

Introduction: Global Literature and Violent Conflicts

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In his magnum opus *Pale Blue Dot* (1994), the science writer Carl Sagan reflects on the eponymous object of his study, captured by Voyager 1, from some 6.5 billion kilometers away from planet Earth. At the request of Sagan, the NASA scientists warmed up the cameras of Voyager 1 for three hours on February 13, 1990, and turned the lens towards our solar system to take one last look at the object we have called our home for over 200,000 years. After snapping a series of “family photos” of our stellar siblings, in which the image of the Earth appears as a “pale blue dot,” 0.12 pixel in size, no more than a “mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam” (12), Voyager 1’s cameras were turned off forever, to conserve energy for the journey ahead into the unknown. The crew of Robert Sullivan’s “Star Waka” – in his book of poetry of the same name – are not as farsighted in comparison, as they run out of fuel on the interstellar highway, causing much nuisance to other cosmonauts in the orbit. It is indeed ironic that in Voyager 1’s Earth-saving mission that it needs to both consume and conserve the tapped energy from the same planet that is reeling from the excessive tapping of fossil fuels, something Sagan makes abundantly clear in his reading of the pale blue dot: “in our obscurity, in all this vastness, there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves” (13).

This inward gazing into the guts of humanity through the eyes of an object standing at the edges of our celestial bodies is indeed symbolic of the rift between two distinct ways of being human in the Anthropocene debates. Here, Sagan’s allusion to what Dipesh Chakrabarty would call the “nonontological” (13) ways of being human – a geophysical force capable of destroying the planet – is also complemented by the ontological struggles of the human:

Think of the endless cruelties visited by the inhabitants of one corner of this pixel on the scarcely distinguishable inhabitants of some other corner, how frequent their misunderstandings, how eager they are to kill one another, how fervent their hatreds. (Sagan 13)

For Chakrabarty, postcolonial criticism from Frantz Fanon to Homi Bhabha has reflected on the sense of “ontic being” (13) that human subjects are endowed with, through which anti-colonial and anti-oppressive ideologies were borne out, against the pixelated histories of Sagan’s imagery of the splintered, if not sliced Earth. In the wake of the Anthropocene, however, Chakrabarty makes a similar plea as Sagan, to think of both ontological and non-ontological ways of being human: a human endowed with history and culture, and a human that is a geophysical and force-like being on a par with asteroids, stellar debris, and star dust. As ennobling as it may be, this universalist gesture of (inter)planetary humanism is complicated by the crew of Sullivan’s *Star Waka* that is made up mostly of Māori and Pacific Islanders. Could one, for instance, suspend the injuries and injustices of the ontological struggles among humans in the face of a non-ontic threat to humanity as a whole? What if the very non-ontic incarnation of the human category is the product of the violence, historical inequalities, and injustices within and among the ontic humans? The fuel woes of *Star Waka* serve as a periodic reminder of this conundrum: “*Star Waka is a knife through time/ Star hangs on ears for night, defining light/ ear sounds of waka knifing time – aue, again*” (3).

It is the “knifing” metaphor that introduces the axiom of this special issue, namely, ‘violence’. But the violence averred here by the speaker of the poem is more than global, and certainly more than spatial. Instead, it is a temporal and historical knifing; of the very violence produced by the *slicing of the human* within its ontic history:

Just then the rocket runs out of fuel—
we didn’t have enough cash for a full tank—
so we drift into an orbit we cannot escape from
until a police escort vessel tows us back

and fines us the equivalent of the fiscal envelope
signed a hundred and fifty years ago. (Sullivan 7)

In her illuminating essay, aptly titled “A Knife through Time,” Chris Prentice reads these lines as the knife cutting through the lifeworld of the Māori. If the fine handed out to the Māori by the orbital police “cancels out the ‘fiscal envelope,’” that is, the settlement money offered by the National Party (which was rejected by the Māori) as a compensation for all the violation of the terms outlined in the Treaty of Waitangi, then the confiscation of the rocket ship allegorically represents the local government’s occupation of the Māori lands (Prentice 129). Given that

Star Waka's voyage into interstellar space is set in the year 2140, their drifting off into "an orbit they cannot escape from" speaks to the perdurance of the same colonial violence some 300 years after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi (ibid. 130).

