993). It furthermore still sought a path to development and 'growth' by a production of commodities in which the producer (being occupied with wages) is alienated from the product's real value, which can only be appreciated as its consumer. The only real difference is that in capitalism this production of 'surplus value' is done privately, and in socialism by the state (Ibid.). Indeed, following Mies & Shiva (1993), as an alternative I rather would see subsistence economies that aim at regional self-sufficiency, so that the value of production can be directly observed against its costs. This, of course, would be hard to implement in metropolitan societies where most resources have already been depleted, and would throw the globalised machine upside down. It would indeed necessitate a reconfiguration of what we consider 'a good life.'
266. By Moore (Ed.) (2016) and others: see Haraway, 2015.
267. See Haraway, 2015 for an outline of seeking other terms for the epoch of human destruction that 'anthropocene' describes, like capitalocene and plantationocene, and how we should collectively aim for this period, however it is called, to be a short one of transition to a new one - perhaps, Haraway's Chthulucene.
268. See Abram, Milstein, & Castro-Sotomayor, 2020, in which this 'epoch of humility' is introduced as
269. See Milstein & Castro-Sotomayor, 2020 as a Routledge compendium oriented at such.
270. Interview dialogue with Easterine Kire, 2021; Dialogues with Heneise, 2020; TERI, 2015; NHC, 2016
271. I considered the discourse of a current environmental education material used in the Naga context as well, but such was out of the scope of the thesis page limit. I refer you to my complete manuscript: Geerling, *forthcoming.*
272. Or exploring the fissures within (Walsh, 2014).
273. Rosi Braidotti was a key thinker that brought me into feminist philosophy and critical posthumanist approaches, introducing me to the more-than-human realm of subjects, agents and knowledges; contributing a theory of 'nomadism' to become subjects resisting hegemony through taking 'nomadic' steps back and forth between diverging perspectives, and through the affirmative politics of 'positive power' and creative activism (2011, 2013).
274. Some of the academic work and authors that have been central in my rethinking of global power relations, and the role of knowledge and education within it, are Rolando Vázquez (2011, 2012) and Walter Mignolo (2000) on decoloniality and the colonial project of modernity, and Arturo Escobar (1995) and Boaventura De Sousa-Santos (2014), on critical approaches to 'development' and the plurality of knowledges; each rooted in a Latin-American school of critical thought.
275. See ch. 2.1; additionally, Kimmerer (2013) has been a great source of inspiration as to the meeting of Western sciences and Indigenous knowledge systems.
276. A relatively new, inherently transdisciplinary, field.
277. In this research, through the consideration of literature. Otherwise, by making art that interrogates the socio-ecological crises and the 'Western' human-nature binary and related border thinking, by contrasting such with the very dynamic, transformative and entangled fluidity that characterises life in its various forms.
278. Heise, U. K. (1997)
279. The development of the scientific method from the 15th Century onwards, spurred 'the Scientific revolution' up to the 'Age of Enlightenment' or the 'Age of Reason' of the 16th - 17th Centuries, and gave rise to this Eurocentric idea of 'modern Western sciences' as a universal, superior, objective, and value-free system of knowledge, while through colonial conquest, Europe started to define itself as the centre of the world (Mignolo, 2000; Mies & Shiva, 1993).

280. Shiva, 1993; Posey, 1999 (p. 549 of the complementary contribution to the UNEP Global Biodiversity assessment titled 'Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity). Indeed, it is interesting to note that the word 'culture' in the capacity as we use it now, to describe a society's values, beliefs, arts and languages, etc., was derived from a metaphor to 'cultivation' of crops, or agriculture: i.e. the cultivation of mind. This eschews the understanding that our cultural diversity is entwined with the biological diversity we either support, hinder or cultivate.
281. Escobar, 2011; De Sousa-Santos, 2014; Mignolo, 2000, 2011
282. The Enlightenment's humanist ideals of democracy, liberty and rationality, that oriented around an idea of human progress, were not only complementaries of the colonial horrors, instead this 'civilising' quest actually served to legitimise such dehumanising practices (Dussel, 1993; Braidotti, 2013).
283. As a critically contributing scholar within 'Sub-Altern Studies'; a 'post-colonial' theoretical project specific to the Indian context until it picked up into a wider theoretical 'post-colonial' movement. Spivak's critical contribution to the field of study itself pertained to its initial neglect of gender questions (1988).
284. Though arguably drawing on previous philosophical work as Hegel's understanding of self, developed through his consideration of Master-Slave relations in *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1807) (Jensen, 2011).
285. In which the Imperial 'master' "is the subject of science or knowledge", and the colonized morally inferior other, is not (1985: 256).
286. Åhrén, 2016
287. Cronon, 1995; Short, 1991; The world's first officially protected area (henceforth, PA) - Yellowstone National park, created in the US in 1872 "for the benefit and enjoyment of the people" was unfortunately equally exemplary for nature preservation practice as for the way it displaced the Native American Shoshone and Crow people (Spence, 1999). Muir's effort in the influential environmental organisation of the Sierra Club that led to the 'protection' of the 'wild' Yosemite Valley in 1890, that had been long inhabited by Indigenous peoples, equally came with their dispossession, displacement and murder (Muir, 1912). The hunting and fire-management practices of the natives were seen as violations that "marked inability to appreciate natural beauty" (Spence, 1999: p. 3-4). Such fenced off, often by gunmen, 'protected' areas are therefore also referred to as the 'fortress conservation' model. Muir only realised later in life when he journeyed to Alaska, that the relationships and knowledges of Indigenous peoples much corresponded with (and informed) his conservation ideals (Fleck, 1978).
288. See Rangarajan, 1996; Saikia, 2011, specifically regarding Assam; and for an account written in 1924 by American Brigadier General William Mitchell joining a hunting mission for sports, see National Geographic, 2014.
289. According to Rangarajan (2005), this amounted to the killing of 80,000 tigers, between 1875 and 1925.
290. See Saikia, 2009, Survival International, 2017: https://www.survivalinternational.org/news/11586;
291. See e.g. Kenrick, 2020, on the displacement of the Sengwer in Kenya, and e.g. Survival International: https://survivalinternational.org/tribes/jenu-kuruba on the ongoing protest of the Jenu Kuruba people (honey collectors) in India, who are evicted from their lands by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) for the sake of a Tiger reserve without people, yet full of jeeps with tourists. For an interactive map on more colonial tiger reserves in India see survivalinternational.org/indiantigerreserves. Instances of 'green colonialism' furthermore occur through infrastructural projects for renewable energy such as hydro-electric dams or wind farms. See the 'Environmental Justice Atlas': www.ejatlas.org, for an overview of conservation violence, as well as development encroachments on Indigenous lands.
292. Schneiders, 2006
293. With regards to Yosemite valley, one affected native American, Black Elk, observed that "the Americans had "made little islands for us and other little islands for the four-leggeds, and every year the two were moving farther and farther apart.""(Spence, 1999: 3)
294. Klepeis & Laris, 2006; In Cronon's words: "wilderness tends to privilege some parts of nature at the expense of others" (1995, p. 86).
295. MEA, 2005
296. 'Carbon trading' as an example gives leeway for industrial centres to exploit, while limiting (extractivist) development in so-called 'underdeveloped' countries, in some way constituting a continued colonisation of land, and a buying off of responsibility - yet, it at least helps to acknowledge the worth of such natural spaces and pay those countries or peoples for the environmental services they provide.
297. Maffi, 2010
298. Mace, 2014
299. Fischer, et al., 2015
302. See also Leopold on his 'Land Ethic' in A Sand County Almanac (1949 [1977]), conceiving that an ethics of care could only come about through intimate contact, stating that "we can only be ethical in relation to something we can see, understand, feel, love, or otherwise have faith in." (1949 [1977]: 223-225).
303. He offers a 'key sentence' rather than a definition to explain this concept (in Seed, Macy, Fleming, & Næss, 1988): "The ecological self of a person is that with which this person identifies" (p. 22). This speaks to the way we "see ourselves in others", also non-human others (p. 20), and that this elicits empathy.

