

## Introduction

How we think about violence has changed throughout time. Consider the category ‘domestic violence’. In Colonial America the horrors of wife-beating were categorized as ‘wife-disciplining’. With the exception of Puritan law, corporal discipline of one’s spouse was, tragically, considered a legitimate means by which a husband exercised his authority and ‘chastised’ his wife.<sup>1</sup> The application of the term ‘violence’, with its negatively charged overtones, to the act of ‘wife-disciplining’ would have been considered a confusion of categories for many husbands. Americans considered wife-disciplining to be part of the husband’s legitimate ‘regime of mastery’ that he exercised over his wife. Corporal punishment was his prerogative.<sup>2</sup> Heather Duerre Humann points out that even with the eventual criminalization of spousal abuse the conceptual category ‘domestic violence’ hardly received mention in literature on the family and the ‘theorization of the family’ until the 1980s.<sup>3</sup> In early America, even after tort reform, beating one’s wife fell into the category of illicit forms of wife-disciplining, and not into a super-category called violence.

<sup>1</sup> Venessa Garcia, ‘Domestic Violence, Sociology of’, in *The Social History of Crime and Punishment in America: An Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1 (ed. Wilbur R. Miller; London: Sage, 2012), 482–486; Heather Duerre Humann, *Domestic Abuse in the Novels of African American Women: A Critical Study* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2014), 10–11.

<sup>2</sup> Reva B. Siegel, ‘“The Rule of Love”: Wife Beating as Prerogative and Privacy’, *Yale Law Journal* 8/2 (1996): 2117–2207 [2142].

<sup>3</sup> The same is the case for related terms such as ‘domestic abuse, spousal abuse, wife-beating’, and so on. Duerre Humann, *Domestic Abuse*; Teresa de Lauretis, ‘The Violence of Rhetoric: Considerations on Representation and Gender’, *Semiotica* 54/1–2 (1985): 11–32, repr. Teresa De Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film, and Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 31–51 [30].

The category ‘domestic violence’ eventually followed the reduction of the category ‘disciplining’ (and ‘correcting’ or ‘chastising’) and many years later the expansion of violence into a category that included beating one’s wife.<sup>4</sup>

As Philip Dwyer notes, studies of violence struggle to define the parameters of ‘violence’ because the concept exhibits plasticity through time.<sup>5</sup> As we look at how earlier cultures conceptualized violence, we observe the ‘inflation’ and deflation of the concept of violence in a given historical milieu. That gives us critical angles from which to investigate historic and contemporary meanings of violence. This ‘inflation’ of the concept of violence, as Dwyer calls it, highlights a phenomenon that scholars of the Hebrew Bible might consider. By observing the inflation, or broadening of the category ‘violence’ through time, we are able to think beyond conventional construals to other culturally specific constructions of violence. If the concept of violence has undergone expansion in recent memory, it is quite likely that conceptions of what constitutes violence have undergone inflation (and deflation) as we look back at biblical texts.

This book focuses on the question of how various biblical writers conceptualized and represented acts that they deemed problematically violent within their own varied cultural linguistic milieux.<sup>6</sup> It considers the poetics of violence that different biblical writers used to represent acts of problematic violence.<sup>7</sup> It asks, What did biblical writers include or exclude from representations of those acts?<sup>8</sup> Where did they allow the ‘camera’ to focus and why? Such questions shift our inquiry from, What is violent in the Bible? toward, How did biblical writers represent and conceptualize acts

<sup>4</sup> For a historical survey, see Siegel, ‘The Rule of Love’; Ruth H. Bloch, ‘The American Revolution, Wife Beating, and the Emergent Value of Privacy’, *Early American Studies* 5/2 (2007): 223–251. Before the categorization ‘domestic violence’, excessive violence was considered ‘cruelty’ in the late nineteenth century (Siegel, ‘The Rule of Love’, 2134).

<sup>5</sup> Philip Dwyer, ‘Violence and its Histories: Meanings, Methods, Problems’, *Hist. Theory* 56/4 (2017): 7–22 [11].

<sup>6</sup> David A. Lambert, *How Repentance Became Biblical: Judaism, Christianity, and the Interpretation of Scripture* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 7.