The fact that Sullivan chooses to paint the violence visited upon the Māori in an interstellar space fortifies Chakrabarty's plea for thinking both ontic and non-ontic ways of being. In effect, if the ontological struggles of humans were not resolved before the non-ontological predicaments of the Anthropocene, there is every danger of them resurfacing once, if at all, we avert the Apocalypse – or at least that's what happens to the crew of the Star Waka who attempt an escape from, to use Sagan's words, "the endless cruelties visited by the inhabitants of one corner of this pixel on the scarcely distinguishable inhabitants of some other corner" (13).

The universalism, planetarianism, or even multi-verism masked under the Anthropocene often has the ennobling effect of rescuing or rehabilitating the "commons" at the expense of endlessly deferring the existing inequalities among humans. At least this is the grievance put forth by the developing countries since the Paris climate summit in 2016: 'the developed countries, having reaped the benefits of fossil fuels, now tell us to not use them.' Voyager 1 is trying to conserve the fuel for the future journey, and Star Waka is stuck in the past because it does not have sufficient cash to pay for a full tank. Any discourse on environmental justice is charged with the double function of not only contending with the violence inflicted by those from one corner of the 0.12 pixel-planet upon the other corner, but also the violence arising from the inequalities in power as well as resource distribution in the same pixelated corner/s of the globe, like the ongoing invasion of Ukraine by its mighty neighbor.

In an age of conspiracy theories, alternative facts' hermeneutics of suspicion, and post-truth discourses, this special issue aims – by zooming in from the various planetary, worldly, universalist, and humanist scales – to ground violence in global and local struggles. In recent literary criticism, particularly in the wake of the Anthropocene debates, terms such as 'planetary,' 'world,' or the 'global' have been marked as isonomic, if not immutable categories. Christian Moraru's conception of the planetary as "Weltanschauung [...] participating in a number of worlds and world orders while physically located in a particular polis" (127), for instance, is to be distinguished from the world that is made up of "previously disconnected or loosely connected regions [that] have brought closer together modernity's world en miettes" (124). By contrast, much

like in Chakrabarty, ‘globe’ remains an ontologically structured and organized category:

Once it has been brought under the regime of rational calculability as globe, largely on economic, administrative, and technological grounds – whether, once more, through truly occurring worldly developments such as neoimperial geopolitics and unification of financial markets or through rhetorical overadjudications – it is reduced ontologically and does not function as an endless space of qualitative leaps, as a playground of being any more. (ibid. 126)

There is also an implicit ethical hierarchy attributed to each of these conceptions in the emerging discourses on environmental humanities, with the welfare of the planet placed at the helm of the ethical discourse, the world in the middle, and the global and local at the bottom rung. This special issue takes stock of these hierarchies by uncovering the sites of their convergence and divergence: the divisive yet binding trajectories of universalizing and worlding the globe through violence that foreground political agency, nationalist and local aspirations, and myriad other ways of belonging to the planet.

However, in the wake of the epistemic ossification between world and the globe – not just of the planet – both literature and violence find themselves in a turf war between the material and the metaphysical, the spatial and the temporal, and substance and the sublime. Against the spatializing tendencies of the world, and its conflation with the global, Pheng Cheah posits temporality, *not* spatiality, as the normative force of the world. From Auerbach to Goethe to Marx to Arendt, Cheah finds that the conception of the world unfolds itself as a temporal category: “an inner history of mankind” which created a conception of man “unified in his [sic] multiplicity”; “a higher, nonalienated sociality beyond the commodity relations of bourgeois civil society” (Cheah 315, 316).

Although, as San Juan Jr. has identified, the post-9/11 responsive violence has embarked on a new era of the global sublime, with an endless supply of “shock and awe” (8) as promised by George W. Bush, the proponents of world literature have paid little or no attention to the affective scales of ‘violence’ that pervade our contemporary world order, be it the soft or slow violence of the other worlds in the name of a singular world, or the hard violence of normalizing, and normalizing the world in the name of exporting civilization or western democracy to the rest of the world. Instead, the ensuing genres of the ‘9/11 novel’ and ‘terrorism literature’ have confined themselves to questions of trauma, grief, and loss in the European, American, and the transatlantic cultural contexts, while

rendering the violence emanating from, and received by, the non-western world in the language of war, terrorism, or war on terrorism.