304. He links this to Kant's distinction between a moral act and a beautiful act - the first being done merely from respect to a moral rule, the latter being a 'right act' done because we feel genuinely and positively inclined to. Næss thus argues that environmental education should be premised on stimulating such inclinations and beautiful acts tied in with joy, rather than morals tied in with sacrifice. See Seed, Macy, Fleming, & Næss, 1988, *Thinking like a Mountain: Towards a Council of All Beings;* named after a chapter of Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac*.
305. Notably to the story of Genesis 1:26-31, and 3:23-34, as spoken to by scholars like Bateson (2000 [1972]), Haraway (2008a) and White (1967), in which man is not only conceived of as the actor to "subdue the earth", but in which the world is organised by a set of binaries "separating light from dark, land from water, humans from animals, and man from woman, creating a pristine garden filled with everything man could need." (Adsit-Morris, 2017: 18)
306. The 'Western' natural sciences boomed in a time when the Christian belief in God was still pervasive, and many scientists started their observations about the world as a type of 'natural theology.' For example Newton considered the universe a 'divine clockwork' (Wulf, 2015: p. 17) - see Wulf's *The Invention of Nature* (2015) which traces the developments of the natural sciences through the biography of a leading scientist, Alexander von Humboldt: from a non-specialised holistic approach, in which contributions of poetry or visual arts to the study of 'nature' were considered relevant, to the highly specialised and secular approach to science we know today.
307. It goes back so far and deep that many scholars seem to assume it to be rather a central facet of 'Western' culture in general, however, as mentioned, this idea of the 'West' is very much a constructed idea, and obscures the diversity within as well. Re-membering other parts of such a wide and diverse cultural history, may help us to see the outside of this thinking box easier. Celermajer (2020) gives an example by retelling stories of specific 'Western' cultures that might give rise to altogether other ways of imagining the human amidst a home of non-human others.
308. See *Facing Gaia*, Latour, 2017
309. Kohn, 2013
310. David Abram first coined the phrase 'more-than-human' (1996) to include the vast array of other beings with whom we exist through entangled relationships, sometimes referring to it as 'the commonwealth of breath'. It is now widely used in environmental humanities discourse as a way to overcome the limiting associations of the word 'nature' which as a signifier has come to exclude humans from the signified. It more-over prevents a dichotomous construction as 'non-human' and can be used to acknowledge the multiplicity of beings, including rivers, rocks, other animals, plants and such invisible entities or forces that are not acknowledged by the 'Western' secular ontology and epistemology, such as spirits.
311. Yet, he understanding of body and soul as two differentiated entities of consciousness, does not exclude the centrality of bodily knowing, as Heneise's (2019) application of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological approach to Angami Naga ways of knowing through dreams -in which souls or *ruopfü* act as their own agents beyond the body, yet stay in relationship to the flesh of the body- *and* corporeal knowing, shows through application of Merleau-Ponty's concept of reversibility, in which wake- and dream-time are continuums of the same reality that affect and inform each other. Furthermore, it was arguably not the body-soul binary perse, but rather the assumption that it was only humans who bear souls, that allowed an arrogant transcendence of the human above the rest of the world as machine like matter.
312. Descartes, 2004; It furthermore constituted his approach to a method towards 'certain' and objective knowledge.
313. That indeed, is part and parcel of the world through the air in our lungs, the water in our bodies, the minerals and carbon that constitute us, and the multiplicity of gastro-intestinal fauna inside of us. The philosophical work of Merleau-Ponty reconfigured the centrality of the body, rather than the mind, as the primary site of knowing, through embodiment by the 'body-subject', through 'being-in-the-world': "knowledge in the hands, which is forthcoming only when bodily effort is made, [...] cannot be formulated in detachment from that effort" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962 [1945]: 144). This countered the ratio-dominated Cartesian world-view, and broke the spell of detachment between subject (knower) and object (known) by acknowledging that such knowing only occurs through relationship or engagement: "My body is the fabric into which all objects are woven" (Ibid.: 235), and "man is a network of relations" (Ibid.: 456). As such, like in Bird-David's relational epistemology stemming from animate cosmovisions of the world (1999) addressed below, "[t]he 'I' that knows is tangled with what is known." (Paul Harris, 2008: 31).
314. A post 'post-modernism' methodological movement, overcoming the exclusive focus on the discursive as socially constructing the world, which itself was a reaction and rejection of the previous modernist regard of a simply material world which could be objectively named (Alaimo & Heckman, 2008). New Materialism builds on scholars like Foucalt (1977) in whose work knowledge and power were controlled by spatial structures and institutes (notably through the panopticon), building towards an understanding of reality in which the power of the discursive and the material are interlinked (Adsit-Morris, 2017).
315. Elaborated upon by Lévi-Strauss as a 'universal schism', which he explored through the differentiation between raw and cooked food, even as he tried to subvert it (Lévi-Strauss, 1969 [1964]; Bird-David, 2017).
316. Dussel, 2007

