Introduction: Locating the Mutations of Colonial Violence in the Postcolonial World

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Towards an Understanding of Colonial Violence

In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), psychiatrist and philosopher Frantz Fanon states that "Europe undertook the leadership of the world with ardor, cynicism, and violence" (311). As he makes clear throughout his book, this violence became the organizational principle of the colonial world, where the colonizer maintained the colonized in a constant state of subjugation. The violence of colonialism, Fanon predicted, would "only yield when confronted with greater violence" (61): "it is the intuition of the colonized masses that their liberation must, and can only, be achieved by force" (73).

Since its publication in the early 1960s, *The Wretched of the Earth* has become one of the most influential texts in the study of the relationship between violence and colonialism, but it has also been widely misunderstood. For example, in *On Violence* (1969), another foundational text in twentieth-century violence studies, political theorist Hannah Arendt mentions Fanon's "praise of the practice of violence" (69) and his "glorif[ication of] violence for violence's sake" (65). Her words reflect philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre's reading of Fanon in his preface to *The Wretched of the Earth* more than they do Fanon's text itself. Arendt recognizes that Sartre, "in his glorification of violence," "goes . . . farther than Fanon himself," but she posits that Sartre "wishes to bring [Fanon's argument] to its conclusion" (12), thus making the distinction between the two thinkers one of degree only. However, as psychoanalyst Alice Cherki has argued in her own 2002 preface to *The Wretched of the Earth*, the difference between Sartre's and Fanon's views on violence is not only a matter of the former "radicalizing" the latter; rather, the two men's arguments differ in terms of intellectual substance: "Sartre justifies violence while Fanon analyses it" (11, our translation). Crucially, the influence of Sartre's preface on critical readings of Fanon's book has had wide-ranging implications, in that it fuelled a fundamental misunderstanding of the very nature of colonial and anticolonial violence that Fanon described in his book.

A deeper understanding of colonial violence must necessarily start with an awareness of its multiple forms before examining its continuing presence in the contemporary world. In

what follows, we do not attempt to offer a comprehensive overview of colonial violence—an impossible task here—but to identify some of its main features and incarnations, before focusing on the ethical implications of theorizing and narrating violence.

Configurations of Colonial Violence

Modern European civilizations were founded on colonial violence about six hundred years ago, a process that involved the genocide or abduction of Indigenous peoples; the theft of their land, resources, and knowledges; the destruction of families and communities; the wounding of bodies; and the brutalization of psyches. Europe itself saw little of the violence of this project, because this violence occurred elsewhere. Thus, European colonialism divided the world into Europe and its colonies, which became sites of relentless violence committed by colonizers, slavers, slave owners, convicts, and European indentured servants, all of whom were directly involved in the atrocities. Moreover, as Fanon points out, the colonies themselves were also "divided into compartments," with "native quarters and European quarters," "schools for natives and schools for Europeans" (*Wretched* 37), and segregated spaces in apartheid South Africa—divisions that were maintained by means of "brute force" (*Wretched* 53). As well as by force, the "natives" and the enslaved in the colonies were subdued by a campaign of psychic assault that sought to dehumanize them and pit them against each other.

The extent of the physical and psychological violence inflicted on the colonized is such that Fanon described it as "aggressiveness which has been deposited in [their] bones" (*Wretched* 52) and which is "under the skin" (71). This description is reminiscent of anthropologist Carolyn Nordstrom's much later depiction of unremitting violence as being "embodied," "profoundly personal" (105). Nordstrom, quoting some of the people she interviewed during her research, describes violence as a "dangerous illness" (116) and a "rash on the soul" (113); she argues against Western concepts of violence as being "thing-like" (115), with a "specific *given* nature" (115, italics in original). However, Nordstrom is not referring here to the violence of colonialism but to that of postcolonial terror warfare in the context of the Mozambique war (1976-92). She defines terror warfare as a strategy whose "goal is to defeat political opposition by controlling populations through the fear [and the meting out] of brutality" (103). Our contention is that colonial violence *is* precisely terror warfare. Colonialism, like the terror warfare studied by Nordstrom, not only involves "the maiming and killing of humans," but it

is also "a cultural system that becomes reproduced in the minutia of daily living and the constructs of what it means to be human" (Nordstrom 103-04).

Within the colonial system of violence, the colonizers redefine the "humanity" of the colonized by robbing them of it: as Fanon reminds us, colonial ideology "turns [the native] into an animal" (42). Such ontological violence takes on myriad forms and varies according to both territory and gender: thus, the colonized man has been femininized (as typically happened in the Indian subcontinent) or, conversely, hyper-masculinized (and bestialized, as occurred in much of Africa), while the colonized woman has been sexually objectified or, occasionally, masculinized, as enslaved black women were in the Americas. It is widely recognized that these varied configurations of the colonized (which sometimes operated simultaneously) were shaped by, and in turn served, colonial agendas. For example, in the context of slavery, the sexual commodification of women justified their rape by slave owners, while the masculinization of female slaves emphasized their "labouring capacity" (Beckles 36), hence their monetary value. Similarly, the infantilization of the colonized, famously perpetuated in English literature by Rudyard Kipling's description of the "new-caught, sullen peoples" as "half devil and half child," was widely invoked to legitimize the European "civilizing" mission.

