Violence as a genre of urban life: Urban sustainability and (in)security in South African cities

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ABSTRACT

Focusing on the urban identity of South African cities, this paper considers the merit of adopting "genre knowledges" to understand how violence shapes urban sustainability. Genre and the metaphor of unconscious "muscle memories" allow scholars, urban planners, and development practitioners to understand violence in sociohistorical and situated ways, as a systemic impediment to urban sustainability. South African residents and state actors have themselves internalized genre knowledges of violence that develop through common norms and implicate individual and collective entities. Specific instances of violence reveal how, once incarnated, genres of violence live on through muscle memories, like a phantom limb. However, genre knowledges and their physical evocations are not path-dependent: by genuinely reckoning with violence as situated cognition, and understanding its sociohistorical drivers, new practices can emerge. To realize urban sustainability in South African cities, one must engage violence as a defining genre of urban life.

Introduction

What is the merit of adopting "genre knowledges" as a lens to understanding violence and its role in shaping urban sustainability in South African cities? In a groundbreaking and highly influential *reframing* of the concept of genre in rhetoric and communication, Miller (1984) defines genre as "typified actions in recurrent situations" (p. 151). Genre constitutes forms or styles of action that develop, over time, through agreed-upon norms or practices. This paper employs the metaphor of unconscious "muscle memories," defined as the physical manifestation of repeated, eventually internalized, actions; these phantom physical actions allow for an understanding of violence in its full sociohistorical and situated form, as a systemic impediment to urban sustainability. South African residents and state actors have internalized genre knowledges of violence that act as "situated cognition," defined as the links between psychology and action, knowledge and social norms (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1993, p. 475). To "write the world from Africa" (Mbembe & Nuttall, 2004, p. 348), one must account for violence as a defining genre of urban life. Enactments of violence in South Africa are differentiated: violence can be every day, structural, and spectacular in nature. But instances of violence recur, and are tragically typified. They are sedimentations of past practices and anticipations of future ones.

Although there are many ways to define and assess urban sustainability (Cobbinah & Addaney, 2019; Huang et al., 2015), this paper centrally considers the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #11, which provides indicators for achieving "Sustainable cities and communities." SDG #11 advances that member-states and city leaders "Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" ("Goal 11," 2020). *Safety*, or freedom from systemic violence, is a necessary precondition to achieving urban *sustainability*, even as the sustainability concept is multiplex and

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spans different policy spheres and timeframes (Deslatte & Swann, 2016, pp. 581–582). Indeed, when unbundling the sustainability concept, there is a "market" for urban interventions that can achieve sustainability goals at minimal cost and with minimal confrontations of political or social norms that may seem intractable. As in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, safety is fundamental to achieving sustainability; without safety (what to say of genuine freedom from violence), other aspects of sustainability are unattainable. Importantly, in global-governance institutions and among planners and urban-development practitioners, there is considerable effort across developing-world cities to create sustainable urbanization processes: by considering violence through genre knowledges and the metaphor of unconscious muscle memory, academics and urban planners can better realize sustainable cities.

This paper considers South African violence in the context of urban sustainability by leveraging the rich theoretical work on genre knowledge, and developing the metaphor of unconscious muscle memory. The paper proposes that South African residents, police, military, and state/political officials have internalized *genre knowledges* of violence that act as situated cognition, implicating individual action in social structures, and manifesting bodily and physical practices and philosophies of governance grounded in militarized violence and a rigid control of space (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1993). After decades of apartheid violence, one might expect that legacies of prior situated forms of violence have waned. This paper argues, by contrast, that these intrinsic responses are only growing in strength, further sedimenting as "natural" or "inevitable" South African responses to crisis. Today, urban residents and newly arrived immigrants increasingly join citizen groups and various arms of the state in typified instances of muscularized violence.

If "safety" is defined in terms of the elite, it can only serve at best as a partial answer to sustainability. Without a rich understanding of the lived experiences of people in the streets, interventions to promote "safety" can in fact produce deeper and more entrenched forms of structural violence. Paul James (2015) proposes a number of indicators for measuring "security and concord," which he argues are necessary sub-components to achieving urban sustainability (p. 154). Pieterse (2008), by contrast, proposes looking at local epistemologies of safety and violence, drawing on the voices and perspectives of affected communities. Yet any near-term framing of "urban safety" risks promoting solutions that are short-term mitigations (armed guards at gas stations, private security), and not long-term systemic understandings of the roots of violence as situated cognitive responses. Violence is the physical manifestation of sedimented practice in recurrent situations. It is a *genre* of urban life. This framing underscores solutions that require engaging socio-historical factors like norms and values.

It is increasingly difficult to "read" urban life in South African cities through lenses that do not include violence, which is driven by insecurity: physical, spiritual, and socioeconomic. Indeed, even as Mbembe and Nuttall (2004) argue that scholars must "defamiliarize commonsense readings of Africa" (p. 352), the very real legacies of violent state power and its responses persist, in what Landau (2010) calls "echoes and evocations" (p. 217). These legacies mutate in South African lived experience, with properties that depend on (1) spatial and economic *context*, (2) experiences in spiritual and psychological *consciousness*, and (3) figures of the subject resulting from proximate *crisis*. Once incarnated, responses to violence live on, like a ghost limb, in the minds and actions of ordinary South Africans and their state. It is difficult to "To write the world from Africa or to write Africa into the world" (Mbembe & Nuttall, 2004, p. 348) when one must write one's consciousness in and through violence. Efforts to achieve urban sustainability in South African cities must contend with violence as a defining genre of urban life. Even as manifestations of genre knowledge are contextually distinctive, this paper finds that postcolonial contexts in the so-called Global South that experienced past violences must contend with enduring muscle memories, forms, and practices of urban violence that impede sustainable living. Yet genre knowledges and their physical evocations are not path-dependent or pre-determined: with a genuine reckoning of violence as situated cognition, with social and historical drivers, new practices can emerge. Inherent to genre is the tension between stability and change.