If Pheng Cheah's non-utilitarian, affective, and struggle-based conception of the world rekindles the "play of social forces" (315), I suggest that violence, especially the violence of non-state actors, functions as an intersectional, if not a binding agent between the world, global and planetary histories. My insistence on dwelling upon the term 'global' in the face of the alacrity with which 'universal' and 'planetary' violence have captured the public imagination, is not only shaped by the temporal significance associated with events such as the 9/11 attacks and decades-long wars in Afghanistan and Iraq which gained recognition as major "world historical" events (Lazarus 10-11) since the Second World War, but also by the strategic realignment of the world along the temporal scales of affects such as fear, security, threat, survival, resistance, and resilience as opposed to fixed geopolitical coordinates of nations, states, or contained cultures. Through this historical trajectory, the violence of non-state actors is valorized as a negative and extra-judicial phenomenon, although in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, this perspective has changed drastically, with the European states themselves actively supplying arms to civilians to fight an invading army.

There is, however, a glaring underhandedness in this regional solidarity expressed by the European nations to another European nation, which critics have called the "double standards" (Al Jazeera n.p.) of the West: the civil uprising in Ukraine seen as bona fide defense of the nation given its affinity to Europe both racially and geographically, whereas similar uprisings against the invading forces elsewhere – from colonial Algeria to present-day Yemen or Afghanistan – are unabashedly dubbed as terrorist or insurgent. The preferential treatment of the violence of non-state actors in the European hemisphere as politically legitimate extends to the core of the global outsourcing of unauthorized violence to the colonies in 19th-century colonialism. Following the French Revolution, the uses of terror by non-state actors were not only glorified but seen as a necessary deterrent violence to the tyrannies of the state. Once state terrorism had found its way into the mythic violence of the state, as an active arm of suppressing resistance under *Le Directoire* (1795-1799), the subsequent labelling of non-state actors, such as the Algerian nationalist revolutionaries, as terrorists, became a mere "reenactment of a historical precedent" (Lazreg 11) – the Reign of Terror. By labelling the colonial insurgents as terrorists, the French colonialists sought to mask their own historical effacement with terror(ism) by rebranding it as counter-terrorism (Erlenbusch-Anderson 93). After the fall of *Le Directoire* in

1799, the need to keep a safe distance from violence has not only resulted in the aestheticization of terror as a sublime object, to be reserved and preserved for such extraordinary events as the French Revolution where a complete overhaul of society could be envisioned, but also in the relocation of this object of terror into the colonial subject (Morton 37).

Frantz Fanon, however, was among the first anti-colonial critics to challenge such negative valorization of the colonial subject as an embodiment of terror—the object of the European sublime of violence. If colonialism itself “is violence in its natural state,” Fanon writes, “it will only yield when confronted with greater violence” (61). Such responsive character of violence, he argued, serves the colonized to redeem the unity and the dignity that was robbed of them. In declaring that violence is the “oxygen” of anti-colonial revolution or a “cleansing force” (94), far from advocating the sort of instrumentalist, utopic, or sovereign violence of the vulgarized Marxist doctrines, Fanon gestures towards the sublime’s cathartic yet transcendental character. Here, the idea of violence has a temporal, unifying, world-making, binding effect not just for colonial Algeria, but for the entire ‘wretched of the earth,’ which is best captured in Moira Fradinger’s notion of “binding violence,” (2-10) one that forges communal bonding between and among states and non-state actors. Likewise, Paul Staniland observes that in times of war and intense hostilities, “we see [...] shared sovereignty, collusion, spheres of influence, and tacit coexistence that blend state and non-state power, often alongside neighbouring areas of intense combat” (248).

Today, alongside the globalization of capital, there is also a global acculturation of violence through the free flow of arms trades, private armies, and an entire technical apparatus of vertical sovereignty (Weizman), that is, the controlling of territories through aerial surveillance, satellites, and drones. Since 9/11, there is a notable shift in the conception of violence from a thoroughly state or sovereign-centric perspective to the use of violence by non-state actors. As Joel Nickels argues in *World Literature and the Geography of Resistance* (2018), there exists “an entire world of territorially based struggles aimed at constructing forms of self-government outside of the state, maintaining power bases in sustained conflict with the state, or assembling organs of struggle that are state-dystonic” (2). Much the same way, Auritro Majumder’s recent work *Insurgent Imaginations: World Literature and the Periphery* (2021) demarcates the sites of insurgent humanism and its capacity to forge peripheral solidarities across India, the states of the former Soviet Union, Black America, Mexico, Vietnam, and China. These views are also echoed by Achille Mbembe’s (2003) and Arjun

Appadurai's (2006) theses on the borderless disposition of necropolitical networks enabled by the very free flow of capital and arms, cyber technologies, and communal imaginaries enabled by globalization.