<sup>7</sup> Thanks to David Lambert, personal correspondence 02/03/2019, for helping me frame this issue.

<sup>8</sup> Dwyer, ‘Violence’, 15. Here Dwyer makes the helpful observation that ‘transgression, or perceived transgression, is key to defining violence’ in such cultural terms. Similarly, Francisca Loetz argues that violence is ‘boundary crossing action’. It both threatens and ‘consolidates [the social order] ... by provoking the sanctioning of boundary transgressions’ (Francisca Loetz, *A New Approach to the History of Violence: ‘Sexual Assault’ and ‘Sexual Abuse’ in Europe, 1500–1850* [Leiden: Brill, 2015], 3).

that they considered problematically violent?<sup>9</sup> Such questions lead me to consider conceptions of violence in the Hebrew Bible that might be understood differently from a modern perspective. As John Goldingay observes, ‘Insofar as the Bible is concerned about violence, its framework for talking about it differs from the [modern] Western one.’<sup>10</sup> This difference, or rather *differences*, is what I seek to explore in this book.<sup>11</sup>

## POINTS OF ENTRY

A guiding premise of this study is that discussions of violence in the Hebrew Bible need to allow for the text’s own descriptive categories, for its own cultural linguistic framings of the category ‘violence’, and for the unique cluster of features that encompass the ‘problem of violence’ from the perspectives of biblical writers. This kind of framing, as David Lambert argues, ‘allows [the Hebrew Bible] to address anew matters currently dominated by “immediate interests”’.<sup>12</sup> Chief among those immediate interests are ethical concerns. While I consider it important to wrestle ethically with passages in which God is the agent or initiator of violent acts, it is also methodologically important to distinguish between

<sup>9</sup> Dwyer, ‘Violence’, 15. Dwyer also notes the problem of historians only seeing what others may have wanted us to see. Thus, there is also a legitimate place for using the analytical tools at our disposal to assign labels where none may have existed. But it is important to acknowledge and be aware of exactly what we are doing. We need to acknowledge the ‘cultural and historical contingency’ of violence ‘while simultaneously acknowledging its ubiquity’ (16).

<sup>10</sup> John Goldingay, *Do We Need the New Testament? Letting the Old Testament Speak for Itself* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015), 150. Goldingay’s specific concern is accepted (i.e., divine) vs. rejected (i.e., human) violence. One might also observe with de Lauretis that ‘the subject of violence is always, by definition, masculine’, an observation perhaps relevant to the Hebrew Bible (*Technologies of Gender*, 43).

<sup>11</sup> I recognize the immense range of discussions about violence in contemporary literature. However, I nonetheless maintain that in general, biblical writers are not always talking about the same kind of problem that modern scholars working in the fields of sociology, political science, psychology, and legal and criminal law posit regarding contemporary Western society. Overlap between ancient and modern conceptions exists, to be sure, but consistent patterns of representation reflect the particular cultural and theological world of ancient Israel. Kristen E. Mclean and Catherine Panter-Brick, ‘Violence, Structural and Interpersonal’, in *The International Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, Vol. 12 (ed. Hilary Callan; Chichester: Wiley, 2018), 6368–6375. The standard delineation of violence is between self-directed, interpersonal, and structural violence, though other typologies like ethnic, gendered, and class-based notions are also discussed. Cf. Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois, eds, *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004).

<sup>12</sup> Lambert, *How Repentance Became Biblical*, 7.

(legitimate) modern concerns about violence and the portrayals and critiques of violence at work in the Hebrew Bible itself. Biblical conceptions of the problem of violence cannot be taken for granted, but should be investigated from the ‘ground up’.

But which texts do I select for analysis if biblical writers might have operated with categorically different notions of violence, or lacked such a category altogether? I focus my study on texts where most interpreters agree that biblical writers are critiquing violence. These texts often include morally laden terms typically related to violence, especially *חַמַּס* and *שֹׁפֵךְ + דָּם*,<sup>13</sup> though on several occasions other contextual indicators guide my analysis. Those linguistic or contextual indicators provide points of entry for probing how biblical writers construct violence (as a problem), and what alternatives or possibilities might exist for understanding them. They allow for a thicker etic description of the cultural assumptions, representational priorities, and values that best make sense of the way biblical writers condemn violence.<sup>14</sup> They also allow us to ask whether our conception of violence aligns with or differs from ancient conceptions.