This paper is structured around the themes of *context, consciousness, and crisis* to reveal how muscle memories of violence live on in ever-changing yet unmistakably reminiscent ways. It begins by problematizing my choice as the author to engage genre knowledges of violence in the South African context, home to cities like Johannesburg known for its violence in facile ways (like sensationalized media accounts). Indeed, muscle memories of violence are present, and distinct, in urban spaces the world over, even as South African cities provide a revelatory case. Next, the paper considers the theoretical terrain of genre knowledge, defining genre and showing its analytic value for understanding violence in South African life. The paper then analyzes contemporary cases: South Africa's COVID-19 response, Peter Jackson and Neill Blomkamp's 2009 film *District 9*, South Africa's 2008 xenophobic riots, and current Gender-Based Violence (GBV). The paper considers each case in turn, though one could consider numerous other historical and contemporary moments to test the paper's framework.[1] With genre knowledge as a theoretical tool, the paper explores three properties that emerge when violence is framed through genre knowledge: *context, consciousness, and crisis*. A discussion section examines the links between urban violence and urban sustainability, connects the South African urban context with other Global South urban contexts, and explores how my theorizing on genre knowledges of violence and the metaphor of unconscious muscle memory fits in with broader work on urban violence in developing countries. The paper concludes considering how South Africans might transcend the ghostly specter of a militarized violent society.

Why South African cities?

Given that distinct muscle memories of violence are present in most global cities, a reader might ask: why focus on South African cities? South African cities are generative because of their distinctive layered histories. For instance, in its 134 years as a city, Johannesburg has borne witness to settler colonialism, militarism, apartheid, and now neoliberal governance arrangements, all of which inflect memories and practices of violence in telling ways.[2] Moreover, in South Africa, there are currently genuine efforts by political leaders and governing coalitions to reconcile past injustices and transcend historical legacies of violence. Yet political unrest in July 2021, after the arrest of former President Jacob Zuma, speaks to specific physical recurrences of violence in South African cities that impede possibilities for urban sustainability. Genre knowledges offer a dialectic between universality and specificity, and intractability and malleability. Even as genres are typified through a sedimentation of many, repeated or recurrent events, individual moments are always different and ever-changing. Over time, the very contours of violence as a genre can change. Understanding the socio-historical variegations in violence as a genre of urban life in South African cities offers the potential for more transformative change, in the form of longer-term understandings of safety and structural urban sustainability.

Beyond South African cities, *African* cities have faced historical realities of imperialism, colonialism, economic underdevelopment, and structural adjustment, all of which come with legacies of violence (Mbembe & Roitman, 1995; Pred & Watts, 1992). Moreover, as Cobbinah and Addaney (2019) note, African cities today have a short timeframe to confront urgent issues of sustainable city management and resilience (pp. 9–10). At the same time, specific national histories and social contexts will lead to distinctive, situated genres of violence. This paper's analysis is confined to South African cities, but this approach to engaging violence as a genre of urban life holds relevance across the continent, and in contexts of the so-called Global North.

Academics, urban planners, and development practitioners need new ways to think about violence and its relation to everyday urban life and sustainability. Just as sustainability cannot be discrete, decontextualized, or measured solely by statistics or target indicators (Deslatte & Swann, 2016; James, 2015), scholars, urban planners, and development practitioners must consider urban violence and safety in a way that is recognizable and understood by people in cities. Understanding violence and its role in shaping urban sustainability in South African cities through genre knowledges affords scholars this opportunity. Violent incidents are not one-offs: they recur, and are connected to systemic and

structural wholes. Violence is typifiable, mapped onto collective memories and social norms. The fact that violent situations recur in South African cities reveals how genre knowledge manifests itself in unconscious "muscle memories," caught in a flux between mutation and historical sedimentation. Theorizing violence and safety in this way gives academics, planners, and practitioners a new set of conceptual lenses for thinking through both the causes of violence and solutions that advance urban sustainability.

Theoretical entryway: Genre knowledge as situated cognition

This paper defines genre as styles of action that develop, over time, through agreed-upon conventions. Our understanding of genre has advanced well beyond the structural attributes of literary form. In her groundbreaking 1984 article "Genre as Social Action," Miller fundamentally redefines genre as "typified actions" in "recurrent situations" (p. 151).[3] Recurrences need not be daily: spectacular violence that erupts annually or once a decade is connected with other, every day, and structural forms of violences, that collectively stitch together a typological quilt of violence as a genre of urban life. Berkenkotter and Huckin (1993) argue that genre knowledge is a form of situated cognition. Genres are typified in that they contain specific practices and conventions, yet nonetheless remain dynamic rhetorical forms, developed in response to repeated and recurrent circumstance. The Russian literary and cultural critic Mikhail Bahktin (1986), ever attentive to the basis of genre in social activity, speaks of genre in "Toward a Methodology of the Human Sciences" as "congealed events" (p. 165). Genre forms the basis for *crystallizations* of earlier social interactions, and informs subsequent interactions.

Genre offers analytic value for understanding violence in South Africa. Genres are conceptual and rhetorical heuristics, meaning that they condense and codify wide-ranging actions and responses. Violence in South Africa has taken place at the everyday, systemic, and spectacular levels, all of which were employed recursively by various actors: early colonial frontier Dutch and Huguenot settlers, the apartheid state, the ANC's armed wing (*uMkhonto we Sizwe*), and others. Genres also sanction appropriate or expected communication in communities of practice, and ease situated cognition, defined as the bridge between thinking/understanding and doing, here by urban residents in real time. Situated cognition means that knowing is inseparable from doing. Leveraging genre, repeated responses to and anticipation of violence promote, in turn, a more physical "muscle memory," which also has conventions and recurrent practices. Properties of genre include conventions in form and content, a tension between stability and change, situatedness and embeddedness in collective and community life, a duality of structure (genre both constitutes and reproduces social structures) and community norms and ownership (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1993, p. 475).

Reflecting on genre studies in the 30 years since her classic 1984 article, Miller (2015) argues that genre, as social action, lies at the nexus of intention and exigence, and form and substance (p. 67). Genres exist both as individual instantiations and as a socially negotiated set of broadly held norms and expectations. Genre knowledge of violence, and intrinsic or unconscious physical and psychological responses to it, can therefore situate individual acts or instantiations of violence within collective histories, state governmentalities, and memories. The cultures of hegemonic actors like the apartheid military-industrial apparatus may well have introduced specific genres of violence to South African society, and governmentalities of violence may remain one of the more overtly regularized expressions of technologized violence in South Africa today. But dynamic physical forms and substantive contents of violence have since taken on lives of their own, even as lived experiences of violence differ contextually across the country, and particularly in today's South African context of contested sovereignties (see Ashforth, 1998). Genre knowledge advances that human agency and social structure, far from being a dualism, are implicated in each other. Genres are both the generative medium and the resultant outcomes of social and communicative practices. In Jackson and Blomkamp's film *District 9*, violence even overtakes imaginaries of possible futures in South Africa. Indeed, when accepting the Jerusalem Prize in 1987 in the waning days of apartheid governance, South African author and public intellectual JM Coetzee said that apartheid governmentality

had led to "deformed and stunted relations between human beings … [and] a deformed and stunted inner life." On South African literature, Coetzee said: "[It] is a literature in bondage. It is a less than fully human literature. It is exactly the kind of literature you would expect [to see] … " given the context of large-scale imprisonment and everyday apartheid violence ("Coetzee, Getting Prize," 1987). In South Africa's April 2020 response to the COVID crisis, powerful actors reflexively turn to familiar forms and contents of violence as genres or repertoires of statecraft, even when they might be largely ill-suited.

