



Justice and Reconciliation in World Politics

Calls for justice and reconciliation in response to political catastrophes are widespread in contemporary world politics. What implications do these normative strivings have in relation to colonial injustice? Examining cases of colonial war, genocide, forced sexual labor, forcible incorporation, and dispossession, Lu demonstrates that international practices of justice and reconciliation have historically suffered from, and continue to reflect, colonial, statist, and other structural biases. The continued reproduction of structural injustice and alienation in modern domestic, international, and transnational orders generates contemporary duties of redress. How should we think about the responsibility of contemporary agents to address colonial structural injustices, and what implications follow for the transformation of international and transnational orders? Redressing the structural injustices implicated in or produced by colonial politics requires strategies of decolonization, decentering, and disalienation that go beyond interactional practices of justice and reconciliation, beyond victims and perpetrators, and beyond a statist world order.

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For Lorenz

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Prelude

The Dream of Astyanax's Nurse* (circa thirteenth century BCE)

The dream is the same every time.

With Astyanax clinging to her neck, she is on one of the city's high towers, surrounded by Achaean soldiers. Some have fear in their eyes, others, indifference. Or maybe just the weariness of war. She gazes searchingly at each of them, specimens of shattered humanity. She threatens and curses. She glares. Pleads. Cries. Begs.

It's of no use.

Astyanax is the only one affected, and his wailing pierces the battlements. Then, the soldiers close in. Overwhelming her with their fists and sweat, they pry Astyanax from her grasp. What has this infant ever done to them, other than be the son of Hector? How could this poor babe frighten anyone – he who was so afraid of his father's plumed helmet and spear that he could only hide in his nurse's bosom?

She lunges for him, but catches only his last wail. And then he is thrown –

These high and steep walls that were meant to protect! His cry is no more.

"O what a nurse am I!" she wails.

Who did it? Was it the son of Achilles, or Odysseus? Or was it Calchas, the prophet? Who gave the orders? Later, it was rumored that Astyanax leapt off the walls by himself. If only that were so.

In the dream, there is no time to settle accounts. She watches in horror as the priceless treasure, falling, dissolves. Then the world

* In Greek mythology, Astyanax, "protector of the city," was the infant son of the Trojan warrior Hector and Andromache. During the sack of Troy, the Achaeans (Greeks) threw Astyanax off the high battlements of the city to avoid the possibility of future revenge. See Homer, *The Iliad of Homer*, trans. Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 6.390–502; and Euripides, *The Trojan Women*, trans. Nicholas Rudall (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1999). Thanks to Saleema Nawaz Webster for her editorial assistance with this prelude.

dissolves – the soldiers, the towers, the city’s walls – all fall away, their ashes scattering far and wide.

Only, the nurse remains, amidst a lonely vault of sand. O calamity! Is nothing left? As she peers upwards through the dense cloud of dust, a voice breaks through. Could it be Andromache?

“Dig, and look for the gems,” the voice commands.

“Impossible!” she cries, grasping at the boundless sea of sand.

Always, at this point, the nurse is startled awake. There is sand underneath her fingernails. Did she see gleams, or was that part of the dream?

“Come,” she says, struggling to stand. “We must dig.”