317. Spivak's 'Other' (1985), as elaborated by Braidotti to mean, 'different from and thereby "less than"' the standard of 'the human' as embellished in the Enlightenment's image of Da Vinci's Virtruvian 'Man': white, hetero-sexual, male, cisgendered, able-bodied, rational (Braidotti, 2011: p. 75; 2013).
318. See *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967), in which Fanon speaks about the psychological aspects of colonisation so that "The oppressed will always believe the worst about themselves."
319. On 'double consciousness' describing how in a colonial racist society, the racialised start to perceive themselves through the eyes of the dominating Other (1903).
320. Works of Shiva are firmly grounded by critical analyses of the socio-economic dimensions of the 'Western' domination over both nature and women; considering the linkage between colonial imposition of monocultures of crops and minds (1993), and the neo-colonial theft of biological genomes (*Biopiracy,* 1997), as it plays out globally, but also specifically in India. She eloquently speaks to how 'Western' global economic policy, advanced capitalism, is oriented at short-term profits within a linear imagination of 'progress' and 'growth' which actually constitute a decline on many other fronts and temporalities (2014). See also Mies & Shiva, 1993 on *Ecofeminism*, wherein they speak of the need for the "re-enchantment of the world" (p. 18) as part of a holistic perspective that allows for the healing of our disconnection, seeking indeed an 'environmentalism' that is non-Western.
321. 1993; She for example argued that deep ecology's criticism of anthropocentrism did not conceive that this actually constituted a *andro*pocentrism- in which indeed, not woman, but man is dominant over the world or 'nature', as well as over women.
322. The green colonialism of conservation practices are prime examples, as events in which hegemonic powers (often funded by international organisations) impose and enforce violently the human-nature dichotomy which simultaneously dehumanises those very humans that must be separated from 'nature', just like the initial conservation practices already discussed. In a way then, for a discriminatory perception of a lack of 'culture', people that are culturally entwined with their environment are not assigned the same rights to, and even subjugated below an idealised (humanless) 'nature', that is to benefit those 'human enough' to appreciate such 'nature' (i.e. tourists).
323. Which is at once contradictory to, and stemming from Darwin's evolution in science thinking, as he placed the human within the evolutionary kinship system of species, coming from a common ancestor, and studied common facial expressions of emotions in man and other animals. However, as abused by social darwinism, he also placed evolution on a linear scale of progression (much like we conceptualise socio-economic 'development') - so that it did not challenge the idea of human exceptionalism, and the evolutionary move away from 'nature' through culture.
324. See Latour, 2005 on Actor Network Theory and Haraway, 1988 for a feminist critique on objectivity, and a proposition instead of 'situated knowledges' as the new form of 'objective'. See also Haraway 2008b on inter-species relations, and the quest of "becoming with" (other animals).
325. Today, new interdisciplinary 'discursive grounds' like animal studies, undo these knots in our thinking (Braidotti, 2013: 144-146).
326. Anna Tsing and collaborators in their Feral Atlas of the More-Than-Human Anthropocene (2021) point to the ways in which non-humans participate in making, and also destroying, the world; making an example of invasive species that accompanied human invasions, but took on a life of their own, out of the realm of human control. See https://www.feralatlas.org/
327. For we can never know what it is like to be (e.g.) a bat - see Nagel, T. (1974): "What is it Like to be a Bat?"
328. For a critique on the risk of anthropomorphising by acknowledging ("human") rights to other beings solely by the degree to which we find sameness to humans, see the work of Celermajer (2021; Celermajer & O'Brien, 2021).
329. Braidotti, 2013
330. As one stream of the 'new materialism' philosophical movement.
335. In which matter is one, from which Descartes' mind-body binary would be overcome, and in which matter is endowed with agency and desire for self-expression. (Braidotti, 2013: 56)
336. It is interesting to briefly consider here what might be the difference between a cosmology or an ontology as the basic understanding of life upon which epistemology (ways of knowing), morals (axiology) and livelihoods are built: De Sousa-Santos (2014: 20-24, 105) argues that cosmologies seek to holistically deal with all the great questions of life, and talk from a collective, while our current 'Western' ontology is one that spurs individualistic thinking, and -having assumed itself as universal - rather speaks for a collective than from one. Accordingly, he argues that 'Western' sciences have failed to address the problems it could not solve, notably existential questions, so that our secular ontology brings about a functional life, but not necessarily a meaningful one. He thus calls for an intercultural dialogue and translation that may allow us to conceive of an ecology of knowledges (p. 42), as "we do not need alternatives so much as we need alternative thinking of alternatives" (p. 133).
337. From the Potawatomi word *Bemaadiziiaaki* meaning beings of the living Earth. See Kimmerer, 2015: *Living Beings as Our Kith and Kin: We Need a New Pronoun for Nature.*

338. She reflects that "Science can be a language of distance which reduces a being to its working parts; it is a language of objects" (2013: p. 49), "Saying *it* makes a living land into "natural resources."" (p. 57) Giving the example of the Anishinaabe word, *Puhpowee*, which means "the force which causes mushrooms to push up from the earth overnight", she goes on to say that (Ibid.): "You'd think that biologists, of all people, would have words for life. But in scientific language our terminology is used to define the boundaries of our knowing. What lies beyond our grasp remains unnamed. […] The makers of this word understood a world of being, full of unseen energies that animate everything."
339. Díaz, et al., 2019
340. Ibid.
341. Including forced migration of Indigenous peoples into more remote or rough landscapes.
342. Maffi, 2005
343. First stated in the Declaration of Belém by the International Society of Ethnobiology in 1988 where IPs met with environmentalists and natural scientist. In 1996 a conference was organised in Berkeley on the interlinkage between 'Endangered Languages, Endangered Knowledge, Endangered Environments' and since then the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has echoed this interrelationship (2007): "Biodiversity also incorporates human cultural diversity, which can be affected by the same drivers as biodiversity, and which has impacts on the diversity of genes, other species, and ecosystems" (p. 160). Work has also been underway to include biocultural landscapes and the knowledges involved in maintaining them under the 'intangible cultural heritage' paradigm of UNESCO; see Bridgewater & Rotherham, 2019.
345. This work has however also been criticised for trying to create a universal system under which the world's diversity could be fitted, through these four categories (Bird-David, 2017: p. 2).
346. The *buen vivir* or *sumac kawsay* of Ecuador and the *vivir bien* or *suma qamaña* of Bolivia, as models of 'living well'. See Quijano (2015) on *buen vivir* as decolonial alternative to the colonial idea of 'development', as a much more holistic understanding of wellbeing.
347. Walsh, 2014
348. In response to 'Western' anthropologist E. B. Tylor's first treatment of 'animism' in 1871, as an infantile and failed epistemology (1999: 69).
349. See Mignolo's foreword in B. Reiter (Ed.) *Constructing the Pluriverse: The Geopolitics of Knowledge* (2018) regarding the origins of the term. The terminology has been adopted by various decolonial scholars, including Mignolo (2000) and Escobar (2011).
351. With this level being often the one that is most easily accepted cross-culturally, as it entails 'information'. This includes for example knowledge of the properties of plants, studied in ethnobotany.
353. All these 'levels' are intertwined in practice, with some changing more than others. Knowledge about plants is for example linked to harvesting ethics (Kimmerer, 2013) at the resource management level, with both informed by a spiritual worldview that give shape to human-plant relations, as well as social relations with the human community which would inform both limits to harvesting, but also reasons for harvesting (e.g. to share or as gift). See e.g. Nolan & Turner, 2011.
354. Kovach, 2009
355. Kimmerer, 2015; Abandoned biocultural landscapes (in the name of 'rewilding') may for example actually lead to biodiversity decline (Bridgewater & Rotherham, 2019).
357. CBD, 1992
359. Within folkloristic studies, a (mis)leading approach has been that folklore deteriorates in authenticity as it is changed through time, called the devolutionary premise (Dundes, A., 1969, pp. 5-19). This has been countered by differing perspectives, such as the evolutionist approach, which rather sees a development of folklore, which would point out that the changeability of folklore is exactly what makes it stand out in its pedagogical merit. The devolutionist approach to folklore has however also led to the drive to collect folklore before it 'disappears', or "suffers *further* "loss" of meaning" (Dundes, 1969: p.7).
365. Sanyü for example reflects regarding a sung poem that they are much less adaptable over time than stories, and thereby constitute a more rigid record like one finds in written text - however, instead of being bound by ink and paper, the sung poem is bound by rhythm and rhyme (Sanyü & Broome, 2017: 166).
367. Kire reflected regarding the loss of oral storytelling in our conversation (2021) that:
"People are not used to it anymore now, and also, we haven't got the other practice, that is a writer coming and reading out his or her work.. So, yes, I do that sometimes when I go to schools and colleges, but I can only do… 3, 4.. 2-3 pages, then the students are restless, because they don't have the habit of that [...] We grew up listening to our grandmother telling stories. But I see that a lot of students now, they've not had that kind of time with their grandmothers"
368. Berkes, 2008 [1999]: 26

369. Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021; Hutton (1921) recorded several beliefs and stories in his ethnograph about the Angami Nagas, and roughly arranged them in three groups: historical legends ("in which the supernatural plays little or no part" (p. 253), "legends which follow the traditions" including early history about a village or ethnic lineage "in which the supernatural figures largely" (Ibid.), and what he termes 'Contes', stories told "not for the explanation of any custom or the handing down of any record, but simply and solely for the sake of the story itself" - counting under those "fairy tales, animal stories, and cynical observations of human foibles." (ibid.) Of course, this description seems a bit shallow, as animal stories, and even observations of human foibles, can be rich in potential lessons and morals. Although they are not clearly demarcated as either one or the other, we see in Kire's books similarly diverging themes or styles of writing of being either predominantly historical, or focused on customs and folk narrations, including hunting tales. The imaginative aspects of her novels speak to Hutton's description of 'for the sake of the story itself'. As such, there is overlap with the themes of the storytelling tradition.
371. Former Director of The State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Nagaland at Nagaland Literature Festival 2021.
373. Morung Express (2021, December 4); Although acknowledging the reach that writing in English allows, he furthermore stressed the importance of not forgetting the own, Indigenous languages, in literature.
374. See Nabhan, 1991
375. Rotas, 2015: 92
376. Applying Western Science epistemes on the world, often means reducing the world to a classification of objects, over which -through such 'knowledge' or rather information, but definitely not wisdom - we can exercise control (keeping in check healthy population numbers) (Kimmerer 2013; Adsit-Morris, 2017: 20).
377. Ibid.: 20-21
378. Adsit-Morris, 2017: 21
383. Such as by the UNCBD (1992; art. 8(j)) and its scientific body IPBES ((Poe, et al., 2014; Díaz, et al., 2015; IPBES/7/INF/8), IUCN (OEWG3, 2022), UNESCO (Maffi, 2010), and Agenda 21 (UNCED, 1993; see principle 22, and its ch. 10, 11, 15, and especially 26).
384. Berkes (2008 [1999]); Poe, et al., 2014
385. Based on research composed by Forest Peoples Programme, International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, Indigenous Women's Biodiversity Network, Centres of Distinction on Indigenous and Local Knowledge and Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. It complements the Global Biodiversity Outlook-5 (GBO-5).
386. According to executive Secretary of the UN Secretariat of the CBD, E. Maruma Mrema. Derived from https://www.cbd.int/gbo5/local-biodiversity-outlooks-2 [Accessed October 16, 2022]
387. LBO-2, part IV (2020). See https://lbo2.localbiodiversityoutlooks.net/transitions-towards-living
388. CBD (2018).
389. Note that *'living well*', is derived from Indigenous expressions as *buen vivir*, or *sumak kawsay* in Ecuador (TEBTEBBA, 2012).
390. LBO-2, Target 1 (2020). See https://lbo2.localbiodiversityoutlooks.net/target-1-awareness-of
391. See Shiva, 1997 and Raven & Robinson 2017, on biopiracy in the form of patenting, in India and Australia respectively.
392. Escobar, 1995; See Maurstad, 2002 on an account of the rituals and relations involved in transmitting local fisher's knowledges in Norway.
393. IEK does not automatically mean a conservation ethic, or one that sufficiently prevents a damaging impact, while "noble savage" stereotypes influence assumptions about Indigenous wisdom (Berkes, 2008 [1999]: 15).
394. Snodgrass & Tiedje, 2008
395. As Chilisa states, for Indigenous Peoples the mixing and appropriation of ideas, technologies and knowledges that come in from outside, reflect "the necessary reality of surviving as a minority or Other, which entails using every and any aspect of dominant power." (2012: 24)
396. Like that of 'West' and not-'West' or 'Orient' (Said, 1978).
397. De Sousa-Santos, 2014
398. And also as commonalities between some IPs' epistemes and 'Western' Science practices, may be pointed out as well (Bird-David, 2017; Berkes, 2008[1999]).
399. "Comparing hunter-gatherer-cultivator groups whose populations are estimated on the order of "a few hundred to a few thousand inhabitants" (Smith and Wishnie 2000: 493) and Western cultures of hundreds of millions is now standard practice" (2017: 1).
400. Quijano, 2000; Mignolo, 2000, 2011; Vazquez 2011, 2012
401. Hybridisation doesn't mean a simple merging into one, but rather differentiation.
402. Explained by Chilisa as: "a process that involves stripping the formerly colonised and historically marginalised groups of their ancestral culture and replacing it with Euro-Western culture. The process occurs through the education system, where learners are taught in languages of the colonisers to reject their heritage and embrace Euro-Western worldview and lifestyles as the human norm." (2012: p. 8)
403. See Bhabha, H. (1994) on 'the space inbetween', and Moquin, (2007) on a 'third space.'

404. Chilisa, 2012, p. 25
405. See ch. 2.3.1 for an overview on methods. It must be noted that as the themes interlink, I sometimes refer back to passages already shared.
406. As introduced in ch. 1.2.2, Kepenuopfü is now used to refer to the Christian God.
407. Heneise, 2019
408. It must be mentioned that *Kepenuopfü* is believed to live in the sky, so may be considered a sky god also (Hutton, 1921: 181), and that a sky father was not encountered in the Angami creation story. Hutton did mention that a *terhuomia, Metsimo*, who was believed to guard the entrance to the sky's dwelling place after death, may be *Kepenuopfü'*s partner (1921: 182). Currently the birthing mother has merged with the concept of father sky through the Christian concept of God the father.
409. Potentially alongside (an absent) father sky, although in the Angami version of this creation story, we only encounter the ancestral mother.
410. Including other big cats, namely the species of leopards that are native to the area.
411. See Heneise (2016), Hutton (1921: 182) and Kire's narration at our fire-place conversation below.
412. Including in the Chakhesang version of this story, see the Keza Naga Tales from the Under The Canopy Manual, in appendix 2. As mentioned in the context chapter (1), other Naga tribes' creation stories follow similar lines, though with variations, notably that the creation god was conceptualised as male among some other tribes.
413. The dialogue/Interview with Easterine Kire took place in the cosy, circular, cultural space Árdna of the Centre for Sámi studies at The Arctic University of Norway.
414. As indicated in ch. 3.3, each time a story is narrated, it is slightly different, as such the following must be read with this understanding.
415. Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021; From Hutton's written account of the story among the Angami (1921: p. 261-2), I know that some parts, especially regarding how it was decided that Tiger would go to live in the jungle, and Man in the open spaces or villages, are 'missing'. This was in Hutton's narration namely decided through a race to a mark (in some versions after the mother dies, organised by Spirit; in Hutton's narration, organised by the ancestral mother "who was tired of the family squabbles" (p 261)), that Man only won with the help of Spirit's clever idea to trick tiger, by hitting the mark with an arrow. We find a slightly different version of this narrated by Wekowe-U Tsuhah from Chizami in UTC (2009), in which this trickery and help of spirit is included (though Spirit gives a catapult to man to hit the target in the version from Chizami). Hutton's version goes on to relate that Man sent a cat to Tiger to ask whether he could leave some of the game he hunts, but the cat instead told Tiger to leave everything for man, so that Tiger got angry with Man for his arrogance and greed - which may be why, as Kire narrates here, Tiger only leaves fur of his game (in his faeces) for Man to find.
417. A more elaborate reading of this story, will follow in ch. 5.1.
419. Or arguably Heneise's theorisation on Ruopfü with capital R (2019: xv)
420. Heneise here differentiates between ruopfü and terhuomia, by indicating that Terhuomia are spiritual forces that are not 'kin' (p. 13). Nevertheless, this does not seem so clear cut as terhuomia like *Tekhu-rho*, the guardian spirit or lower deity of tigers and leopards, and *Metsimo,* who has been suggested as the potential husband of Kepenuopfü by Hutton (1921: 182), thereby constituting the potential 'Sky Father', are listed among Terhuomia, so that some might arguably be a form of ancestral more-than-human kin. Regarding spirit encounters in Kire's books, see ch. 4.2
421. See also Heneise, 2019: 59; Here it must be noted that some of the spirits may also be those of passed away humans.
422. This book furthermore relates about female seers, that Kire's new book Earth my Mother follows up on (see ch. 5.1). SOTT will be discussed in more detail as an allegory of the story of Christ in ch. 4.5.1
423. Heneise also recounts a story shared to him about a woman from Dimapur that would spend half the year with her husband, and the other half with her lover that was a river spirit, who was again the daughter of the third-highest mountain peak in Nagaland, *Japfü* (Heneise, 2016, Note 10, p. 103; Heneise, 2019: 26, note 10). The Ao Naga creation story furthermore narrates a harmonious living together of all animals including humans at the beginning of the earth, in which intermarriages between human and other animals were commonplace (Ao, 1999: 65-66).
424. Dialogue/Interview with Easterine Kire, 2021
427. The word *Tekhu* in Tenyidie means tiger, and *miavi, mevimia*, and *mevi*, could be related to *mevi* [T] meaning becoming or growing, and/or *themia* [T], meaning human (Dialogues with Fifi, November 2020). The whole word has by Heneise been explained to mean 'tiger grown into the shape of' (2016: 102, footnote 2).
428. As mentioned, the practice was "believed in but not practised by the Angamis" according to colonial ethnographer Hutton (1921: p. 243), while it was practised by their neighbouring tribes that also form part of the Tenyimia language and cultural group.
429. Heneise, 2016; Dialogues with Kia, September 15, 2020