Deeply ingrained genres of violence in South Africa that implicate individual actions within collective structures, and vice versa, take on a physical manifestation through a mechanism akin to "muscle memory." The repetition and internalization of actions lead to a form of procedural memory that requires little conscious effort. As such, muscle memory tends to automate actions and responses. Muscle memories are not unthinking, nor are they "cultural" or pathological: muscle memories are ready-in-hand responses to repeated prior and anticipated future acts of violence. If a young child learns to ride a bicycle at a young age, for instance, the physical repertoires of cycling can be sufficiently ingrained such that years later, that older child or young adult can easily ride a bike. Part of this muscle memory is physical: a latent knowledge of the bodily practices required to safely and expertly ride a bike. Another aspect lies in consciousness: an individual will have no fear mounting the bike, or turn to it instinctively for leisure or necessary transportation.

The "muscle memory" of violence is surely quite different from cycling. Committing or experiencing violence can be exceptionally traumatic physically and psychologically. Indeed, that very trauma ignites violence as a genre. Moreover, in South Africa, those who are able take extraordinary measures to *avoid* violence, for example, structuring the built environment of urban spaces around securitization and social-class differentiation.

There are many useful frameworks and approaches to studying urban violence: political economy, built form and political esthetics, partisan politics, and spiritual insecurity. This paper seeks neither to diminish these other valuable ways of "reading" violence in South African cities, nor to promote genre knowledges and physical repertoires or muscle memories as a totalizing or comprehensive frame. Rather, genre and muscle memory allow planning scholars and urban practitioners to understand violence as situated and sociohistorical, and as a systemic impediment to urban sustainability.

"Muscle memory" of South African violence is neither totalizing nor unified. Genre knowledges result from physical and psychological responses to repeated acts and anticipations of violence. But these knowledges are variegated, structured around spatial and socioeconomic *contexts* that give way to distinctive experiences in *consciousness*, and are ruptured by periodic and unpredictable *crisis*.

Four contemporary cases of South African urban violence

In July 2021, political unrest in Kwa-Zulu Natal and Gauteng Provinces in response to President Jacob Zuma's arrest sparked protests and the widespread raiding and looting of businesses in ways resembling the xenophobic violence of the last decade. And in response, President Ramaphosa's government called in South Africa's government the military to quell tensions and "restore order," recalling past military reactions to violence including South Africa's April 2020 COVID-19 response. If safety is seen as a precondition for urban sustainability in South African cities, then these recent events should give readers pause, as should the following four vignettes. These are not one-off, discrete acts of violence, but instantiations of typified actions, taking place in situations that recur in South African urban life.

Responding to the COVID-19 outbreak in late April 2020, over 70,000 South African military troops rolled through townships like Alexandra in what was then the country's largest military deployment since 1994 (a period that marked the end of the pacted transition from apartheid to liberal democracy). BBC reports indicate that middle-class South Africans were "sitting comfortably, while poor people [were] literally dying at the hands of the soldiers," referring to an incident in the Alexandra Township where over 10 soldiers were accused of brutally killing a man ("Coronavirus: South Africa," 2020). South African President and African National Congress (ANC) party leader Cyril Ramaphosa announced draconian bans on alcohol and cigarettes, citing

a range of public-health concerns from domestic violence to chronic respiratory effects. Provincial and local government officials subsequently revoked licenses for businesses that did not comply as local residents looted liquor stores or covertly visited underground shabeens, much as they had in apartheid days (Chothia, 2020; Rumney, 2020). U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet admonished South Africa for its response, saying burdens of lockdowns and curfews fell hardest on the poorest in South African society and that the approach was overall far too "heavy-handed" and "highly militarized" (Beavers, 2020). Bachelet and other South Africans in civil society questioned whether South Africa's punitive military response was appropriate for a public health crisis, while ANC party members and police were alleged to be involved in crimes related to illegal liquor operations and police brutality (Rumney, 2020).

South Africa's militarized response to COVID-19 evokes memories of apartheid-era governance and eerily resembles scenes from Jackson and Blomkamp's 2009 film *District 9* (2009), nominated for four academy awards. In this film, aliens have landed in Johannesburg and are being housed by force in an enclosed high-density zone known as District 9, their movements tracked and surveilled. *District 9* makes clear allusions to apartheid statecraft, including the large-scale forced relocation and dispossession of Black South Africans during apartheid from racially mixed zones (or "Grey Areas") to racially and ethnically homogenous zones (Townships and Bantustans). In the film, representatives from Multinational United (MNU), a large and privatized parastatal weapons manufacturer, enter the District 9 neighborhood with tanks and surveillance helicopters, equipped with weapons technology and older bureaucratic techniques, as a team of soldiers and bureaucrats led by protagonist Wikus van de Merwe attempt to issue eviction notices. Wikus and his team are issuing the summonses not to Black South Africans, but to the aliens, known barbarically as "Prawns" (Ebert, 2009). Writes Scott in a 2009 *New York Times* review: "[District 9 inverts] an axiomatic question of the U.F.O. genre. In place of the usual mystery—what are they going to do to us?—this movie poses a different kind of hypothetical puzzle. What would we do to them? The answer, derived from intimate knowledge of how we have treated one another for centuries, is not pretty."

Both the COVID-19 crisis and Blomkamp's fictional film also resemble what Landau calls the "violent orgy" that took place in 2008, also in Alexandra Township, when vigilante South African citizens murdered over 60 people and displaced well over 100,000 (Landau, 2010, p. 214). In the context of the xenophobic riots, Landau writes: "the government deployed armed forces to contain the violence . . . " refusing to name perpetrators and instead citing a mysterious "Third Force" (p. 214). Such actions built on state policy leading up to the riots. South Africa no longer controls its borders with electrified fences, for example, but has deported over 300,000 newcomers, mostly low-income migrants from elsewhere in southern Africa (p. 215).