According to Fanon, who was writing during colonialism, these pervasive physical and psychological attacks "kee[p] alive in the native an anger," a "muscular tension" that "finds outlet regularly in bloodthirsty explosions—in tribal warfare, in feuds between septs, and in quarrels between individuals" (54). Fanon here refers to the fact that the colonized initially unleash their accumulated aggressiveness "against [their] own people" (52), a phenomenon that the philosopher links to "the astonishing waves of crime in North Africa" (52), but which finds echoes throughout the colonial world. A figure that epitomizes this violence inflicted by the colonized "against [their] own people" is that of the black overseer on slave plantations, a role also held by Olaudah Equiano, the former slave and abolitionist, who briefly mentions this period of his life in his autobiography (201). Such examples illustrate Nordstrom's idea that violence is a "fluid cultural construct": "those exposed to violence learn violence, and are thus capable of perpetuating it" (115).

In many parts of European empires, violence among the colonized was actively encouraged by colonial policies. For example, divide-and-rule strategies were implemented along ethnic lines in colonial Nigeria to ensure that rivalries would emerge between North and South, while in India the colonizers sought to create social hierarchies through selective

education and language teaching. As Thomas Babington Macaulay wrote in his "Minute on Indian Education" (1835),

> it is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern—a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. (249)

Colonial education promoted cultural alienation: it was a politically endorsed form of psychological and epistemic violence against individuals and communities, which for the colonized resulted in a "fracture of consciousness" (Fanon, *Black Skin* 150). Describing a similar effect of rupture, Kenyan author Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o writes in *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (1986) about how the "harmony" of his early childhood years among his Gĩkũyũ-speaking community "was broken" when he entered colonial school (11). Ngũgĩ emphasizes the complementary effects of physical and psychological violence in the process of colonization:

> Berlin of 1884 was effected through the sword and the bullet. But the night of the sword and the bullet was followed by the morning of the chalk and the blackboard. The physical violence of the battlefield was followed by the psychological violence of the classroom. (9)

Ngũgĩ's intervention remains best known for advocating the use of African languages to write African literatures. His argument is based on the view that "language carries culture," while culture, in turn, "carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world" (16). Ngũgĩ thus reports the alienating effect of studying not just the English language, but also English literature, as part of his colonial education, from "simplified Dickens and Stevenson" in primary school to Chaucer and T.S. Eliot "with a touch of Graham Greene" at Makerere University (12). Such experiences are psychologically damaging. Nigerian Chinua Achebe recounts how, as a child, he read English books that featured Africans portrayed as "savages," "sinister and stupid" (118).

As a result, the young Achebe "hated their guts" (118), not realizing at this point that he was supposed to be "one of those unattractive beings jumping up and down on the riverbank, making horrid faces" in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (118).

If the violence inflicted upon the colonized by the reading and learning of English literature has been widely documented, an element that is far less often mentioned in postcolonial criticism is that the study of English literature *as a discipline* was itself established as part of the colonial project. As Ania Loomba writes in *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (2015):

> The rise of literary studies as a 'discipline' of study in British universities was in fact linked to the perceived needs of colonial administrators: English literature was instituted as a formal discipline in London and Oxford only after the Indian Civil Service examination began to include a 1000 mark paper in it, on the assumption that knowledge of English literature was necessary for those who would be administering British interests. (95)

This historical fact has wide-ranging implications for contemporary postcolonial literary criticism: the discipline, which derives many of its methods of textual analysis from English literary studies, is fundamentally rooted in colonial violence, and thus participates in this fluid cultural system.

Adopting a paradigm focused on the fluidity of violence is crucial in the postcolonial context because it prevents the historicization—hence the reification—of colonialism as an event that is restricted to the moment of conquest or to the pre-independence period. As historian Patrick Wolfe writes in his discussion of settler colonialism, "invasion is a structure," "not an event" (388). The "structure" of colonial violence pertains not only to territorial domination but also to the imposition of new languages, new epistemologies, and even new temporalities. Achille Mbembe, in his discussion of Congolese music and dance, states that "Belgian colonial rule was to a large extent an endeavour aimed at restructuring local time and space": "Christianity introduced a new calendar and a new temporality" (64). This imposition partakes of colonial brutality just as the "violence, exploitation and economic pillage experienced over an extended period by the Congolese people" (74) do. This knowledge of the continuing presence of multiple forms of violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

forms the basis of Mbembe's unequivocal declaration that the country "has been living in [a] spiral of terror since the start of the colonial era" (74).