For example, my first chapter analyses the shedding of Cain’s blood, which most interpreters agree is an act that the biblical writer considers problematically violent. From there I investigate how Genesis represents the problem of Cain’s shed blood, and highlight potential variances with some modern constructions of the ‘problem of violence’. Analysing the poetics of violence in Genesis 4 enables us to articulate those variances, and to begin to build a picture of ecological constructions of shed blood. To this extent my book is a study of violence as *they* saw it.

My somewhat simple point of departure, therefore, borrowing from anthropologist Anna Wierzbicka, is

the old insight that the meanings of words from different cultures don’t match (even if they are artificially matched, *faute de mieux*, by the dictionaries), that they reflect and pass on ways of living and ways of thinking characteristic of a given society (or speech community) and that they provide priceless clues to the understanding of culture.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix I for an analysis of these terms.

<sup>14</sup> Clifford Geertz, “From the Native’s Point of View”: On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding’, *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 28/1 (1974): 26–45 [29]; Geertz is elsewhere (rightly) critical of emic approaches that wrongly equate an interpretation of a native point of view with the view itself (*The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (London: Fontana Press, 1973), 15).

<sup>15</sup> Anna Wierzbicka, *Oxford Studies in Anthropological Linguistics: Understanding Cultures through Their Key Words: English, Russian, Polish, German, and Japanese*

As Wierzbicka points out, study of culture via key concepts (like violence) is not an atomistic enterprise. Instead, one looks at such concepts ‘as focal points around which entire cultural domains are organized’.<sup>16</sup> In other words, terms for violence embed assumptions about the nature of reality, about social identities, and about divine–human relationships. The task before us, then, is to interpret biblical writers’ portrayals of violence and to organize those portrayals in a way that makes sense of them.

Yet we might still run into a chicken and egg situation because we lack – from the beginning – the assurance that ancient conceptions of violence bear any resemblance to our own. And even modern concepts of what constitutes violence have their own range of meanings, from the strict sense of coercive acts intended to inflict bodily harm to verbal violence and bullying, and then from personal to structural and cultural concepts of violence.<sup>17</sup> Thus we run the risk of anachronistically projecting modern conceptions of violence onto ancient terminology, and then re-presenting ancient texts in modern terms. This is an unavoidable problem, especially when studying the ancient world. Nevertheless, this potential danger does not leave us in a stalemate. Biblical terms translated ‘violence’ or ‘bloodshed’ have a sufficiently large lexical stock to give us plenty of contextual clues with which to work out a more complex and rich understanding of how biblical writers portrayed and conceptualized the problem of violence. The very fact that we translate specific terms as ‘violence’ or ‘bloodshed’ enables us to test whether they, in context, sustain the conceptual designations we bring to the text. We can then suggest a basic degree of overlap as a heuristic starting point to be tested, nuanced, and re-evaluated in the course of the study.

Key terms that interpreters normally associate with violence need to be set in relation to other prevailing motifs, narrative themes, behaviours, and values, and all of these in connection to their literary and rhetorical representation. In her sociological study of values, Ethel Albert provides a helpful example of a culturally specific assessment that does just this:

Values do not emerge in experience as sharply separated, unitary standards, each self-contained in its monadic independence from other coexisting values. Instead,

(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 4; Farzad Sharifian, *Cultural Conceptualisations and Language: Theoretical Framework and Applications* (Philadelphia, NL: John Benjamins, 2011); John B. Carroll, ed., *Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1956).

<sup>16</sup> Wierzbicka, *Oxford Studies in Anthropological Linguistics*, 16–17.