Along with state and vigilante-citizen violence, Gender Based Violence (GBV) (violence associated with normative roles and inequalities between genders) remains "systemic, and deeply entrenched in institutions, cultures and traditions," according to the nonprofit Safer Spaces ("Gender-Based Violence," 2020). Indeed, Abrahams et al. (2009, 2014) have found that GBV in South Africa exists at some of the highest rates globally: in 2009, incidents of GBV in South Africa were five times the global rate, and homicide from intimate partner violence nationally was more than twice the rate than in the United States. Despite a prominent recognition of gender equality in South Africa's constitution and in South African human rights discourses, Sideris (2005) argues that social norms and historical legacies of gender roles lead to an inability for South African men to recognize women as "independent [entities] who cannot be controlled or forced to be or do what [men] want" (p. 100). Reihling (2020) proposes that South African masculine invulnerability is a "social assemblage," with material fodder based in historical memory and social norms, and through embedded ethnographic work in Cape Town finds that historical vestiges of "manhood" remain intimately tied to the violent struggles against colonialism, militarism, and apartheid (pp. 12–13). In her ethnography following migrant women in

Johannesburg, Kihato (2013) considers the potent intersection of xenophobia and GBV, finding that both the city's everyday public-built environment and intimate spaces can be lethal for migrant women and require intense and prudent navigation.

In each of these four cases, violence is distinctive in its immediate enactment even as socio-historical situatedness leads to reverberations and mutations of violence in eerie, perhaps even predictable, ways. Indeed, when considering violence as a genre of urban life, structure and agency merge to shape both physical spaces and human emotions. Bremner (2004) writes on post-apartheid Johannesburg and argues that "terror fuses with the figure of the criminal" to create new built environments of "increasing privatisation and enclosure of space" (p. 455), represented through the motifs of the criminal, boundary wall, and house. Studying places like Johannesburg, Calcutta, and other "Southern" cities, Roy argues (2016), is essential to creating "new geographies of theory" that can ultimately inform "a plurality of different concepts of the urban" rather than "universal grammars" that have traditionally foregrounded North Atlantic urban contexts (pp. 207–208; p. 202). As such, when studying broad theoretical concepts like violence and urban sustainability, it is essential to engage the distinctive and historically freighted contexts of Southern geographies like those of South African cities, allowing scholars and practitioners, in the words of Watson (2009, p. 2259) to "see from the South" and develop planning paradigms and systems with appropriate contexts and populations in mind. Genre knowledges of violence allow scholars and practitioners to consider contemporary problems with an eye to history and memory, ensuring that appropriate technical and policy responses transcend Eurocentric universalizing and remain grounded in structural conceptions of violence in local, embedded ways (Roy, 2017, pp. 32–35).

Contexts of "muscle memory": Genre through social and economic geography

Local *contexts* determine variegated enactments of and responses to violence, meaning that violence impedes urban sustainability in local and contextually grounded ways. Consider necklacing (throwing a burning rubber tire around an enemy, painfully burning them to death): it was interchangeably employed by Black South Africans in the ANC, the rival Zulu Nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), and the apartheid state, one against the other. Necklacing reemerged in xenophobic attacks in 2008, this time against perceived outsiders, and periodically is used in acts of "angry vigilante mobs" aimed at suspected "criminal elements" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2001; Hickel, 2014, p. 105). Nomoyi and Schurink (1998) examine necklacing in three townships outside of Port Elizabeth, and find that the social-action genre of necklacing remains "ready at hand" in the repertoire of violence, but is deployed in context-specific situations with specific meanings. Today, this means that necklacing, as a genre of violence, is more often practiced by perceived "sons of the soil" against perceived outsiders.

Other enactments of violence are situated by race and class. Chance (2015) examines the material politics of *fire* in shack settlements outside of Durban, arguing that fire was a central material weapon "from below" of the ANC's armed wing, *uMkhonto we Sizwe*. Fire, today, remains central in South African politics "from below." It is what Chance calls an "unruly force" in service delivery and street protests, citizen blockades, and xenophobic riots (Chance, 2015, p. 396). At the same time, the very same struggle songs (like *Amandla Awethu!)* and militarized dances (*toyi-toying)* that once galvanized *uMkhonto we Sizwe* and the ANC Youth movements have now been reappropriated as freedom chants and political rallying cries in South Africa's unequal society. Conflicts and violence over the informal use of electricity and electrification have also led to destructive fires in townships, and to the fortification and surveillance of electricity infrastructure in response (Chance, 2015). The material politics of fire are contextually suited to high-density and precarious Township life. Genres can be taken up in ways that suit the interests and purposes of users and audiences.

Evoking the grotesque, genres of violence in *District 9* are deliberately embodied. The transformation of the film's protagonist, Wikus, is a case in point. He loses fingernails and watches his body mutate in real time and even tries to cut off his own hand in a disgusting scene of self-mutilation. Jackson and Blomkamp portray the Nigerians living in District 9 as fascinated with *muthi* (witchcraft),

carnal cannibalism, and inter-species prostitution. "The grotesque" in these contexts offers a confrontation with one's own body, changing relationships to violence from distant to intimate. Perhaps unintentionally, *District 9* as a popular film serves as a media-technical apparatus that reinforces and morphs genre knowledges in the specific context of South African sci-fi and horror film.

A distinctive contextual variegation of South African violence pertains to immigrant populations as they experience xenophobia. Landau and Pampalone (2018) find in their book *I want to Go Home Forever* that both new immigrants and longtime South African residents are shaped by violence as they seek to craft a life in the country: many immigrants yearn to return home even if it means foregoing material economic benefits. In a review, Diko (2020) argues that failures and "disappointments" of South African post-apartheid development have given way to conflict, as cities and public-sector entities fail their residents (p. 2). The film *Vaya* (Omotoso, 2016) considers domestic rural-to-urban migration, integrating a gender lens into questions of everyday violence and belonging. The film's narratives of new Johannesburg arrivals employ technologies of violence ranging from bodily and economic exploitation, to vitriol, to the violence of anonymity and invisibility in the fast-paced metropolis.