From Colonial to Postcolonial Violence

Mbembe's insistence on the relentless nature of colonial violence in the DRC even after the country's independence confirms Anne McClintock's statement in her book *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (1995) that "the term postcolonialism is, in many cases, prematurely celebratory" (12). McClintock continues:

> for the inhabitants of British-occupied Northern Ireland, not to mention the Palestinian inhabitants of the Israeli Occupied Territories and the West Bank, there may be nothing "post" about colonialism at all. Is South Africa postcolonial? East Timor? Australia? Hawaii? Puerto Rico? By what fiat of historical amnesia can the United States of America, in particular, qualify as postcolonial—a term that can only be a monumental affront to the Native American peoples . . . ? One can also ask whether the emergence of Fortress Europe . . . may not also signal the emergence of a new empire, as yet uncertain of its boundaries and global reach. (12-13)

McClintock's questions are obviously rhetorical and function to point to the persistence and mutation of colonial violence in so-called "postcolonial" times. In discussions about the British Empire, this argument is most easily made in the case of settler colonies such as Australia and the USA, which have become independent from Britain but in which, for the Indigenous peoples, colonization remains an ongoing process, as McClintock cogently emphasizes. To these examples, one might add the cases of territories that are not even nominally independent—for instance, Martinique and Guadeloupe remain French overseas departments to this day.

McClintock's objection to the term "postcolonial" is not an isolated reaction (see Ashcroft, Tiffin, and Griffiths 204-09 for a short history of the debate around this term). Rather, her comments are symptomatic of a general suspicion among scholars of the label "postcolonial," an attitude that, in recent years, has led to the increasing popularity of the seemingly more radical intellectual movement of "decolonization." In their study of the

phenomenon, Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang draw attention to the multiplication of "calls to 'decolonize our schools,' or use 'decolonizing methods,' or 'decolonize student thinking'" (1). The authors argue that "the easy adoption of decolonizing discourse by educational advocacy and scholarship . . . turns decolonization into a metaphor" (1). They forcefully contend:

> Decolonization brings about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life; it is not a metaphor for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools. . . . The metaphorization of decolonization makes possible a set of evasions, or "settler moves to innocence," that problematically attempt to reconcile settler guilt and complicity, and rescue settler futurity. (1)

Such attempts to "rescue settler futurity" are located along the entire political spectrum. Tuck and Yang give the example of the Occupy movement:

> The Occupy movement for many economically marginalized people has been a welcome expression of resistance to the massive disparities in the distribution of wealth; for many Indigenous people, Occupy is another settler re-occupation on stolen land. (23)

In this scenario, so-called "decolonization" in fact affirms and effects continued colonization—one might even argue that the term "reoccupation" used by Tuck and Yang is inadequate, considering that the initial occupation has never stopped. In any case, this example illustrates both the ubiquity and the magnitude of colonial violence in the contemporary world, a violence committed even on the part of those who claim to fight the inequalities brought about by capitalism, the very system that supported colonization and slavery.

Tuck and Yang's reflections are also a sober reminder that questions such as those posed by McClintock cannot simply be brushed away with a mere academic paradigm shift. In view of this, we have made the decision to continue using the imperfect shorthand term "postcolonial" in the title of this book, as "postcolonialism" can also be understood as the discipline that "deals with the *effects* of colonization on cultures and societies" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 204, our italics). Not only is the "postcolonial" world described in the

contributions collected in this volume pervaded by such "effects" but also the very conceptualization of contemporary postcolonial violence as embodying a series of "effects" allows us to clearly identify colonization as the foundational *cause*. Meanwhile, the danger of any simple dichotomization is dispelled when this approach is combined with theories of violence that, as stated above, present violence as fluid and constantly mutating. Such an approach combining postcolonial and violence studies makes it possible to discern lines of continuity between the colonial and the postcolonial world, and to examine in more detail the very structures and powers that enable this violence to continue.

There is no doubt that it is because colonial violence is so deeply embedded in systems, structures, and peoples, that it remains difficult to root out. However, this observation must come with the acknowledgement that colonial violence has also been deliberately maintained by political interference, corruption, debt, war, and the actions of multinational corporations. Examples abound; a few illustrations will suffice to make this point clear. In 1825, after the Haitian revolution (1791-1804), which saw the uprising of free and enslaved Haitians against slavery and French colonization, France demanded financial compensation for its loss in land and slaves, thus burdening Haiti with debts that ensured that the Caribbean country would never recover. On the other side of the Atlantic, in Nigeria, the Biafran War (1967-70), which took place only a few years after the country's independence in 1960, was a direct result of the divide-and-rule policies mentioned earlier, with the British participating in the war to secure their financial interests. After the Congo's independence, Belgium interfered in the country's political affairs by playing a central role in the assassination of Patrice Lumumba and went on to support kleptocratic president Mobutu Sese Seko for decades; in more recent times, Belgian corporations have continued to draw massive profits from the mining industry in the DRC, with no concern for Congolese people. In Australia, policies calling for the abduction of mixed-race Aboriginal children, who were then made wards of the state and placed in institutions, were implemented until the 1960s at least, with a painfully similar history shared by Native American children in Canada. Segregation policies existed in the USA until well after the time of colonialism, and decades after the official abolition of "Jim Crow" laws, police brutality against and mass incarcerations of African American people show that this violence is still ongoing. Psychological violence too continues in many forms, with the objectification and animalization of black people showing no signs of abating, if not always in conscious then in unconscious forms, as a recent article by Anderson et al. suggests (462).

