

## LESSON 3.1

## DISMANTLING WHITENESS

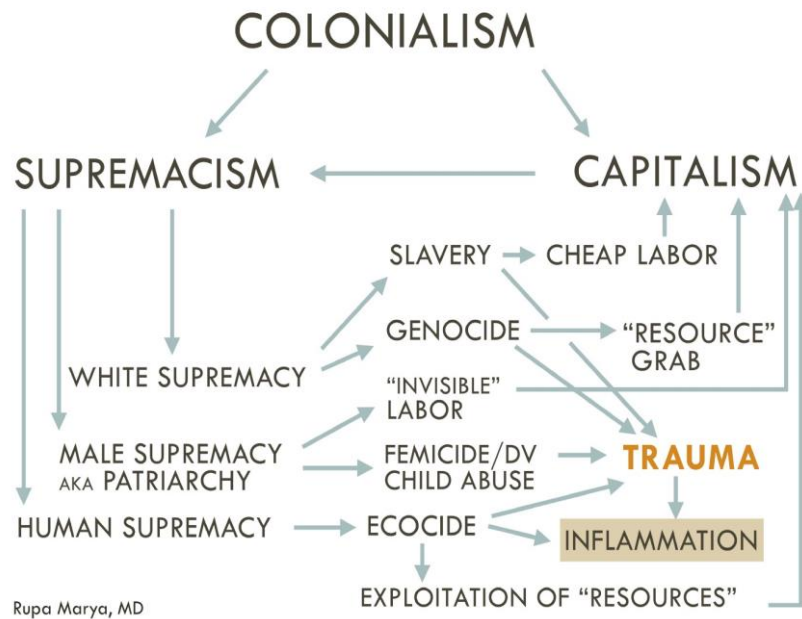
To understand the root causes of the pathologies we see today (including forced migration) which impact all of us but affect Brown, Black and poor people more intensely, we have to examine the foundations of western society which began with colonization. As **Rupa Marya** puts it: "to be colonized means to be disconnected and disintegrated — from our ancestry, from the earth, from our indigeneity, our earth-connected selves. We all come from earth-connected people, people who once lived in deep connection to the rhythms of nature." She believes it is not a coincidence that the colonization of America's land happened at the same time that Europeans were burning hundreds of thousands of witches, those women who carried the traditional indigenous knowledge of the tribes of Europe.

In her [lecture](#) Rupa Marya points out: "colonization was the way the extractive economic system of Capitalism came to Western lands, supported by systems of supremacy and domination which are a necessary part to keep wealth and power accumulated in the hands of the colonizers and ultimately their financiers."

Tragedy of this is painted already in the following quote from the French writer in the 18<sup>th</sup> century:

*"I do not know if coffee and sugar are essential to the happiness of Europe, but I know well that these two products have accounted for the unhappiness of two great regions of the world: America has been depopulated so as to have land on which to plant them; Africa has been depopulated so as to have the people to cultivate them."*  
(J. H. Bernardin de St. Pierre 1773)

Take a look at the flowchart below. It illustrates how multiple forms of oppression are related, and how these lead to multiple forms of harm. At the top is colonialism, which leads to capitalism and supremacy, which are themselves connected. These flow into white supremacy, patriarchy, and human supremacy, which fuel things like slavery, ecocide, and genocide, which all connect to trauma and then inflammation. Multiple forms of harm are connected back up to capitalism.



White supremacy created a framework that legitimized slavery and genocide. Slavery created cheap labour, which is necessary for a functioning capitalist system. And genocide created unlimited access to resources, in the form of land, animal parts, minerals and raw materials which are also necessary for a functioning capitalist economy. And as capitalism functions, it further entrenches systems of supremacy. We all know that white supremacy looks like scary people with swastikas in hoods. But it can also look like any place where there's an abundance of white people in exclusive contexts, where power and access is not readily ceded to others.

There's white supremacy and then there's male supremacy, AKA patriarchy, which leads to the invisibilizing of women's labour or in this context reproducing the work force and suppressing our wages, which further supports capitalism. Patriarchy also leads to femicide, domestic violence and child abuse, which we see across all groups here. We also see human supremacy, where people feel superior to the rest of living entities, thereby subjecting living soils, seeds, animals, plants and water to horrific treatment in the name of exploiting resources, which in turn feeds the capitalist need for ever-increasing profits.

Another important view connected to dismantling whiteness is also delivered in the **Kehinde Andrews's** short video where he confronts us with the fact that the West was built on racism and that it's time we faced that. Watch the video [here](#).

**FURTHER THOUGHTS AND REFLECTIONS:**

*If you are sincerely interested in the topic we also recommend you to watch the documentary [Psychosis of Whiteness](#).*