<sup>17</sup> Fritz Graf, ‘Violence’, *EncRel*, 2nd ed., 14:9595–9600.

the actual content and boundaries of any particular value will be affected by its changing relations to other values. [O]ne group or society . . . may conceive of ‘freedom’ only within the limits set by commitment to a principle of submission to a hierarchical order of authority; in another society, freedom is closely tied to equalitarian values. The two societies will not experience the same ‘freedom’.<sup>18</sup>

Analogously, we can observe that violence was perceived and experienced as problematic according to differing cultural values and conceptions, and was portrayed in culturally specific terms. Biblical writers portrayed violence as a problem, and they did so using the language provided by values like ritual purity, ecological harmony, moral character, or justice. Insofar as biblical writers describe violence in conjunction with those values, and insofar as they do so with relative frequency, unique cultural constellations take shape, just as atoms from different elements might bond in different configurations to form different chemicals. My study suggests, therefore, that while biblical writers represented physical acts of violence and brutality that humans commonly experience, they did not all construct or interpret that violent experience in the exact same way that we might. They experienced and thus portrayed violence differently – according to different patterns of representation.

#### TOWARD A LITERARY AND CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEM OF VIOLENCE

Scholarship on violence in the Hebrew Bible varies widely. To one side stand approaches to the biblical text that hold *ethical* concerns firmly in hand. Such studies treat the text as an ethical problem to be understood or resolved.<sup>19</sup> Toward that end, studies in this category employ strategies of acceptance or resistance toward the text.<sup>20</sup> In this arena, Phyllis Trible’s

<sup>18</sup> Ethel M. Albert, ‘Values’, in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 16 (ed. David L. Sills; London/New York: Macmillan Company & The Free Press, 1968), 283–291 [286].

<sup>19</sup> The concern over violence in the Bible reaches back to the early second century, and continued in earnest in the modern period. Christian Hofreiter, *Making Sense of Old Testament Genocide: Christian Interpretations of Herem Passages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Thomas R. Ellsner, *Josua und seine Kriege in jüdischer und christlicher Rezeptionsgeschichte* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 2008).

<sup>20</sup> Jonneke Bekkenkamp and Yvonne Sherwood, eds, *Sanctified Aggression: Legacies of Biblical and Post-Biblical Vocabularies of Violence* (JSOTSup 400; London: T&T Clark, 2003); Eric A. Seibert, *The Violence of Scripture: Overcoming the Old Testament’s Troubling Legacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012); Jerome F. D. Creach, *Violence in Scripture* (Interpretation: Resources for the Use of Scripture in the Church; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013); Joel N. Lohr, *Chosen and Unchosen*:

*Texts of Terror* (1984) has made the most significant impact. Trible brought feminist and rhetorical perspectives to the problem of violent texts, and reflected theologically on misogyny and violence against women in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>21</sup> Others, like Regina Schwartz (*The Curse of Cain*, 1997),<sup>22</sup> have made broader claims about the violent legacy of biblical monotheism.<sup>23</sup> Eric Seibert (*The Violence of Scripture*, 2012), and more recently, Gregory Boyd (*Crucifixion of the Warrior God*, 2017), with others apply ethical critique to violence in the Hebrew Bible as a whole, while still others, in the wake of 9/11 and the rise of the ‘New Atheists’, take a more defensive or apologetic posture.<sup>24</sup>

To another side sit studies that apply particular theoretical approaches to the text in order to explain biblical violence from a *historical* or *cultural* perspective. Interpreters might apply the anthropological insights of Clifford Geertz, the historical insights of Walter Burkert, or the philosophical theory of René Girard, in order to explain the socio-religious or cultural *function* of violence.<sup>25</sup> Within the field of biblical studies, interpreters have investigated the socio-religious logic of violent acts, and how a particular belief structure might provide sanction for acts of violence. They attend to what Scarpati and Pina call ‘normative’ violence – violence

*Conceptions of Election in the Pentateuch and Jewish-Christian Interpretation* (Siphrut, 2; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009); cf. the two-volume treatment of violence in the Hebrew Bible by Gregory Boyd, *The Crucifixion of the Warrior God*, 2 Vols (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017).

<sup>21</sup> Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (OBT; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984). Cf. John J. Collins, ‘The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence’, *JBL* 122/1 (2003): 3–21; Gerd Lüdemann, *The Unholy in Holy Scripture: The Dark Side of the Bible* (tr. John Bowden; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997).