Just as violence in everyday life is experientially distinct for new arrivals in Johannesburg, South African women navigate their city expertly aware of GBV and the ways in which patriarchy limits their rights to the city (Beebeejaun, 2017, p. 323). Indeed, Beebeejaun argues that gender is a neglected lens through which scholars analyze everyday urban life. Norms and practices over time lead to the sedimentation of gender roles, which are then normalized even as domestic violence and violence against women are framed as "family matters," separate from state and citizen violence (p. 323). GBV pervades public and private spaces distinctively, situating cognitive and muscle-memory responses from women and men.

Legacies of militarized violence look radically different in consumer-driven hip gathering spaces in South African districts of Woodstock/Observatory, Braamfontein/Maboneng, or what Nuttall (2004, p. 368) calls "Y Culture" in Rosebank, or in a fortified suburb. Writes Dirsuweit (2002), wealthier residents have long been aware of crime and violence—both the everyday and spectacular—and have structured their built environments accordingly (see Caldeira, 1996, on fortified enclaves). Indeed, fortification in South Africa began decades before the end of apartheid, alongside the forced relocation of Black South Africans through the Group Areas Act, and is not limited to wealthier suburbs. Consider the notorious (once) luxurious Ponte City Apartment complex, built as a securitized island complete with a "full battery of watchmen" guarding the building 24/7 ("Ponte: The Tallest Residential Building in Africa," 1975, p. 35). Wealthier South Africans have since moved to suburbs with increasingly privatized infrastructures, relying on militarized gates, private security staff, weapons, and surveillance technologies. These wealthier, more often White, and politically connected South Africans have largely been spared the spectacular violence and police brutality to which lower-income and immigrant South Africans are routinely subjected. Yet their daily movements and routines have "had a considerable effect on the form and usage of [Johannesburg]," furthering racial segregation and creating fractured private spaces, not a single urban *public* (Dirsuweit, 2002, p. 3). The private-security industry is a case in point. Fear and avoidance, participation in ancillary bureaucracies, or the direct labor of working on new punitive surveillance instruments are likewise key touchpoints in building genres of violence. Such genres rely on fear, generating a self-preservation reaction or survivalist mentality; they generate a "muscle memory" of action and response that fuels ongoing spirals of violence. When South Africa hosted the World Cup in 2010, it engaged a mix of nearly 50,000 supplemental public and private security staff who conducted particularly draconian oversight.

Low-income South Africans have leveraged unruly and unpredictable genres of violence, leading to an experience of urban life that combines Pieterse's (2008) repertoires of experimentation and extemporaneity with longstanding community knowledge of a violent and unequal governmental regime. By contrast, weapons and responses to violence for wealthier South African seem more regularized and formal. State and military deployments use both cutting-edge technologies (as in *District 9)* and apartheid-esque biopolitical strategies (as in the state's COVID-19 response). The

historical sedimentation of genres of violence across contexts leads to a muscle memory that can prompt, and indeed automate, fear and responses. The safety that urban sustainability requires is difficult to achieve when violent pasts continue to echo in South Africa's state apparatus and in conditioned responses of city residents.

Consciousness: Violence and situated cognition

Repeated experiences of situated violence seep into consciousness, shaping subjectivities. Narratives of urban "problems," and solutions to them (like the broad vision for urban sustainability) are *socially constructed* and framed, by a media-technical apparatus, and by histories and stories told in cities and families (Barbehön et al., 2015, p. 236). Barbehön et al. argue that "problem discourses [in cities] . . . are embedded in the sociopolitical context in which they appear, and thus in social power figurations" (p. 237). The ways actors frame "urban problems" can be multiple, so different stakeholders view and understand violence, an urban problem, in different ways. Yet understandings and enactments of violence impede a common notion of sustainable urban living. Moreover, these experiences in consciousness are tied to power, meaning that genre knowledges of violence seep into consciousness in very *political* ways. Arendt (1970) argues that violence can also be tied to sociopolitical contexts where there are vacuums in legitimate and socially negotiated power (pp. 36–37).

Militarized violence is, like genre itself, a form of situated cognition. South Africa sought to degrade and diminish citizens of color in a White supremacist hierarchy of worth, knowledge, and perceived intelligence (see Prah, 1999). To take seriously Dlamini's claims (2009) that violence has grown more unpredictable and severe for many South Africans, this may serve as key evidence explaining curious forms of *nostalgia* for apartheid and the past that are embraced by South Africans of varied racial and economic groups, and ideological affiliations. Lower-income South Africans supporting the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) might reflect fondly on the days of the ANC's Freedom Charter and socialist politics, and advance that they preferred the apartheid regime to the invisible enemy of neoliberal inequality today. Wealthier White South Africans might reflect on the safety and ease of life of past days. Dlamini argues that nostalgic memories often engage "law and order" or "anxiety about what has gone on in post-apartheid South Africa" (p. 156). In the Mandela and Mbeki years, brutal governmental practices of top-down violence gave way to terms like retrenchment, downsizing, and neoliberal privatization, which have resulted in economic restructuring that increased precarity for many. Nostalgia seeks a past where there was racial clarity, a clear enemy, and social class solidarity, at least within racial groups.

New forms of violence morph familiar genres in unexpected ways, and jumble norms around community ownership and social relations. Echoes and collective traumas have led to what Ashforth (1998) calls "spiritual insecurity." Writing on *Inkosi ya Manzi* in Soweto (Zulu for "King of the Waters," or royal snake), Ashforth argues that contested sovereignties have led to dueling regimes of meaning-making. Knowledges of secular geography, traditional witchcraft, and various theologies (from mainline mission Christianity to new and growing denominations like Pentecostalism) all provide compelling yet distinct explanations for daily misfortune. Residents rely on a mixture of explanations for events depending on local moments, much like the formation of the township argot language *Iscamtho* (see Ashforth, 2002, p. 211). Ashforth's findings echo scholarship by Davis (2020) connecting *shifting territorialities of sovereignty* with violence and cartelization in contemporary Latin America (pp. 206–207).

Constant forces uprooting and then re-sedimenting identities naturally lead to ambiguous strategies of meaning-making and of understanding one's own identity. In *District 9*, for instance, Wikus continues to loathe the Prawns, even as it becomes increasingly clear he is becoming one. He deliriously alternates between trusting the sovereign authorities of MNU and other White South Africans (notably, his wife), and trusting Christopher, the intellectual and scientific mind of the aliens as their relationship grows during the film from accidental acquaintance to partnership. These forces of ambiguity in consciousness can lead to unconscious repetition of violent tropes, epistemologies, or

actions. Mandela was able to unite the country precisely by *transcending* the familiar scripts and repertoires of violence: he projected identity openness (or ambivalence), and consequent rejection of apartheid methods of violence. Even in his clothing and mannerisms, Mandela eschewed genres of expectations for a national leader, giving him the potential to envision new genres of South African political and cultural life.