434. As introduced, this ability to 'change perspective' into a wild animal's, often predators, is more widespread among cultures that live in intimacy with the forest world, notably through hunting. Very similar understandings and experiences are shared from such diverging Indigenous societies, such as for example the Ojibwa (Native Americans), regarding the role of a mobile soul or spirit for such practices: "so that it is not necessary to assume that the body part, in all cases, literally undergoes transformation into an animal form" (Hallowell, 1975: p. 162).
435. It seems the ruopfü travels more easily, or safely, when the body is asleep, although as described below in ch. 5.2, with regards to spirit theft, this can also happen during wake time, in which case the body falls sick.
437. This is also noted by Fürer-Haimendorf (1946) with regards to the weretigermen of the Konyak, and he furthermore relates Mills to have observed the same belief and stories among the Ao Nagas (p. 209); see also Hutton, 1921b, as the practice is believed to especially prevalent among the Sema Nagas.
438. Those that descend deeply into these soul journeys during dreamtime, could furthermore end up spending most of their days in bed and slowly losing touch with human wake-time reality, tired from their nightly activity as tigers (Heneise, 2019).
440. Like the practice of therianthropy, the understanding of animals being ruled, protected or represented by a 'master spirit' is more widespread among Indigenous cultures in forest ecosystems; see Virtanen (2017) on master spirits of animals among the Apurinã in the Brazilian Amazon.
441. Quote about Khonoma.
442. Speaking with Kire about meetings with weretigermen, she narrated a personal experience, that links to the segment above: "I don't know why it works, but we were out trekking once, and on the way back, my friends and I, we met another group and they were camping, so they gave us tea and we were sitting for ten minutes with them, and then they said, there's a tiger. There was kind of a precipice, and behind that was a kind of a hill, a cliff and a hill, and they said, there's a tiger there and he was just sort of roaring in the night, so we were very scared. Then they also said, one of us called out 'elder brother', and we know that when you call out 'elder brother' he will never attack you. *smiles* [...] We left, but they got back safely the next day, so, I don't know, it's very weird but, sometimes you just have to accept those things." (2021) As Kire's narration is relatively recent, it seems that this sibling relationship at least in part still stands today.
443. This includes negotiation with non-human spirits, and ancestral human spirits, who among Angami Nagas are believed to live in or near the village. See Heneise, 2019: 11, and 119-120:
444. Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021
446. Sanyü, V. M., & Broome, R. (2017): p. 288.
447. Dialogue/Interview with Niketu Iralu, 2021; See also the Sahapedia interview with Methaheto Chase (2018)
448. Niketu Iralu continued to share that: "Now the Hindu nationalist party BJP, they're saying that that is a Hindu god, so the villagers are saying, why don't we, say, put a temple here and collect the money *we both laugh*". This -jokes aside- also points to cultural influences currently infusing the land with new meanings.
449. See also Moon-Little on the Zeme Nagas in Wouters & Heneise (Eds.), 2017
450. Dialogues with Kia, August 28, 2020; Heneise, 2019
451. Sometimes, the activity of forest spirits has however been used as an excuse to cover updomestic violence, so narrates Kire in *Forest Song*, which is based on real experiences: "Bise's mother had gone to be with a lover? Didn't you just say that she had been taken by forest spirits?" "Oh, that was what her husband said when he got her back, but didn't you notice her face was black and blue and she couldn't get out of bed for three weeks because two of her rib-bones were broken? Have you ever heard of spirits beating up people?" (FS, 2011: 9-10)
452. This links to something Elder Niketu Iralu stated in our conversation, with regards to his work in conflict resolution within Khonoma that had to be done, before a CCA could be created: "Our natural resources of the forest are in recovery now [...] our forest lands, the trees, the mountain streams, they cannot be protected, and the animal wildlife cannot be protected, unless the human beings have the right relationship with one another." (Dialogue/Interview with Niketu Iralu, 2021)
453. She however also took creative liberty in continuing from that received base of the story imaginatively (Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021).
455. Methaheto Chase, Sahapedia Interview, 2018: 7:30 - 12:10.
456. Hutton comments on a stone which is believed to cause storms when raised up from the stream at Phesama, and several others believed to stir the wind. He also mentions that someone functioned as "interpreter" of a stone at Natsimi (Cherema), speaking to its spirit in dreams and using it for divining the future: "The stone takes human form at night, and it is in this form that he first appeared to his votary and told him to remove the stone from the field, and it is in this form that the latter meets him in his dreams." (1921: 408) He also noted that boulders or rounded stones were seen differently from rocks and rough stones and related that they were believed to be able to reproduce. Offerings were also made to such stones, and could acquire quite a following. Smaller black stones, similar to the one at Natsimi, "are kept by all tribes as charms, particularly for crops," and called *thego* [T] (Ibid.: 409).
457. For a discussion on taboo areas see ch. 4.3 and 5.3.1
458. Dialogue/Interview with Easterine Kire, 2021
459. Based on real spirit encounters of close friends or relatives (Dialogue/Interview with Easterine Kire, 202).