While the debate on global literatures is receptive of the structural violence underlying these developments, it has not fully grasped the significance of armed violence in global literary circuits, including pulp fiction, war on terror films, the popularity of narco-violence in the over-the-top (OTT) media, and an entire genre of 9/11 fiction. For the most part, the debates on global literature have treated the texts and issues surrounding terrorism and insurgent violence as a genre of its own, which has been absorbed into various circuits of postcolonial, Anglo-American, and transatlantic criticism. The essays presented in this special issue aim to reinscribe violence into the global literature debate by situating it in the first order of structural violence.

The many proponents of world as well as global literatures read globalization as a structurally violent process; a center-periphery system of aesthetic and cultural value (Moretti 2004), or of “uneven developments” within a capitalist world-literary system, as theorized by the Warwick Research Collective (2015). A heuristic quest for reconfiguring the spatial coordinates of the “world” has been at the crux of concurrent discourses on ‘Globalit. Inc.’ (Baucom 2011), global Anglophone studies and Global South literatures. The proponents of global literature both interrogate and critique the homogenizing and universalistic tendencies of literary cultures enabled by the free market and capital (Radhakrishnan 2005; Huggan 2011) – and the suppression of vernacular letters as a result – the politics of postcolonial canon-formation (Mukherjee 2013; Menon 2016), and literary representations of speculative as well as recorded global events such as the climate crisis, the global financial meltdown, the war on terror, and indigenous struggles and movements in the Global North.

The notion of ‘globe’ in global literature has other heuristic and hermeneutic functions. If, for some, the ‘global’ in ‘global literature’ configures as an “impressionistic” circulation and exchange of letters, signs, social movements, and cultures with their protean quality (Gupta 3), for others, it involves “technologies of recognition” circulated by academic discourses that subsume but necessarily sublate global letters into the literary market itself (Shih 2004). For those skeptical of equating global with traveling figures, a cosmopolitan habitus, and hybrid cultural tropes, global literature becomes a conceptual grid that brings together both the homogenizing (‘centripetal’) and differentiating (‘centrifugal’) effects of global capital in the metropolis and its margins (Fehskens 3, 10).

While the allegorical as well as the spectral dimension of a planetary imagination becomes ever more relevant to the literature of the Anthropocene and postcolonial dystopic fictions, the proponents of Global South literatures redirect our attention to the fraught relationships between the Global North and the Global South (West-Pavlov 2018). Mukoma wa Ngũgĩ, for instance, argues for a south-south solidarity against the inertia of postcolonial triangulation of Asia, and Africa through Europe. Sudesh Mishra defines the Global South as “a sliding signifier” that corresponds to a set of aesthetics, worldviews, and spaces that are subject to hegemonic practices imparted by the colonial-imperial nexus and the forces of the free market, but also as the latter’s “most powerful antagonist” (54, 55).

These theoretical currents in global literature bear the potential for situating violence within these free-market antagonisms which, as Arjun Appadurai remarks, provide the non-state actors with an effective tool of political agency and community formation that has been denied to them under the previous regimes of the colonial-capitalism nexus. In what he calls the “fear of small numbers,” or the perceived fears of becoming a minority and the violence associated with it, is “intimately tied with the tensions produced for liberal social theory and its institutions by the faces of globalization” (84). In the face of predatory identities (i.e., one ethnic national identity) tied to capitalism and the formation of postcolonial identities, Appadurai argues that majorities fear becoming minorities, while minorities are always being produced through national and cultural borders. It is out of these “linked fears” that “globalization intensifies the possibility of this volatile morphing, so that the naturalness that all group identities seek and assume is perennially threatened by the abstract affinity of the very category of majority and minority” (Appadurai 83). In an overt clash of the “vertebral” (the old nationalist and ideological structures) and “cellular” social structures (local level, diversified, heterogeneous networks), the globalization of violence unfolds at both ends of the spectrum; the state and the non-state, the oppressor and oppressed, the military and the militants. The production of terrorists, environmentally precarious subjects, insurgents and jihadists in this sense is nothing more than “a metastasis of war” (Appadurai 92), in which the terrorists, insurgents, or all other non-state violent actors become soldiers detached from the nation.