These examples are directly inherited from colonialism, but there are many other instances in which colonial violence has surreptitiously mutated and is thus more difficult to recognize. In other cases, colonial violence operates in combination with other forms of violence, such as that based on gender. Many such complex examples are analysed in this book. They will be presented in the final part of this introduction, after we briefly consider the ethical implications of theorizing and narrating violence.

Theorizing and Narrating Violence

Recent studies have sought to examine the range of phenomena that can be collected under the umbrella of violence. In *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections* (2008), philosopher Slavoj Žižek distinguishes between "subjective" violence, namely "violence performed by a clearly identifiable agent" (1), and "objective violence," which can be either symbolic—that is, "embodied in language and its forms" (1)—or "systemic," that is, violence maintained by "subtle forms of coercion that sustain relations of domination and exploitation" (9). As Žižek argues, objective violence "may be invisible, but it has to be taken into account if one is to make sense of what otherwise seem to be 'irrational' explosions of subjective violence" (2). Žižek's distinction between different types of violence allows analysts to develop a structured understanding of the dynamics of violence. However, it is our contention in this book that his ideas need to be combined with a detailed historical and political contextualization of the violence being examined, as invoking "systemic" violence in a vacuum might otherwise run the risk of disembodying its agents, hence allowing the evasion of personal responsibility and, ultimately, accountability. As Bruce B. Lawrence and Aisha Karim state in their introduction to *On Violence: A Reader* (2007)—albeit to make a different point than we do here—"violence is always and everywhere historically contingent," but it is also "always mediated through individuals" (6) whose role, we argue, needs to be clearly perceived and understood.

The reverse challenge of broadening the analysis from the individual to the systemic arises when studying violence through the lens of trauma theory. In *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma Out of Bounds* (2013), Stef Craps asserts that, "by narrowly focusing on the level of the individual psyche," dominant trauma discourse "tends to leave unquestioned the conditions that enabled the traumatic abuse, such as political oppression, racism, or economic domination" (28). As a consequence, the traditional trauma paradigm "negates the need for taking collective action towards systemic change" (Craps 28). In contrast, Craps points out that the link between

individual trauma and systemic violence is examined by Fanon both in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967, originally published in French in 1952), in which the psychiatrist and philosopher focuses on the psychological effects of racism, and in the final chapter of *The Wretched of the Earth*, in which he studies the mental distress caused by colonial violence in Algeria (see Craps 28-31).

Fanon's work also stands out in the corpus of early trauma theory because of its focus on non-white, non-Western people, whereas "the founding texts of the field . . . are almost exclusively concerned with traumatic experiences of white Westerners and solely employ critical methodologies emanating from a Euro-American context" (Craps and Buelens 2). As Craps makes clear in *Postcolonial Witnessing*, applying Western models of trauma to non-Western cultures is not only unhelpful, but it is actually harmful. Relying on the work of Ethan Watters, he gives the example of "the Western trauma counsellors who arrived in Sri Lanka following the 2004 tsunami and who, in their rush to help the victims, inadvertently trampled local expressions of grief, suffering, and healing, thereby actually causing the community more distress" (22). In short, foreign aid amounted to an infliction of psychological violence.

As the example of trauma studies makes clear, both theorizing and analysing violence have major ethical implications; so, too, does the act of *narrating* violence in fiction, drama, and film. There are, of course, important differences between artistic practice and scholarship in terms of form, method, and purpose, yet theorists, literary critics, and artists alike are all faced with the same fundamental questions: "how does one speak about violence without replicating and perpetuating it? And how can one apply knowledge about violence to advocate strategies that either reduce its incidence or deflect its force?" (Lawrence and Karim 10). Lawrence and Karim state that, "in order to pursue the implications of this last question, one must first recognize that it cannot be answered" (10). Creative literature, drama, and film, as well as the analysis thereof, however, may at least offer ways of recognizing violence and guide an understanding of its dynamics in the postcolonial world. While engaging in this endeavour, this volume further draws attention to the ethical issues that might be involved in the very act of narrating violence in literature, drama, and film. As literary scholars Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse suggest, echoing Lawrence and Karim's comments above, writing about violence can indeed be "a form of violence in its own right" (2). Laura E. Tanner makes a similar point, whilst also insisting on the role of the reader in identifying the ideologies en-crypted in depictions of violence: "the reader in the scene of violence must negotiate a position

relative not only to victim and violator but to the attitudes about violation encoded in representation and experienced through reading" (3).

As reading is a process of negotiation and there is no single readerly response to literary violence, the same text can give rise to widely diverging feelings and interpretations. For example, some will deem a graphic representation of violence to be "pornographic," while others may not. Those who do generally indict the writer for featuring gratuitous violence; they may also posit that such pornography is a violation of the reader or viewer that either desensitizes them or risks distressing them.