Kwaito is a genre of music that grew in popularity as the nation transitioned from apartheid to liberal democracy, combining house music with African sounds and track samples. Kwaito is typically played at slow tempo and includes catchy melodies and loops. Steingo (2016, p. 214) argues that Kwaito calls for a "promise of freedom," and an esthetic future vision that might transcend everyday anxieties, promising instead a copacetic nonchalance and *freedom from violence*. Yet the vision advanced in Kwaito music has not been realized on the ground in post-apartheid South Africa. Writes Steingo: "Systematic, top-down violence [during apartheid] has given way to a type of violence that is fluid, decentralized, and to some extent 'invisible'" (p. 214). Indeed, even nonprofessional Kwaito musicians themselves must "protect their equipment and performing music for hours each day" (p. 214). Steingo argues that the *apparition* of democracy is in fact performed through Kwaito. Yet the promise of Kwaito, argues Steingo, is "at once illusory and necessary—necessary, in fact, because it is illusory" (p. 220). Even as South Africans are haunted by a specter of what *has been*, and the knowledge of what *is now*, there is freedom in the promise of what *could be*. Responding to Mbembe and Nuttall (2004), scholars must consider reading South African urban life through Kwaito alongside spaces and social forms like "The Zone" shopping mall in Rosebank, with private security guards present at every turn. Just as Watts (2005) argues that a reading of the African metropolis would be incomplete without an engagement of political economy, so too would our reading be incomplete without considering genre knowledges and "muscle-memory" responses to violence.

Genres of violence socialize subjectivity. The typified actions of violence in their recurrent situations create and reaffirm cultural beliefs and values. Media-technical narratives and framing of South African "urban problems" (its cities' violence, its lack of sustainable urban living) seep into consciousness and inform everyday urban life. As such, genres of violence signal a community's norms, the grounds of knowledge, ideology, and social being.

Violence and crisis: Rupture or regularity?

Sedimented identities and meanings, centrally shaped by violence, periodically re-constitute themselves in anticipation of and in response to crisis. Everyday perception of and response to crisis, not merely crisis itself, constitutes a critical dimension of urban sustainability. Mbembe and Roitman (1995) argue that "the crisis [is] a constitutive site of particular forms of subjectivity" and that perceptions of crisis are decisively inherent to the "generalized production of violence in the world today" (p. 323). Mbembe and Roitman write in the context of Duala, Cameroon, as the country faced massive austerity and social and economic restructuring at the hands of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). This "Structural Adjustment" led to large-scale layoffs of former civil servants and public officials. Well-heeled academics soon found themselves moonlighting as taxi drivers, and cash crops like cocoa, lumber, and cotton struggled suddenly as they were subjected to world-market prices. There is a "stupor associated with terror" and that "by relegating the crisis to the realm of the inexplicable, people likely simultaneously circumscribe a field of both constraints and possible, reasonable, and legitimate action" (p. 325). Such is the experience of stalled modernity in Cameroon. "Fear, and the laughter it provokes, are often an effect on the ambiguity of lived experience: one is subject to violence and yet, often in spite of oneself, one participates in its very production" (p. 351).

What is the figure of the South African, then, in times of crisis? South African *crises* have been so thoroughly normalized that experiences of reality have long been fractured, with some South Africans living in constructed and often racialized sanctuaries. Yet crises nonetheless offer the potential of a spectacularly violent *rupture* with uneven and irrational effects, the specter of which haunts the

potential for urban sustainability even when crisis is not at hand. Although the Alexandra Township is no more than a 10-minute drive from the heart of Sandton, a wealthy Johannesburg suburb, Sandton was not significantly affected by the xenophobic pogroms of 2008 or police brutality in the government's COVID response. White South Africans may not see or witness spectacular state violence or popular violence, but an increasing media-technical regime of securitization, surveillance, and self-isolation shapes the elite subject around crisis nonetheless. In a notable scene in *District 9*, Wikus comes home for a surprise birthday party in the (presumably) largely White Johannesburg suburbs. The space seems to exist as an island of calm in a sea of militarized uncertainty. Yet crisis emerges suddenly when Wikus publicly exhibits elements of his transformation into an alien. For a brief set of scenes, there is a rupture: designed as distant witnesses *to* crisis, these suburban spaces have now become spaces *of* crisis. Notably, this is a moment when there is rupture in the film's genre as well: previous scenes were shot in docu-realist style; at this moment, the viewers enter Wikus' wobbly subjective experience, with more experimental-psychological cinematography.

Privileged enclaves the world over have experienced a similar rupture in the COVID-19 crisis, as one's perceived experience of technoscientific modernity is shattered with a realization that life could indeed be precarious. But, notably, South African military deployments are taking place in townships, and *not* in wealthier areas. For lower-income South Africans, militarized COVID lockdowns have been nearly quotidian, with predictably porous and fluid exceptions made, as in the case of the police-run illegal liquor operations (Rumney, 2020). Notes Robinson (1996), governance through alternatively rigid and porous means, varying across geography and race, was also a hallmark of the apartheid regime.

Experiences of crisis lead to new and distinctive subjects. Gondola (2009) writes on *young Bills* in Kinshasa, comparing them to Sophiatown's *Tsotsis*, young people in Johannesburg who sought an identity by existing just beyond the grasp of formal or state authority, with "existential troubles of an irresolute and rootless [existence]" who turned to Hollywood-sponsored Western film as a marker of intimidating identity (pp. 75–76). Subcultures like these emerge in the context of trauma. When formal pathways to identity-creation seem nonexistent, subjects resort to acts of "doubling" or fakeness, themselves constitutive of everyday violence (Mbembe & Roitman, 1995, p. 340); acts of collective signification like the *Tsotsis* or Bills in the 1960s allowed young people to embrace "lore, heroism, and exceptionalism" when conventional heroes were not to be found (Gondola, 2009, pp. 76–77).

South African gangs have long existed in this context of everyday and militarized violence, perhaps as a countervailing force or, in the spirit of Mbembe and Roitman's "doubling," as a violent force of their own. Prison gangs like The Numbers Gang, for example, have operated in and through South African prisons since the 1800s; in the context of Ramaphosa's COVID lockdown, write Prinsloo and Bax (2020), gang leaders represented by "The Council" called a rare truce and helped state entities with service delivery, providing low-income residents with disinfectants in their jurisdictions. Such a truce speaks to the current crisis as exceptional from a daily reality of physical violence and economic insecurity.