Appadurai’s views have far-reaching implications for the literary texts examined in the essays presented in this special issue. By way of accounting for the clash of the vertebral and cellular structures creates the conditions of “small numbers” and the violence necessary to defend such

conditions, the essays featured here reject the discourses of ontological difference, or the Orientalist undertones associated with postcolonial violence, that postcolonial societies are inherently violent. In view of these intersectional as well as constellational inequalities brought forth by globalization, the essays further resist a neat categorization of the violence of perpetrators and the violence of victims, or the violence between two opposing corners of the pixelated planet, as in Sagan's apocalyptic imagery. Instead, they turn to the violence within the same pixel, which is often inherited by postcolonial states themselves and reapplied under the aegis of nation building, and to the constellations of new power networks in the guise of global discourses on the war on terror and energy security.

With an emphasis on the aesthetics of movement, mobility, texts, and art, however, literary criticism on globalization has remained immune to two other significant developments: the general spread of military culture on a global scale and the environmental aspects that shape discourses of energy security, violence, and terrorism. According to Barış Çoban, security and militarization are among the most potent yet underrecognized aspects of globalization, often overshadowed by the rhetoric of financial and capital flows: "the globalisation process refers to both the globalisation of violence and the monopolisation of violence via imperialistic power and its allies" (310). This holds practically true when the national states as well as the global actors delegitimize the violence used by non-state actors as terrorist. Against this, Çoban proposes a category of "global opposition" as a primarily class-based resistance found in the myriad anti-globalization, insurgent, and radical environmental movements, wherein "religion and nation [have] been overemphasised and put into service as new forms of dissidence" (317) and "used to legitimise anti-democratic interventions and violence inflicted on societies by local and the global power" (315).

If globalization is primarily linked to the flow of capital, goods, and technologies, such flow is also parallel to the informal globalization of crime, human trafficking, money laundering, and drugs. As Graeme Cheeseman notes, western states are increasingly using armed forces from the private and international markets "in the pursuit of domestic political and other interests, while civilian police, customs and security services are becoming increasingly armed, militarized and incorporated into national and international security structures and regimes" (44). According to Lorraine Elliott, these military security structures are inextricably linked to the war on terror doctrine and its attendant "energy security" discourse wherein the social and political conflicts in the postcolonial world are seen to be linked to "environmental decline" (73) and breed authoritarian and

unstable governments, which could then be subjected to discourses of global disciplining such as the war on terror, in the name of planetary welfare. The confluence of these discourses, especially planetary welfare in the face of nuclear threats, oil and gas interdependency in a globalized economy, and violent insurgency, has become evident in the ongoing standoff between Russia, Ukraine and the rest of the 'world.'

Similarly, against the liberal view that the violence of non-state actors is nihilistic and outside the realm of politics, Andreas Behnke argues, much like Appadurai, that terrorism, too, is part of modernity and a 'by-product of globalisation,' and

[t]o obscure this connection by de-politicising the violence of the global Partisan becomes an ideological and partisan, rather than analytical proposition. By rendering the violence globalisation engenders accidental and nihilistic, globalisation itself becomes absolved from any responsibility for the rising intensity of violence that accompanies this process. (312)

Literary texts, as the essays in this special issue suggest, are primed to unravel not only the partisan ideologies engendered by globalization, but also the violence accompanied by such ideologies.

Global violence, in this sense, means both the globalization of violence and the violation of the global commons, in which states, non-state actors, and other stakeholders develop a replicating pattern of using violence to defend their respective claims over nation, statehood, sovereignty, the world, and the planet. Not merely a divisive symptom of global inequalities, but by implication, global literature becomes an active site of forging new bonds and solidarities generated through violence among aggressors and victims alike. The task of literary criticism, then, is to find both existing and emerging patterns of global commons, without having to invent new ones, or reinscribe old patterns of overarching, oppressive, and colonizing humanisms and universalisms in the name of one world and one planet. Masao Miyoshi, for one, argues that:

Literature and literary studies now have one basis and goal: to nurture our common bonds to the planet to replace the imaginaries of exclusionist familialism, communitarianism, nation-hood, ethnic culture, regionalism, 'globalization', or even humanism, with the ideal of planetarianism. Once we accept this planet-based totality, we might for once agree in humility to devise a way to share with all the rest our only true public space and resource. (295-296)