460. After the character *Levi* gets shot accidentally by his best friend, while hunting at night - something which is narrated to occur more frequently, as the work of malevolent trickster spirits, as shared above.
461. Here we can acknowledge the interlinked understanding of the importance of an elder in the family, as of the importance of a big tree in the forest.
462. Dialogues with Kia, 2020.
464. Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021
465. Hutton explains it as the whole ceremony that accompanies a taboo or ritual observance (1921: 2).
466. This traditionally often also included a prohibition on any type of intercourse by speech or act with strangers (Hutton, 1921: 2).
467. 1921: 192. Hutton spells it as 'penna' and 'kenna'.
468. Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021; This relates back to the passage shared in ch. 4.2 regarding the rules of hospitality and etiquette in the forest, towards the original landowners, so that when harvesting anything, it would be etiquette to thank the spirits.
469. Hutton (1921: 190-2) offers some other practical examples related to livelihood, concerning that it is expected of people to first help their neighbours to complete the grain harvest, before they go back over their own reaped fields to cut the leftover stubble, as grain spoils quickly (therefore a rule preventing greed for personal gain); and a prohibition on burning trees that are used for building as firewood - i.e. taboos on careless self-gratification.
470. Hutton gives an example of being himself more or less scolded for wasting 'the stump of a cheroot' used for smoking (1921: 190).
471. More examples of this will be presented in ch. 4.4 on IEK
472. Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021
475. Joshi, 2012: 75
476. *Khunuo* means animals [*T*].
477. Fürer-Haimendorf (1946) also describes a rite among the Konyak Nagas, in which prayers where whispered to a centrally erected bamboo pole during early spring, about which he was told that it concerned the fertility of the fields, with the prayer calling for "'As a woman embraces her lover, so may the earth take the seed of the rice into her womb.'" (p. 204) He also reflects about this that "The fertility of field and man are closely linked in the mind of the Naga: they are different expressions of the same force, and the prosperity of the village depends on its abundance." (Ibid.)
478. Which seems to link to the creation story of the neighbouring Khasi in Meghalaya, who furthermore maintain a strong taboo on greed, and where certain protected areas 'sacred groves' are common. See Nongbri, 2006.
479. See also Heneise, 2019; Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021
483. Dialogues with Kia, September 2020.; *ruzhüo* meaning hunting (Dialogues/Classes with Fifi, 2020). For a further discussion see ch. 5.3.1
484. This life ruled by fear of spirit attacks and strict taboos to prevent punishment of some kind, was, of course, not at all easy, with this example exemplifying such: "The strictest of taboos was upon the lashü death. No mourning of the dead. […] a lashü was the most abominable of apotia deaths. By late morning she was buried, hastily, tumbled into the pit and covered up with soil. Her husband and children were deeply grieved over her death, but they were too familiar with the taboos and feared breaking them by a public show of grief." (SIMF, 2018 [2003]: 6-7) Separate graveyards outside of the village existed for those that died under ominous circumstances, called 'apotia' deaths, whether by murder or spirit related deaths; an example being death during childbirth (Kire, WTRS, 2014: 6.)
487. "Tsomhou: nutgall tree." (Ibid.)
488. "Jotho: edible species of the nettle family."; "Gara: Indian pennywort"; "Gapa: Great plantain" (Ibid.)
489. Hutton mentions that besides cotton, a species of nettle (*wüve*) and jute (*gakeh*) were used for weaving among the Angami, and for dyeing a local Indigo type plant (*tsoprü, Strobilanthes flaccidifolius*), two species of creeping plants (*nki* and *tsenhü*), as well as a tree *'nthoh* (1921: 62)
490. Where traditional knowledge would use the call of birds to predict weather and understand the seasonal cycle, using certain bird calls as indications for the agricultural calendar, birds and birdsong have become increasingly absent, or their singing can sometimes no longer be interpreted because it does not line up with the changing weather patterns due to climate change (Bradfort, 2022); as such climate change is also a threat to such IEK.
491. For a discussion on hunting practices in Chizami, see Naro, et al, 2015.
492. Communal hunting is no longer common, except on special occasions, such as the lifting of a hunting ban.
493. Still today, men only join part of the agricultural workload, and are therefore left with a lot of leisure time, in which they go hunting; see Naro, et al., 2015. I want to mention here that Kire indicated in our conversation (2021) that she dislikes being theorised and labelled as an eco-feminist, when her intention only is to chronicle the realities of her people and their lifeworlds; that is, not to pass judgement.

495. Here the passage seems to reflect a nonchalance about hunting “feel free to trap or shoot all the birds you want”. This may reflect current attitudes, but possibly also past attitudes). We may explain this by the understanding of being granted what is caught by the spirits, yet the current phraseology does not seem to speak to that. Perhaps it is just a cynical statement in the context, yet it also points to the possible paradox of hunting ethics amidst practices of overhunting.
496. Yet, even such reputation or fame need to be avoided, as Moon-Little shares with regards to the Zeme Nagas (In Wouters & Heneise (Eds.), 2017).
497. As has indeed been practised in many cultures worldwide. See also Kimmerer, 2013 for an account of the Potawatomi.
498. Dialogues with Kia, 27 October, 2020
499. Berkes (2008 [1999]); See ch. 3.2
500. Such as through the notion that *Kepenuopfü* as Creator also lives in the sky (Heneise, 2019; Hutton, 1921).
502. Dialogues with *Kia*, July - November 2020; Kire, FS, 2011: 3.
505. It is interesting that in Fürer-Haimendorf’s account of weretigermen among the Konyak, it was notably three weretigers (among which one woman) who, besides their prophetic and theriantrophic abilities, were the only ones to have indicated to be able to dream of or with the Supreme Creator, Gawang (1946: 209). We can see how tekhumiavi were intermediaries with God, in this way, so that we may understand how early missionaries would have sought to demonise their powers, when in reality they were a type of traditional priest, who could embody the ‘holy trinity’ of Spirit, Tiger, and Man.
508. Outlining those passages is out of the scope of this thesis. Regarding the importance of such historical counter narrations from a Naga perspective, see also ch. 1.2.3, 2.3.1 and 5.2.
509. In Khonoma; see also Sanyü, 1987: 87 (note 5)
511. “Keshiini: black men’s kilt, decorated with rows of white cowries” (Ibid, footnote 2)
512. Which links to the latin-american stream of Indigenous thought, which orientates itself around the concept of *buen vivir*, as a relational conceptualisation of the ‘welfare’ ideals of a communal life, as contrasting with the capitalist ideas of individual profit (so that a countries 'welfare’ is measured by Gross Domestic Product).
513. Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021
514. This links to more common storytelling formats, in which a main character as ‘the heroe’ archetype goes on a quest, and finds him or herself transformed by the quest - the teaching or ‘moral of the story’ being the treasure that is found in the end. See Estés (1992) for her Jungian analysis and ‘archaeology’ of myths and story tropes, which she develops particularly as it relates to ‘the wild woman’ archetype.
517. Assigning human virtues or characters to non-human beings in order to respect them.
518. Hutton, 1921: 261.
519. In the version recorded from the Angami by Hutton (1921), an arrow.
520. In a version from the Chakhesang village of Chizami, Tiger is narrated to never fully eat what he hunts, leaving a piece for Man. The Chizami telling furthermore provides information as to how humans may have managed to keep the villages safe from tigers, by using sound or noise (the sound tuuuu, which Tiger fears in the story) (UTC, 2009). The use of noise was also mentioned in a narration of a tiger hunting trip by an American brigadier during British colonial times (National Geographic, 2014).
521. Indeed, much like Eve ate the Apple in the Bible, causing a fall out of paradise, into a world where the human has to toil for her sustenance.
522. In the version from Chizami this included the gift of agricultural tools like baskets and *dao’s* (UTC, 2009).
523. Resting, and letting the field or forest rest too perhaps, as part of success is a rather different tale than the one we are told by capitalist society’s notions of success (and thereby, potentially a rather important practice and belief to remember) yet corresponds with many religious practices in the observances of rest days (e.g. Friday for muslims, Saturday for Jews, Sunday for Christians).
524. For as Kia shared me in our conversations (2020), each person older than you must be addressed by e.g. ‘auntie’, as it would be disrespectful to address someone older than you by their name, and this hierarchy of age is of course specifically clear when regarding the status of Elders in the community
525. Hutton remarks: “the thought of death is never far from [Angami’s], and the fear of it is a potent factor in their lives.” (1921: 39); See also Sekhose, 2012.
526. Other readers or scholars, seem to derive similar meanings from Kire’s works:“Kire seems to focus on how myths help in establishing the relationship between human/culture and tiger/nature in their worldview. By mentioning about the ‘weretiger’, she debunks the epistemological division of nature and culture.” (Sharma, 2020)
527. Heneise, 2019; Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021
531. *When the River Sleeps,* 2014; Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021
532. *Son of the Thundercloud* (2016); Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021; Heneise, 2016: p. 98