An attempt to avoid such a response in the latter case gave rise to the use of trigger warnings, which are meant to signal the presence of particular types of violence or sexually explicit content so as to preserve the reader's or the viewer's sensitivities. Although the rationale behind trigger warnings is to prevent distress, disrespect, or even trauma, they involve their own ethical challenges. The most obvious is perhaps the question of who appoints the arbiters of what is deemed to be potentially violent or offensive. Another issue arises when considering culturally related trigger warnings in postcolonial settings. For example, in Australia, there has been a rise in the use of trigger warnings alerting Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders to the fact that a film contains references to (or representations of) recently deceased people—a cultural practice often prohibited among Indigenous peoples, but in forms that vary across communities ("ABC Indigenous Content"). When issued by non-Indigenous filmmakers, such trigger warnings may be viewed either as a mark of respect towards the original inhabitants of the land or as yet another "settler move to innocence," to reiterate the phrase used by Tuck and Yang in their analysis of decolonization (1). Indeed, the filmmakers warn their Indigenous viewers, but then engage in the disrespectful practice anyway. In other words, an ostensible mark of cultural respect may also be seen to aid the perpetuation of violence. A similar argument about the role of trigger warnings in preserving violence might be made about the USA. Whilst trigger warnings in this national context have often been associated with forms of conservatism that condemn the representation of graphic sex and violence as being damaging for the viewer or reader, one may ultimately wonder whether the refusal to unexpectedly confront violence on the page or on the screen may not be a way of refusing to acknowledge its existence in the real world.

This cursory glance at trigger warnings, which raises questions but draws no definitive conclusions, illustrates the importance of examining different types of violence in different

contexts so as to gain a fuller understanding of this fluid phenomenon. In this book, we have structured our collective analysis of violence in the postcolonial world into three thematic sections—"Intimate and Gender Violence," "Violence and War," and "Violence on the Move"—in the hope of better apprehending how the works of creative writers, dramatists, and filmmakers depict and intervene in the different types of violence stemming from the legacy of the brutality of colonialism.

Intimate and Gender Violence

In their introduction to *Rethinking the Victim: Gender and Violence in Contemporary Australian Women's Writing* (2019), Anne Brewster and Sue Kossew emphasize "the continuity of violence between intimate, interpersonal violence and systemic, institutional forms of violence" (2). Discussing more specifically violence against women, the authors

> recognise that this violence is not informed by gender alone but that it is determined by many other systems of inequality which impact on and shape gender, such as sexuality, race, ethnicity, disability, class, age, mental health, regional isolation and citizenship status. (2)

Brewster and Kossew go on to examine these intertwined factors in the specific geographical space of Australia, through an analysis of female-authored literary texts "that allo[w] us to think critically about how violence is reproduced in a range of contexts" (3), many of which directly bear the traces of Australia's brutal colonial history. Even though the book's focus is national, the authors draw occasional parallels with scholarship on Indigenous peoples in Canada (86) and on narratives of violence in South Africa (75-76), as well as with the work of Frantz Fanon (86, 114), thus suggesting crisscrossing patterns between different (post)colonial manifestations of gender violence.

It is precisely such patterns—their systematicity, but also their specific geographical, cultural, and temporal manifestations—that the first section of the present book seeks to investigate. As chapters have been organized thematically rather than geographically, it is striking that the Caribbean features so prominently in three of the four chapters that make up this section. However, it is perhaps apposite that a study of violence in the postcolonial world should start with a focus on the Caribbean, for the region is often perceived as "the paradigmatic

instance of the colonial encounter," as David Scott states in his reading of C.L.R. James's *The Black Jacobins* (Scott 126). Indeed, the region "has been shaped almost entirely by that founding experience" (Scott 126), having witnessed the horrors of genocide, slavery, and indenture, and having experienced colonial domination, anticolonial resistance, and now neo-colonial oppression. As Suzanne Scafe writes at the beginning of her chapter in this book, borrowing the words of Hyacinth Ellis, "violence is one of the crucial alphabets for reading and writing the Caribbean" (Ellis 1).

The mention of "reading and writing" in this quotation is particularly relevant to highlight the centrality of these two components in the first contribution to this section. In her chapter, Suzanne Scafe examines three texts by Jamaican writers—the short stories "Immaculate" (2012) by Marlon James and "The White Gyal with the Camera" (2012) by Kei Miller, as well as Kei Miller's novel *Augustown* (2016)—to focus on the blurry boundary between spectacularized violence and ethical narration. To conduct her analysis, she puts into dialogue Fanon's call to develop a "literature of combat" in the fight against colonialism (*Wretched* 193) and the work of Rosemary Jolly on South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2010), in which Jolly states that testimonies might in certain contexts "spectacularize" violence, and thus present this violence without the necessary distance for ethical thought. This link between ethics and representation, Scafe argues, is crucial when examining James's and Miller's fictional texts, which feature the rape and murder of young women while also depicting a society in which the race and class systems inherited from colonialism have fuelled systemic violence against men. Following a carefully contextualized close reading of James's and Miller's fiction, Scafe concludes to the texts' potential to perform an intervention in the contemporary Jamaican context through their gesturing at the possibility of recognition in the Hegelian sense (also discussed by Fanon): recognition amongst the characters themselves, but also the readers' recognition of the characters' predicament as it is represented in the texts.