While Miyoshi's call for a solidarity based on planetarianism is a salutatory one, it is prone to the same ideological follies of universalism

and humanism, as evinced in the civilizing mission of colonialism or the neoliberal ideologies of spreading a specific breed of democracy across the world through violence and militant action. Planetarianism engenders similar ideologies of saving the planet, even at the expense of colonizing other planets. The very parlance of “colonizing Mars” has been so deeply entrenched in the popular imagination that colonialism is seen as a humanist mission – on par with the civilizing mission – when done to an empty planet, even if such planet may inhabit microbial forms of life which are not recognized as political life. The essays in the special issue – spanning from Pakistan, Syria, India, the Middle East, New Zealand, and the UK to Nigeria – handle such emancipatory humanisms with care by turning attention not only to the violence of the inhabitants of one corner of the earth against those of another corner, but to the unresolved tensions within and among the societies inhabiting splintered corners of Sagan’s pixelated planet.

Shazia Sadaf’s “Benevolent Violence: Bombs, Aid, and Human Rights in Mohammad Hanif’s *Red Birds*” explores the complicity of liberal human rights discourses with the war on terror campaign. Through the political realist lens of Mohammad Hanif’s *Red Birds*, an otherwise irrealist novel laden with ghostly protagonists and animal characters, Sadaf analyses how such realism of fiction and the realism of politics are intertwined, especially in the war on terror, which mobilizes international aid, charity, and liberal humanism in the civilizational doctrines and benevolent humanism. Combined with militant force, the passive, at times parlaying violence forged in the name of aid and help in Hanif’s novel renders its characters almost worldless, with neoliberal dreams and visions infiltrating the temporalities of their worlds (Cheah)—the vernacular worlds of the Pakistani and the Middle Eastern cultures the novel represents.

Chijioke Onah’s “Remembering the Dead: Testimonial Narratives and the Politics of Memory in the Representation of Boko Haram Terrorism” employs a similar critique of global dissemination as well as consumption of postcolonial violence from Nigeria. Onah questions how a lion’s share of attention given to the concerns raised by the activist/advocacy group of #BringBackOurGirls, campaigning for the Chibok Girls kidnapped by Boko Haram in April 2014 fed into existing discourses on global violence that transpire forgone conclusions about Islamic terrorism and violence in Nigeria. Countering the arrogation of the complex causes and facets of violence in Nigeria with three survivor accounts, Onah uses the genre of testimony to register the competing yet conflicting memories that counteract the homogenizing, at times

Orientalist, impulses of global discourses on violence. Unlike the activist political discourses that unfold through “messages” about the conflict that construct a founding discourse of global memory, testimonies leave “traces” of other suppressed memories, such as the accounts and versions of the violence recounted by the kidnapped girls who cannot simply be reduced to victims or voiceless subalterns who cannot speak.

In capturing the subaltern voices at the receiving end of violence, Daniel O’Gorman’s essay “‘We’ve become the boogie men’: Islamophobia, Schlock Horror and ‘Radicalization’ in Omar El-Khairy and Nadia Latif’s *Homegrown*” exposes the masked racism of the very liberal discourses of multiculturalism. Focusing on the cancelled production of Omar El-Khairy and Nadia Latif’s experimental play *Homegrown*, which dispels the myths about Islamic radicalization in the West—the hyped representations of Muslim terrorists as figures of horror—in which audiences themselves play the role of shocked and exaggeratedly horrified characters. The fact that most members of the audience leave the play in the middle of the show, without having the knowledge of the full events, raises questions about the liberal humanist discourses that freeze the other—like the Muslim other—into a fixed and knowable position on the basis of partial knowledge. O’Gorman’s essay offers a compelling critique of such half-hearted humanisms and liberalisms, particularly British Islamophobia which is built on the abuses of such partial knowledge inherent in the cultural fabric of global Islam.

Elisabetta Marino’s essay “Counter-narratives of Global Terrorism in Sunjeev Sahota’s *Ours are the Streets* and Tabish Khair’s *Just Another Jihadi Jane*” turns to a similar disabuse of tainted liberal ideologies in the context of Syria and Afghanistan. Despite the vast geographical and cultural difference between Afghanistan and Syria, the protagonists of the two novels assume the collective identity as jihadists in their adopted home—England. Rather than legitimizing or delegitimizing the latter’s association with jihadists, Marino’s essay carefully covers the conditions of their diasporic subalternity, and their marginalized positioning outside of the civic domain—schools, labor markets, and the public sphere—that makes them susceptible to radical counter-ideologies which promise them a sense of identity, belonging, and agency.