<sup>22</sup> Regina Schwartz, *The Curse of Cain: The Violent Legacy of Monotheism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

<sup>23</sup> Schwartz is not without her critics, but she nonetheless raises important questions about the relationship between the exclusive theology in the Hebrew Bible and religious violence. Cf. R. W. L. Moberly, ‘Is Monotheism Bad for You? Some reflections on God, the Bible, and Life in the Light of Regina Schwartz’s “The Curse of Cain”’, in *The God of Israel* (ed. R. P. Gordon; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 94–112.

<sup>24</sup> Paul Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster? Making Sense of the Old Testament God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011); Eric A. Seibert, ‘Recent Research on Divine Violence in the Old Testament (with Special Attention to Christian Theological Perspectives)’, *Currents in Biblical Research* 15/1 (2016): 8–40.

<sup>25</sup> Robert G. Hamerton-Kelly, ed., *Violent Origins: Walter Burkert, René Girard, and Jonathan Z. Smith on Ritual Killing and Cultural Formation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987); Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*.



that a society condones, sanctions, or justifies.<sup>26</sup> They might, for instance, seek to understand how stoning a son may have possessed a certain cultural and religious rationale,<sup>27</sup> or how the divine warrior theme might reflect theological convictions.<sup>28</sup> Some seek to understand the logic of the ‘ban’ (חרם) in Deuteronomy and Joshua, including the governing war ideology and religious notions that gave rise to this concept.<sup>29</sup> Others examine the conventions governing ancient warfare rhetoric as a function of ancient Near Eastern society.<sup>30</sup> Saul Olyan’s edited volume *Ritual Violence in the Hebrew Bible* (2015) studies violence as a (culturally) rational act ‘intended to achieve particular ends’, and focuses on social relationships established, reaffirmed, and terminated through such violent acts.<sup>31</sup> These approaches each assume a discernible cultural rationale for violence or violent rhetoric, even if finding such rationale remains unsatisfying ethically.

While an immense literature has formed around those cultural and historical themes pertaining to normative violence, biblical writers’ perspectives on what they consider the *problem* of violence, and how (or whether) they constructed such a category, remains by comparison unexplored. In other words, there is no study that maps *criticisms* of violence *indigenous to the Hebrew biblical text*. In turn, there is little attention to solutions to the problems of violence that biblical writers articulate. There is a need, therefore, to map the various biblical critiques of violence along the grain of their own recurrent thematic and rhetorical emphases, to explain the cultural and theological logic driving biblical authors to frame

<sup>26</sup> Arielle Sagrillo Scarpatti and Afronditi Pina, ‘On National and Cultural Boundaries: A Cross-Cultural Approach to Sexual Violence Perpetration in Brazil and the United Kingdom’, *Journal of Sexual Aggression* 23/3 (2017): 312–327 [313].

<sup>27</sup> See Caryn A. Reeder, *The Enemy in the Household: Family Violence in Deuteronomy and Beyond* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012).

<sup>28</sup> The classic formulation is in Gerhard von Rad’s, *Der Heilige Krieg im alten Israel* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958). Cf. the review by Charles Trimm, ‘Recent Research on Warfare in the Old Testament’, *Currents in Biblical Research* (2011): 1–46.

<sup>29</sup> Philip D. Stern, *The Biblical Herem: A Window on Israel’s Religious Experience* (BJS 211; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991); Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Lohr, *Chosen and Unchosen*, 208–225.

<sup>30</sup> K. Lawson Younger Jr., *Ancient Conquest Accounts: A Study in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical History Writing* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990); Lori L. Rowlett, *Joshua and the Rhetoric of Violence: A New Historicist Analysis* (New York: Continuum, 1996).