In the next contribution, Petra Tournay-Theodotou juxtaposes two different postcolonial contexts—those of Jamaica and Cyprus—to offer a comparative analysis of violence committed against women. She analyses two short stories, Alecia McKenzie's "Satellite City" (1992) and Nora Nadjarian's "Okay, Daisy, Finish" (2006), and establishes that the violation of female bodies depicted in the texts is rooted in the countries' respective colonial histories. Tournay-Theodotou argues that, in the Jamaica of McKenzie's story, the trauma of slavery is inscribed

on the bodies of two murdered women discovered at a roadside, and the callous reactions towards the victims—analysed in the chapter using Julia Kristeva's notion of abjection—reproduces colonial violence while also revealing a need to control the narrative of the island's violent history. Nadjarian's text bears witness to a different history, that of a nation once colonized but which is now a member of the European Union, and in which Asian domestic workers are routinely subjected to psychological and physical mistreatment. Daisy, the Sri Lankan domestic worker at the centre of Nadjarian's story, is verbally abused by her female employer and relegated to the basement, until she is eventually rendered ambiguously visible in an exoticized portrait painted by the Cypriot woman's husband. While McKenzie's and Nadjarian's stories explore different types of gender violence, Tournay-Theodotou calls attention to the pervasive objectification of black and brown women's bodies across postcolonial contexts.

Issues of race, immigration, and colonialism also inform Daria Tunca's chapter on sexual assault and emotional vulnerability in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*. After briefly emphasizing the dynamics of postcolonial and gender violence in the novel, Tunca focuses on a scene of sexual assault that has been the subject of conflicting critical interpretations, due to scholars' uncertainty about whether the female protagonist consents to the sexual act. The chapter suggests that Adichie's novel deploys a subtle "grammar of violence," and argues for the combined use of sociological and linguistic theories of rape (mainly by Sharon Marcus and Susan Ehrlich) to unpack this textual elusiveness. In her analysis of the sexual assault scene, Tunca shows that the victim's reaction conforms to real-life responses to such situations; moreover, the character-focalizer's sense of guilt contributes to misleading the reader in their interpretation of the scene. The chapter then turns to another narrative episode in *Americanah*, involving male Nigerian character Obinze's "sham marriage" arrangement with a young European woman of Angolan and Portuguese descent during his undocumented stay in Britain. The examination of this subplot reveals that Obinze rescripts this financial transaction as romantic intimacy in a way that might both deceive himself and the vulnerable woman who had consented to the marriage. The fact that this seems to have escaped critics so far leads to questions about the novel's strategy in representing violence.

Strategies of representation are at the heart of Rebecca Romdhani's chapter on Typhanie Yanique's *Land of Love and Drowning* (2014). The novel is set in the US Virgin Islands, a

former Danish colony, and features multiple instances of sexual violation against female characters, including incestuous paedophilia. As Yanique makes clear in her "Author's Note" to the book, *Land of Love and Drowning* is a response to Herman Wouk's *Don't Stop the Carnival* (1965), two of whose characters she uses in her own novel. The central claim in Romdhani's chapter is that Yanique turns Wouk's characters into narrators and crafts a complex metafictional tale in which the narrators, whilst striving to write back to Wouk's depiction of the Caribbean and to US colonialism, in general, end up also participating in symbolic violence, a concept developed by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu his *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977). To buttress this argument, Romdhani examines how scenes of sexual violence in the book elicit disgust, an emotion that acts as a prompt for the reader to start questioning the novel's strategies of representation. Throughout the chapter, the complex literariness of Yanique's book is carefully unpacked using a combination of peritextual, epitextual, and intertextual elements, all of which guide the close reading of three key scenes involving the female protagonists. These characters, Romdhani argues, are disturbingly mythologized by the narrators—hence, as the chapter makes clear, these women are the victims of a form of symbolic violence that the novel as a whole condemns.

Violence and War

Gender issues are also pervasive in the second section of the book, which focuses on violence and war. This is hardly surprising, considering the "staggering gender asymmetry" (Maleševic 275) of warfare throughout history: "despite a handful of exceptions," Sinisa Maleševic writes in *The Sociology of War and Violence* (2010), "battlefields have been and remain the exclusive arena of men" involved in fighting (275). On the other hand, as Sandra Ponzanesi points out, "women form the majority of casualties in war" (1-2). These general assessments have been nuanced by a number of studies that highlight women's participation and interventions in wars (e.g. Alexander and Hawkesworth) and that "contes[t] traditional stereotypes of women as perennial victims, perpetual peacemakers, or the embodiment of the nation that men seek to protect and defend" (Ponzanesi 3). Regardless of whether scholars emphasize women's status as victims, perpetrators, or agents of resistance, studies on war and gender inevitably view this relationship as "a complex puzzle that involves a number of different variables" (Maleševic 295), be they social, historical, or ideological.