Yet experiences of crisis, and responses to it, have also given way in South Africa and elsewhere to alternative logics and realities, ways of doing business, and subjectivities of existence. Muscle memories of how to impose top-down violence of military governance, and of making the state *ungovernable*, are pervasive in South Africa, both during and after crisis. But these muscle memories are only partial: even within crises, alternative actions and practices exist. Crisis leads to a mutated reworking of everyday life, just as genres that combine stability and change are inevitably slightly out of step with themselves. Tensions abound as these everyday mutated existences, formed by collective resident practices, butt up against top-down processes. In the context of urban violence, these tensions mean that top-down responses to violence can be misaligned with embodied experiences of violence on the ground. One such example is the formal "slum upgrading" process, which Pieterse (2008) describes as hopelessly naïve as it meets the "both atomized and organized survival practices of the poor" (p. 120). Pieterse notes that individual responses to broad-based experiences of governmentality are

"contradictory and elusive ... especially in unregularized and underserviced areas" (p. 120). And Simone's concept of *worlding* (2002) looks at distinctive efforts by African residents to maintain local ties and roots while developing global networks that are themselves fleeting, extemporaneous, and contingent (p. 36). *Worlding* efforts act as responses by residents to neoliberal globalization advanced by "formal" Global North economies from above. Moreover, specific subjectivities and characteristics inherent to *worlding* practice—like the need for spontaneity and a willingness to always be making plans—emerge from chronic crisis. Muscle memories in response to *everyday* violence have themselves grown normalized, routinized, regular. But new crises throw in unpredictability, and *spectacular* violence is always a threat. South Africans thus act, and prepare to act, in ways that might on the surface seem "inchoate ... unsystematic, chaotic, and inconclusive" (Mbembe & Roitman, 1995, p. 349). One tangible South African genre of urban violence resulting from Simonian *worlding* practice involves fear and anticipation of immigrants' economic gains, and violent reactions in the form of xenophobic pogroms. These actions, anticipations, and the stupor associated with crisis all impede sustainable urban environments, which require fundamental safety for newcomers and long-time residents.

Crises, then, can affect city residents' consciousness and can be a bridge between *spectacular* and *everyday* violence, disrupting normalized regimes of accepting or adapting to genres of situated violence. In specific moments of crisis, *protests* are also a way of naming a genre and giving voice to something that has not been voiced. Activism around GBV in South Africa, for instance, names and frames the issues when structural dynamics of patriarchy would otherwise have gone unnamed. Yet the specter of crisis exists constantly, and unevenly, at all times. And in such crises, genres of violence morph. Crisis can serve as the exigence for morphed if not new genres.

Discussion: Urban violence and sustainability in South Africa and the Global South

This paper opens by way of inquiry: what is the merit of adopting "genre knowledges" as a lens to understand violence and its role in shaping urban sustainability? It finds that genre and the metaphor of unconscious "muscle memories" allow scholars and urban-planning practitioners to understand violence in a properly sociohistorical and situated way, as a systemic impediment to urban sustainability. Violence, when understood as an internalized genre of urban life that acts as situated cognition, impedes urban sustainability specifically by colonizing the psyche of South African urban residents. There is no simple answer for how it does so, given that subjective experiences of violence in South African cities, as violence's associated genres, vary by *context*, experiences in *consciousness*, and anticipations of and responses to *crisis*. Yet in its many forms and mutations, violence as a genre of urban life prevents South Africans of all backgrounds from feeling urban safety, and accordingly prevents sustainable urban planning and design. In the realm of land-use planning, as but one example, wealthier White South Africans' *fear of violence* continues to prevent the construction of economically integrated, higher-density, transit-friendly neighborhoods in cities like Johannesburg. Instead, fortified enclaves with private security further entrench routines and repertoires of violence.

Treating violence as a *genre* of urban life complements related scholarly work on violence in Global South contexts. Following work by scholars like Moncada (2013) and Davis (2020), looking at violence as a genre of urban life can help problematize relationships between local actors (the police, residents of different racial or ethnic backgrounds) and historical and transnational forces (past experiences of structural adjustment, current unequal dynamics of globalization). Moreover, Roy (2016) notes that so-called Global South countries are distinctive in their genres and muscle memories of violence, in that "postcolonial" places have typically experienced historical violences that endure in memory and consciousness. By leveraging genre knowledges toward understanding violence, and practices of individual and collective muscle memory in response to those genres, scholars and urban-planning practitioners can view violence as distinctively sociohistorical and situated, across developing-country contexts. For example, Salahub et al. (2019) examine repertoires of violence common the world over, noting local differences. Owusu et al. (2019) engages repertoires of violence in Ghana and find

a "poverty penalty" with regard to violent crimes, where lower-income residents are more likely victims of crimes and where higher-income residents are protected by police (p. 41). Here, crimes like armed robbery are present alongside a crime-prevention apparatus—complete with bribes in request for service—that forecloses sustainable urban living in different ways (p. 41). In India, by contrast, Mahadevia and Desai (2019) advance that late liberal planning interventions seeking to "world-class" Indian cities may instead cause dispossession and experiences of structural violence, producing distinctive genres of protest and what Benjamin (2008) calls an informal "occupancy urbanism" (p. 177). Experiences of violence, both interpersonal and institutional, ground at times amorphous arrangements of political economy and power through habituated responses to recurrent events. These "muscles memories" of and in response to violence impede urban sustainability much as past and ongoing trauma prevents sustainable personal living.

Drawing on genre, academics, urban planners, and development practitioners can understand violence as impeding urban sustainability. Such a framing is important because planners and urban-development practitioners are undertaking considerable effort in South African cities and across the developing world to realize urban sustainability. Taking seriously violence as a genre of urban life allows for a view of violence as a systematic impediment to South African cities' achieving urban sustainability. In turn, achieving sustainable urban life requires confronting spatial and psychological demons of violence.