535. This is exemplified by Easterine Kire in our conversation, comparing Tenyidie to English, as it pertains to speaking to tigers: "The trouble with Tenyidie and Indo-European languages, you can't exactly have…corresponding terms. So, when I use Tenyidie in English, sometimes it sounds weird, *smiles* because it is not there in the Indo-European mentality or you know, mindset, and the logic is different, [...] It is sometimes almost the opposite of European logic. The hunter, meeting a tiger, instead of fighting him, he thinks, and he realises, it's a weretiger and instead of shooting it, he just shouts words and sort of abrades him and tells him 'aren't you ashamed' and 'I'm a guest,' and it goes away. *smiles*" (2021)
The act of calling a (were)tiger 'an Elder Brother,' is an action by which Tiger as well as the humans present are reminded of the respectful relations that exist and must be maintained between them. Calling out those sentences that Kire suggests, such as "I'm a guest", indicate that the moral rules of hospitality are applied to the forest and the Tiger as well - both are bound by the same etiquette and social rules or ethics - but it also reflects that the forest is considered the territory of non-human people, such as Tiger, where they are therefore only guests. This is a fundamental aspect of managing to co-inhabit a space as neighbours (and thus, human-wildlife conflicts).
536. Gaski (2019) speaks to this through the North Sami word for listening, as applying to listening to messages from other creatures, wind, sky, and the earth; considering such an ability to truly hear or listen as vital to survival. This is linked to the way Nagas observe omens from the world, and listen to messages derived from dreams.
537. Such was narrated to me by Kire (2021) with regards to for example earthquakes and land-slides, as symbolic signifiers which indicate that Man has not taken *care* of the land, of the feminine questions, as Kire termed them, referring to her new book *Earth my Mother*; see ch. 5.1.
541. Building on Ao (1999), Heneise also refers to this as 'soul co-essence', see Heneise, 2019: 64.
546. Such is also narrated in Luikham's (1987 [1983]) account of 'Two Legendary Wer Tigers' Ngheto and Thazuve in Wokha district, in his compilation *Folk Lore and Tales of the Nagas*: pp. 46-48. He furthermore mentions the British administrators' initial incredulous interrogation of the practice, until "on collaboration from the villagers, they believed in the stories and assigned the strange truth to evil spirits." (p. 47)
550. Interview with Kezhasorie Meyase, 2022
554. Dialogue/Interview with Easterine Kire, 2021
555. Interview with Kezhasorie Meyase, 2022
556. Such was further elucidated in the original manuscript through an analysis of an environmental education material: 'Under The Canopy: A Window to Wildlife Conservation in Northeast India' (2009). See Geerling, *forthcoming.*
558. Dialogue/Interview with Niketu Iralu, 2021
559. Dialogue/Interview with Niketu Iralu, 2021; He continues to share how even in the older cases of having to defend oneself against a human enemy, the slain had to be treated with respect, and offered an apology.
561. It is furthermore interesting that, in response to the catastrophes that followed our assumed control, in the 'West' we continue to imagine ways by which we may yet be in control, by searching our solutions in technological advancements instead of a rethinking of our place and earth's capacity, with some seeking to rather colonise Mars then assume a more humble lifestyle. See also the discussion of the term 'the Anthropocene' in the theory section. An environmental ethic rooted in non-control therefore stands in a healthy tension to the very idea that underlies a 'Western' 'conservation ethic' that seeks control over biodiversity loss through knowledge and the demarcation of protected areas.
563. See Bridgewater & Rotherham, 2019. CCAs like the KNCTS are exemplary, as they demonstrate a holistic approach, by having an integrated landscape planning with both conservation and sustenance areas - with the conserved forest furthermore supporting the latter by safeguarding water regulation for example.
566. Niketu Iralu interestingly reflects about the role that the income of Christianity has played in the loss of such understandings and values, indicating how when the old religion's understanding that the sentient world would punish you for any wrong actions of greed or disrespect fell away, 'people could do what they want'. In that sense, when Nagas accepted Jesus' sacrifice on the cross to mean that chicken sacrifices to the spirits were no longer necessary, as Jesus had already died for their sins, there were no longer the same morally informed repercussions (what we in conservation science may term negative feedback loops) to balance resource use. Yet he speaks to a remaining 'common ethical fibre' upon which such current transformational changes of a hunting ban could rest. As such the new conservation 'taboos', really come in to take the place of the taboos that were lost with the initial income of 'Western' Christianity.
567. Through IUCN's red list (e.g. listing the tragopan, 2020).
569. Dialogue/Interview with Easterine Kire, 2021
571. Dialogue/Interview with Easterine Kire, 2021
572. Dialogue/Interview with Easterine Kire, 2021
575. Kire shared me (2021) another example of an archaeological site:

“There’s a place bordering Burma, where there’s a village, and there is an archaeological site, where they’ve been excavating a lot, and a friend who has her own film crew, went to film it. In the night -we all slept in tents- she said, something came and started to pinch her, and wouldn’t let her sleep, so she was being pinched all over [...] *laughs* it just went on the whole night, and she got so fed up, she said ‘I pinch back! whatever it was, I just pinch back’ *we both laugh* and I asker her, ‘weren’t you scared?’ and she said ‘I was so scared but I didn’t care anymore’ So she got up the next day and she said to [...] the archaeological team [...] ‘something kept pinching me at night’, then one of the members said, ‘well, that’s alright; for me, the night before, something came and wrestled with me,’ so the whole night we were wrestling *laughs* and [...] just before it dawned, it left. And they found out, from the village close to the excavation site, that there was a forest close by, and they had seen creatures in the forest, but they never wondered into the forest, because they respected that this territory belongs to them, so they never went in to hunt, or to forage for herbs etcetera, and then, one man shot one of the creatures once and it ran off, but in the night he dreamt of this creature, and it said to him “you weren’t nice today, you hurt me.” And it had a flesh wound. So, when that story was told, the village decided: that is taboo area, we won’t go in, if we don’t trouble them, they won’t trouble us. But, the excavation site coming there, the crew coming there excavating, it was probably trespassing, and they’ve had all these stories.” > “Wow, did they stop the excavation?” < “No, no, they continued, because again, people doing the excavation, some of them believe, some of them don’t, so they carried on. [...] maybe that is nature’s way of, of guarding herself, of preserving her territory, maybe it felt so threatened that it came out and, did the pinching, and wrestling”

576. Dialogues with Kia, July 2020 & September 2020; however, as the story goes, the taboo was broken because of people having sex in the forest, and it lost its force, after which enemies started to enter (Ibid.).