While the chapters in this section inevitably mirror some of the positions in this ongoing debate, their purpose rather lies in examining how a focus on different forms of war-related violence as represented in the arts can contribute to understanding the manifestations, circulation, and perpetuation of this violence in the postcolonial world. War is here conceptualized in broad terms: while Véronique Bragard's and Neluka Silva's chapters deal with full-scale armed conflicts (in the DRC and Sri Lanka/Ceylon, respectively), Riaan Oppelt's contribution focuses on "turf wars" between gang members in South Africa. All three chapters at least partly focus on visual media, whether drama or film, which in turn results in particular attention devoted to issues of staging, boundaries, and space.

In the opening chapter of this section, Véronique Bragard analyses artistic adaptations of real-life testimonies given by women who have been the victims of sexual violence in the DRC's wars. In this context, Bragard examines American Lynn Nottage's play *Ruined* (2009), American Eve Ensler's chapter "A Teenage Girl's Guide to Surviving Sex Slavery" (from her book of dramatic monologues, *I Am an Emotional Creature*, 2010), and Belgian-Congolese Jenny Onya's dance-theatre testimonial performance *Elikya Na Ngai* (2016). Relying on the work of trauma scholar E. Ann Kaplan, among others, the chapter argues that ethical responses to staged or fictionalized violence should involve not only empathy with the victims but also a recognition, especially on the part of white western audiences, of their own complicity in the violence presented before their eyes. Following this line of argument, Bragard analyses how Nottage's, Ensler's, and Onya's works help or fail to position spectators/readers as such ethical witnesses. More specifically, she examines whether the performances and texts prompt audiences to reflect on the systemic violence that leads to the physical (mostly sexual) violence depicted in the works, and she concludes that Onya's creative mixture of theatre and dance most thought-provokingly meets this difficult challenge.

The next chapter, by Neluka Silva, examines two Sri Lankan plays: Delon Weerasinghe's *Thicker than Blood* (2006), which focuses on the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka (1983-2009), and Arun Welandawe-Prematilleke's *Only Soldiers* (2014), which is set on an airbase in Ceylon during the Second World War. Both plays explore the links between violence, war, and masculinity, through a focus on the figure of the soldier. Relying on a series of theoretical works, including by sociologist R.W. Connell and historian George L. Mosse, the chapter investigates how the plays challenge or reinforce hegemonic representations of masculinity that pervade popular consciousness. Silva first discusses *Thicker than Blood*, which

narrates physical violence on both sides of the Sri Lankan conflict and features an injured ex-soldier, Suresh, who questions the supposed ideals of masculinity that led him to join the military. The chapter then turns to *Only Soldiers*, showing how hegemonic masculine ideals are constructed, glorified, and perpetuated, mainly through displays of aggression and heterosexual activity by the four soldiers at the centre of the play. Silva concludes that, while neither play stages a disruption of hegemonic masculinity, both call attention to its problematic aspects.

Constructions of masculinity also play a role in the South African gangster films analysed in Riaan Oppelt's chapter, Ian Gabriel's *Four Corners* (2013) and Donovan Marsh's *Dollars and White Pipes* (2005), both of which are set in the areas surrounding Cape Town, collectively known as "The Cape." Oppelt's focus is on spatial and racial divisions, which find their origin in the history of the region. The chapter thus starts by discussing the colonial and apartheid policies that resulted in the displacement of black and "coloured" South Africans to an area known as the Cape Flats. In this poor and segregated area, gang violence rose in a bid to exert territorial control and developed into a network involving street gang members, prison gang members, and organized crime leaders. In his analysis of *Four Corners*, Oppelt shows how the structural violence that led to this situation is now perpetuated through what Bourdieu, in *The Logic of Practice* (1990), calls "habitus"—habits into which individuals are socialized—even when gang members attempt to escape the cycle of violence in which they are caught. A somewhat similar fate befalls the main character in *Dollars and White Pipes*, despite his attempt to move across different spaces—from the urban periphery to the city centre—in search of a better life. Ultimately, the chapter argues that *Four Corners* and *Dollars and White Pipes* can productively be analysed to shed light on the sociological factors that lead to the perpetuation of gang violence in the Cape, as these important structural components are often neglected when violent crime is reported in the mainstream media.

Violence on the Move

Movement and the restriction of movement have played an important part in sustaining colonialism. During the colonial period, people were transplanted to the Americas either by force (from Africa) or by deception (from the Indian subcontinent) to work the land and, especially in the case of the USA, to reproduce the labour force. This history has had a major impact on the contemporary world. As sociologist Mimi Sheller writes in *Mobility Justice: The Politics of Movement in an Age of Extremes* (2018), "the politics of mobility is deeply informed

by colonial histories, including histories of coerced mobility, labor exploitation, sexual economies of bodily abuse, and the violent movement of white settler-colonialism" (47). Yet Sheller notices that, paradoxically, "exclusions and impairments to mobility" are all too rarely "placed in the context of longer and often violent histories of patriarchy, racial domination, colonialism, sexism, and ableism" (46). The chapters in this final section examine this link between mobility and histories of oppression—an endeavour already undertaken earlier in this book by Riaan Oppelt's chapter above—but they also underscore the mobility and fluidity *of violence itself*.