Harshana Rambukwella’s “Turbulent Places: The Politics of ‘Framing’ Violence in Postcolonial Sri Lanka” complicates the liberal humanist pathos—as epitomized in the planetary rift into a pixelated conflict in Sagan’s imagery—that makes a neat distinction between perpetrators and victims, civilization and chaos, grievable and ungrievable life. He turns to the Sri Lankan civil war to argue that, in tune with the

global discourses on the South and North, the decades-long conflict has effectively (albeit incorrectly) framed the Tamils as the prime victims and the Sinhalese as the sole perpetrators. Drawing on Rothberg's notion of implicated subjects, Rambukwella reads two Sri Lankan novels which provide a more nuanced account of the agents of violence who do not fit into the neat categorization of victims and perpetrators. Instead, as Rambukwella's reading shows, the historical trajectory of Sri Lanka's class struggle, as evinced in two failed Marxist insurgencies between 1971 and 1989, reveal the complex configurations of internal hierarchies in which not only the Sinhalese but also segments of the Tamil communities are implicated in the island's civil war as *both* the aggressors and the victims.

Turning away from the pathologies of the liberal humanist discourse on violence, the second set of essays focuses on the counter-violence of non-state actors. Stephen Morton's "Narratives of Mourning in the Shadow of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act: State Violence and Contested Sovereignty in Contemporary South-Asian Writing" engages with the burgeoning corpus of insurgency texts from Kashmir and Northeast India. Far from constructing a discourse of violence in the liberal humanist parlance, Morton's essay uncovers how the latent sites of colonialism continue in the domains of law and governance structures of the Indian state that have systemically constructed an identity of the nation's internal Other. Morton reads his choice of literary texts as sites of "alternative militarized political sovereignty" in India that pose a daunting challenge to the nation's status quo, wherein hunger strike, active and passive insurgent action, sabotage, and collaboration become potent weapons of the weak.

Pavan Malreddy's "Militant Metaphors: Precarity and Violence in Niger Delta's Conflict Literature" examines the interrelationship between precarity and violence. Drawing on two texts set in the Niger Delta's oil insurgency, Malreddy's reading of the two sources—one featuring a fictional journalist, and the other a real-life journalist with a penchant for fictional devices—reveals how the global oil conglomerate influences the social and economic organization of the Niger Delta subjects at the local level, often in aspects of life that are not directly related to oil production. In what Malreddy calls 'militant metaphors,' his two texts under examination uncover the violence that is often glossed over by the oil conflict, the symptoms and symbols of the largest yet absent inequality crystallized into insurgency, and the absent metaphors that are laden with militancy: area boys, bookshops, urban gangs, ecology, and landscapes.

Geoffrey Rodoreda's "Of Blood and Terror in the Queen's Own Land: Violence and the Poetry of Lionel Fogarty" offers compelling poetic insights into the militant and insurgent metaphors of one of Australia's cherished indigenous poets. Fogarty's poetry, as Rodoreda's essay carefully unpacks, is replete with metaphors that bespeak multiple modalities of violence unleashed upon the indigenous populations: soft violence, systemic violence, and epistemic violence. Fogarty's poetry does not merely diagnose the pathologies of sovereign violence. On the contrary, it is equipped with an insurgent imagination that advocates, in a Fanonian sense, redemptive violence as a decolonial strategy—an antidote to the founding violence of the postcolonial state.

The eight essays featured in this issue offer a renewed perspective on the intersections of violence, literature, and various modes and modalities of the global commons. While the essays by Rambukwella, Sadaf, and O'Gorman launch a daunting critique of liberal humanism embedded into planetarity, the essays by Marino and Onah map the temporal coordinates of the 'world,' while demarcating their insurgent and agential capacities. Echoing this, the essays by Malreddy, Morton, and Rodoreda posit the discourses on violence at the intersections of the structural inequalities of the globe and vernacular modes of world-making among non-state actors. Taken together, 'Global Literature and Violence' works to register the multiple temporalities of the world that, in the words of Pheng Cheah, do not "violently destroy other worlds" (326).

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