Conclusion: Transcending genres of violence

This paper has drawn on four cases of violence in South Africa—the 2008 xenophobic riots, Jackson and Blomkamp's 2009 film *District 9*, the 2020 COVID-19 South Africa lockdown, and GBV in South Africa—to develop the concept "genres of violence" and counter-conducts and resistances to violence that may themselves be violent (e.g., making South Africa *ungovernable)*. Across each of these contemporary cases, South Africans experience a distinctive brute militarization through violence. Violence does not just regularly move top-down but is "all around." Examples include gangs, petty pickpocket thieves, violent social movements, brutal wings of the South African Police Services (SAPS), activists wielding fire, South Africa's army, or everyday markers and monuments of past violence, like the Voortrekker Monument or Johannesburg's military-history museum. Wealthier South Africans try as they might to isolate themselves from violence, and the legacies of such hyper-differentiation are etched into cities' built environments. But their technologized isolation is itself inhumanely violent. Many cannot bear the experience and seek to leave the country altogether.

Longstanding state governmentalities and societal counter-conducts together developed guardrails and communal cultures around violence. These genres, in a South African urban context, lead to repertoires of anticipation and action that impede sustainable urban living, even as they are largely unconscious. Genres of violence continue to mutate but are only growing in strength, particularly as non-state actors increasingly couple or complement various state acts of muscularized violence. As such, any project of "[writing] the world from an African metropolis" like Johannesburg, as Mbembe and Nuttall (2004) propose, must contend with these significant experiences of situated violence and their distinct form, content, and norms of community ownership. A project of reading South African cities through genres of violence speaks not just to apartheid violence, but to long legacies of military, colonial, apartheid, and now neoliberal governance regimes as they employ sedimented practices and familiar repertoires of statecraft.

Yet reading South African cities through genre knowledges of violence is not a simple task because *context*—spatial, socioeconomic, racial—significantly structures variegated experiences of violence. As repertoires and norms of violence touch down in differentiated ways, they form distinctive and dynamic experiences in *consciousness* that may range from engaging in violence as a part of identity formation, to wholesale avoidance and paranoia of possible violence. Yet regimes of "muscle memory" break down in moments of *crisis*, when genre knowledges are rejiggered in new, unpredictable ways. Anticipation of or response to crisis shapes genre knowledge of violence as much as everyday experiences themselves do.

Therefore, the frame of genre knowledges becomes generative in examining links between urban violence and its role in preventing urban sustainability: urban violence inscribes structural forces of inequality in bodily and physical practices, seen in muscle memories. Although the South African urban context is unique, other Global South urban contexts share experiences of structural global violences and their enduring legacies. Examining genre knowledges of violence and the metaphor of unconscious muscle memory complements scholarly work on urban violence in developing country contexts because muscle memories of and in response to violence are tangible manifestations connecting local social relations and transnational forces.

If South Africa and other developing countries hope to transcend the ghostly specter of militarized violent society, might that path lie in taking variegations in violence's constitution seriously? If there is a space for mutating or bending South African genre knowledges of violence in directions that can promote more sustainable urban living for all residents, cities (Johannesburg in particular) offer promise. Bollens (2007, p. 229) considers how urban spaces can transcend nationalist or group-based practices because in high-density urban spaces there is "negotiation over, and clarification of, abstract concepts such as democracy, fairness, and tolerance." In South African cities, violent actions and responses of situated cognition butt up against others' humanity and lived experience. If genre can reflect the possibility of residents getting along with each other, or just getting used to each other, despite different contextual understandings of the city, different perceptions in consciousness, and different experiences of crisis, then as academics, planners, and development officials, we should be more optimistic about what Johannesburg can represent: an alternative genre of inclusive and sustainable urban living.

A reader might then ask *how*, specifically, academics, practitioners, and residents can promote and practice this alternative, sustainable genre of urban life? Genres emerge out of everyday lived experience. Genre knowledges represent a sedimentation of practices, and new practices can serve as counter-weights to muscle memories of violence. Leaders should consider the role of storytelling and narrative in shaping typified and recurrent ways residents understand and live their city. As stories and frames gain traction, they gain commonality and a scent. Then, leaders (formal and informal) must *live* their aspired imaginary in daily interactions and bodily and physical practices. Urban sustainability, in short, is an alternative genre. To genuinely achieve it, city residents and government officials must live and interact with others according to its ideals.

Ongoing South African crises are wholly different depending on where one lives, and on one's race or class. Yet legacies of violence are a nightmare for all and impede any ability for South African cities to be truly livable or sustainable. But merely understanding the causes of current unsustainable violence will be insufficient to boldly enacting new practices of inclusion that can eventually promote urban sustainability. *New* narratives, imaginaries, and daily practices must reinforce and enact nonviolent urban life across context and consciousness, and even (and especially) in times of crisis.

There is reason for hope: South African cities and Johannesburg in particular have the potential and political will to structurally transcend genres of violence. Inherent to South Africa's story and identity are histories, legacies, and muscle memories of violence, but so too is the idea that its cities, like Johannesburg, are sites of possibility and (re)negotiation. Achieving urban sustainability in South Africa seems ever elusive, even as its cities are dynamic, always at the cusp of something new. Genres are dynamic rhetorical forms, and are always undergoing change in response to the needs and aspirations of communities of practice. Genres can morph, new genres can emerge, and even muscles can be retrained.

Notes

1. Examples include: political unrest following the arrest of former South African president Jacob Zuma, followed by the raiding/looting of shops and the government calling in South Africa's military; former Bantustan cities in South Africa that regularly see service-delivery protests about piped water or educational supplies; recent student movements that successfully advocated that *#RhodesMustFall* and later *#ZumaMustFall*, themselves building on historical student movements in Soweto. Likewise, fictional literary, cinematic, and artistic accounts of post-apartheid South African subjectivities are intimately tied into situated violence (strong examples are found in the work of J. M. Coetzee).

2. This paper's use of the term *neoliberal* in describing post-apartheid South African governing arrangements is informed by a wide literature spanning anthropology, political-economy, and international-development scholarship. The 1990s in South Africa were marked by widespread retrenchment, corporate and state restructuring, deunionization, and new social assistance programs. See Ferguson (2007), Peet (2002), and Schneider (2003) for three theoretical accountings of neoliberal governance arrangements in South Africa.

3. In more recent work, Miller (2017) considers genre innovation—the formation of *new* genres—through productive engagement with paradigms of "emergence" and "evolution" (p. 7). Emergence, in this context, involves an entity "arising" out of a related, preexisting state while being irreducible to that state. Evolution, as both a biological and socio-historical process, involves "diachronic relatedness and synchronic variation" that combines elements or variables (p. 7).

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Disclosure statement

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