The first chapter in this section, by Pietro Deandrea, discerns disturbing lines of continuity between extreme forms of violence, including the horrors that took place in Nazi concentration camps, the brutality meted out to political prisoners in African dictatorships, and the inhumane treatment of asylum seekers in contemporary Britain. Deandrea's point of departure in linking these temporally and geographically distant forms of violence is *The Bogus Woman* (2001), a play by white British writer Kay Adshead that recounts the story of a young African woman in a detention centre for asylum seekers in Britain. The play not only includes scenes of extreme psychological and physical violence that expose the hypocrisy of Britain's self-appointed status as a supposed democracy, but it also features specific narrative incidents, such as the protagonist's ripping of her own flesh or the recounting of invasive medical procedures, which take on a trope-like quality when confronted with similar descriptions in non-fictional writings about the Holocaust and about Nigerian prisons under military dictatorship. Deandrea conducts this analysis in light of Italian philosopher Simona Forti's theory of utopian and abject bodies, thus retracing a genealogy of violence that incorporates, but also goes beyond, traditional postcolonial studies, so as to apprehend the multifariousness of contemporary violence against migrants in the West.

In her analysis of Petina Gappah's *The Book of Memory* (2015), Laura Beck examines how Zimbabwe's history of colonial and anticolonial violence, intertwined with the remnants of precolonial social structures, has impacted the tragic family history of the book's protagonist, Memory. The novel takes the form of an autobiographical account written by Memory, who has been sentenced to death for the alleged murder of her white adoptive father. As the chapter shows, the narrative progressively reveals stories of individual and collective violence that resonate with each other. Like some of the other contributors in the book, Beck relies on Slavoj Žižek's distinction between "objective" and "subjective" violence to understand how violence

morphs from the systemic into the physical, but she also combines these reflections with a focus on the transmission of traumatic memory and, ultimately, on the possibility of healing. In this respect, Beck argues that the novel's examination of colonial violence and its aftermath loses some of its force with the inclusion of an ending that gestures towards redemption and reconciliation, but which does so in a way that may signal recolonization.

Histories of violence are also shown to repeat themselves—this time in a different location—in Delphine Munos's chapter on *Goat Days* (2008, translated from the Malayalam in 2012), a novel by Keralite writer Benyamin that fictionalizes the story of an Indian labourer, Najeeb, in Saudi Arabia. In the introduction to the chapter, Munos starts by contextualizing the kafala (sponsorship) system in the Gulf, which enables the hiring of migrant workers and the exploitation of their labour in conditions that have been compared to both slavery and indenture. Munos maintains that, in this context where physical and psychological violence operates at every level to oppress Indian labourers, there is a danger that fiction about these workers might quickly fall back on the stereotypes of the "hapless Indian victim" and the "bad Arab victimizer." Munos shows how Benyamin's *Goat Days* skilfully sidesteps this pitfall, and does so not just by proposing nuanced narrative content but also by using formal techniques, most notably the use of second-person ("you") forms of address, which the chapter analyses using M.M. Bakhtin's notion of addressivity. Benyamin's novel, by presenting an intimate account of the character's sacrifices and the hardship he endures, positions itself as a powerful intervention against a violent system fuelled by the financial desperation of its victims—itself a contemporary consequence of colonialism—and the greed of its victimizers.

The final chapter in the book, by Victoria Herche, connects colonial violence to contemporary land dispossession and environmental issues in Australia by focusing on Catriona McKenzie's film *Satellite Boy* (2012). Taking her cue from Rob Nixon's influential book *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (2011), Herche discusses the progressive destruction of the land by the mining industry in Australia, a devastation that is not only environmental but also cultural, as it concerns the ancestral lands of Australia's Indigenous inhabitants. The chapter zooms in on this violence as it is depicted in McKenzie's film, in which an Aboriginal boy and his grandfather are evicted from their home to make room for a mining site. While *Satellite Boy* has often been criticized for being politically elusive and overly aestheticizing, Herche in her analysis shows how some of the film's prominent visual and narrative elements serve a spiritual vision that deeply values Indigenous cultures, and that also

pays particular attention to how traditional voices can help younger generations of Indigenous Australians to navigate the modern world.

McKenzie's film makes no firm promises of a brighter future. Neither do the contributions to this book, which focus on the mutations of colonial violence rather than on strategies of healing or resistance. The chapters indeed examine the ways in which violence constantly moves and morphs in the contemporary world, and they also alert us to the dangers involved in narrating violence, thus collectively contributing to the gradual apprehension of this fluid system. As Lawrence and Karim remind us, "violence is always and everywhere process" (12). So, too, is the understanding of its narration in the postcolonial world.

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