577. In the 8th Himalayan Naturenomics Forum, organised by the Balipara Foundation from 1-5 December, 2020 on ‘Community for conservation: A transition from community into hunting’ in Nagaland.

578. See 10:35 of the video documentation (2020) of the online forum: https://youtu.be/xICR33_tIUc

579. Also this was shared by Edake, see the Balipara Foundation (2020) video, 8:40

580. “1. The total protection of certain selected habitats (e.g. sacred forests and other customary sanctuaries); 2. The total protection of certain species of animals or plants (e.g. taboo species); 3. Prohibitions concerning vulnerable stages in the life history of certain species (e.g. hunting taboos in south India for fruit bats at daytime roosts); and 4. Practices of monitoring of populations and their habitat. (Gadgil *et al.* 1993)” (Found in Berkes, 2008 [1999])

581. Besides the NSFD film, see for example Balipara Foundation, 2020.

583. Where a ‘taboo’ is placed on hunting, fishing (especially with overtly effective methods such as electrocution with batteries) as well as on the extraction of other forest resources (such as wood, wild vegetables and herbs, or craft materials) and on cultivation methods like Jhum.

585. Both Kia and Kire indicated that despite hunting bans, hunting still continues, also in the seasons where it is officially prohibited, with Kire furthermore indicating that she has heard stories about people abusing the flexibility of some of the hunting ban lifts when animals eat your crops, in Khonoma (Dialogues with Kia, 2020; Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021). Nevertheless, Kire repeated that she supports the hunting season: “if you don’t do that, people would hunt in secret, so you need some outlet, which is legitimate” (Ibid.).

586. Dialogue/Interview with Niketu Iralu, 2021

587. Ibid.

588. Dialogue/Interview with Easterine Kire, 2021

589. Interview with Kezhasorie Meyase, 2022; This is not necessarily in contrast with his earlier cited opinion speaking to how various cultural practices - arguably some of the tedious taboo observances - are now obsolete, as indeed, a re-evaluation of old values does not mean that *all* old values or practices need to be re-introduced. Just like useful aspects of ‘Western’ sciences are being integrated and applied to local needs as adaptive measures to environmental and societal change (e.g. needing higher yields from the same jhum plots as new areas cannot be made), old values could be selectively reintroduced where deemed valuable.

591. However, it must also be said that, as the quality of relations to nonhuman actors has been especially noteworthy in such stories based in a Naga cosmology, it is not enough to simply print or read such stories. Relations are continuously shaped and reshaped, and the relations narrated in stories must, by effect be lived, achieved for example through local sustenance practices. This relates to Actor-Network Theory: the network dissolves when relations are no longer ‘performed’ (Latour, 2005).

592. As was indicated by interviewed hunters of Chizami; see Naro, et al., 2015

595. Santos also refers to such as ‘orthopedic thinking’ after the work of José Ortega y Gasset (1987: 39). See De Sousa-Santos, 2014: pp. 20-24, 105.

603. Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021

604. Dialogue/Interview with Niketu Iralu, 2021

605. For example: the Ura Academy, with regards to language (2016), Chizami village (through NEN) with regards to biodiverse millet cultivation and the re-institution of the associated celebratory festival.

607. Especially youth as can be seen in the data obtained by the Hoolock Gibbon Eco-Club members, regarding the Chakhesang Chizami village in Phek district (Naro, et al, 2015)

608. Dialogue/Interview with Easterine Kire, 2021.
609. She shared: “There’s a college called the Japfur college, and they are making a lot of efforts in that, and I always use them as an example, because whatever they are doing, is working. So, they give their students assignments like, write a paper on marriage rituals of your tribe, not the Christian rituals, but the traditional culture, and, students don’t know about it, and they have to phone their parents in the village, and parents don’t know, and *smiles* the whole village has to assemble just to get the data out, and information back to the student. So, it’s such a wonderful way of connecting the student back to its roots, and this is happening in formal school. [...] Then another thing that they do on campus is, each student has to grow a certain vegetable, and they have to look after it the whole season, and finally harvest it, and depending on the condition of the cabbage or whatever they’ve grown, they will be graded. [...] And, the whole purpose of this is to get them connected to soil. And to make them see that education is not just sitting in a classroom and reading books, and.. so they learn to study the soil, and learn to grow their own food. Then [...] in the boys hostel I hear they are rearing pigs. Because, there is a lot of waste, kitchen waste, and waste food, so this goes to some pigs, and the boys go rear it. *smilling* [...] so, it is possible. This is such a fine example of how they’re doing it. And because they started that, I know that a neighbouring college is also [...] getting the students to write about cultural things, [...] making it a part of their curriculum. So, it started in a few places, and they’ve shown that it’s possible. We have the example already. It just needs to percolate to the others” (Ibid.)
610. Dialogue/Interview with Kire, 2021
611. Linking the military aggressions and presence of the GoI in the Naga areas to its educational policy, Kikon (2003) demonstrates the political power residing in education curricula. See context chapter.
612. Dialogue/Interview with Elder Niketu Iralu, 2021, as cited in the context chapter.
613. Notably, a critical representation of the contribution of the British to the decimation of wildlife would be a great starting point.
614. De Sousa-Santos, 2014
615. Such was indicated as an issue by Easterine Kire in our conversation (2021).
616. Dialogue/Interview with Easterine Kire, 2021
617. In conversation with Kia (2020), who has a younger nephew, it appears that at a young age the child is given the option to opt out of the local language learning, as indeed her nephew did. Of course, children will be tempted to opt out of something which only gives more schoolwork, especially if such is not generally regarded as a valuable subject. Kire however also expressed that studying English is easier, because of Tenyidie being a complex language, especially to write in, when I asked her about the possibility of publishing her books in Tenyidie (Dialogue/Interview with Easterine Kire, 2021).
618. Dialogue/Interview with Easterine Kire, 2021
619. Within India, and additionally in our globalised world where the knowledge of English greatly increases one’s opportunities, including to participate in the necessary conversations about the state of our planet and human rights, at international levels.
621. Kire however specifically mentioned that she dislikes her work being theorised as ‘ecofeminism’, having often been labelled as such. In her words, she simply has described what she herself has seen, without necessarily passing judgement (or agreeing with all facets of ‘feminism’). Such a sentiment was also expressed by Kia after asking her about her experience of gender-relations. Yet, of course, issues of violence and abuse must be addressed, as they indeed are in Kire’s books, and there is a locally specific drive for change that does not necessarily reflect all ideas of other ‘feminisms’.