<sup>31</sup> Saul M. Olyan, ed., *Ritual Violence in the Hebrew Bible: New Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).



the problems of violence in the terms they do, and to understand where and why biblical authors condemn particular violent acts. The heart of this project, therefore, is to map and describe portrayals of *non-normative*, or *critiqued*, violence in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>32</sup>

To illustrate the kind of study I have in mind here, we may consider by contrast the large number of studies that surround the problems of violence (or genocide) in the book of Joshua.<sup>33</sup> One might very legitimately view as particularly heinous Joshua's calls for Israel to show the Canaanites 'no mercy' and put every inhabitant 'to the sword'. Nonetheless, we must reckon with the fact that calling these acts 'violent' involves the use of a non-indigenous evaluative category. The writers of Joshua never refer to the 'ban' or the conquest as 'violent' and do not seem to present the conquest in those negatively charged terms. Instead, the destruction of the Canaanites (and Achan) belonged to a conceptual world of obedience to the Torah, and thus failure to enact the conquest could be considered ethically problematic from the biblical writer's perspective. These acts, for various reasons, did not fall into the conceptual domain of 'violence' for biblical writers, even though they do for most modern readers. That domain was specially reserved for acts and events deemed ethically reprehensible by biblical writers. Such legitimate ethical concerns fall outside the bounds of this study.

Instead, this question guides my study: How do authors of the Hebrew Bible portray the acts and effects of behaviours that they deem problematically violent, and which modern interpreters recognize as violent?

#### A CONCEPTUAL TAXONOMY OF VIOLENCE

Rather than providing a compendium of various representations, I will first delineate four 'grammars' within which biblical rhetoric about the problem of violence operated. By grammars, I refer to the culturally formed *patterns of representation* with which biblical writers address

<sup>32</sup> Patricia D. Rozée, 'Forbidden or Forgiven? Rape in Cross-Cultural Perspective', *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 17/4 (1993): 499–514.

<sup>33</sup> John H. Walton and J. Harvey Walton, *The Lost World of the Israelite Conquest: Covenant, Retribution, and the Fate of the Canaanites* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017); Douglas S. Earl, *The Joshua Delusion? Rethinking Genocide in the Bible* (London: James Clarke & Co., 2011); Paul Copan and Matt Flannagan, *Did God Really Command Genocide? Coming to Terms with the Justice of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2014); C. S. Cowles et al., *Show Them No Mercy: 4 Views on God and Canaanite Genocide* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003); Seibert, *The Violence of Scripture*.

their subject matter. Attending to those patterns of representation means giving attention to the web of associated linguistic expressions, metaphors, and themes that coalesce around recognized portrayals of violence. Those portrayals are, of course, culturally shaped and conditioned by specific rules and codes of behaviour appropriate to particular social settings or subject matter. I am not suggesting, however, that these grammars of violence were rigidly and consciously constraining writers' minds as they wrote, or even that they consistently operated in complete isolation from each other. Instead, they refer to common ways of construing the problem of violence that appear to operate intuitively, but which nevertheless exert a powerful influence on shaping expectations about how violence will take shape and play out. As Sharon Marcus notes, attending to specific 'grammars' provides interpreters with 'the rules and structure which assign people to positions within a script'.<sup>34</sup> Understanding the cultural script involves recognizing what expectations biblical writers assign to violence. These scripts are not without values – some more overt than others.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the grammars of violence attend not only to the artistic literary presentation, but also to the ethical and theological configurations of violence preserved in the Bible.

The grammars I have selected are: (1) ecology, (2) moral speech, (3) justice, and (4) purity. I have selected these four grammars as representative examples, simply because of the explanatory power that they yield. In the course of this study, we will see that these grammars relate. For instance, the violent damage done to the physical ecology is sometimes framed in terms of impurity. Throughout the book, I will then offer some typical ways that ancient biblical writers construed the problem of violence from within those grammars, while recognizing and describing their relatedness.<sup>36</sup> Other moral grammars could be proposed, it should be noted, and not all biblical writers would even agree on the specific nature

<sup>34</sup> Sharon Marcus, 'Fighting Bodies, Fighting Words: A Theory and Politics of Rape Prevention', in *Gender Struggles: Practical Approaches to Contemporary Feminism* (ed. Constance L. Mui and Julien S. Murphy; New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 166–185 [173].

<sup>35</sup> A script may, for instance, position white males 'as legitimate subjects of violence among all men' while positioning black men as 'ever-threatening subjects of illegitimate violence' (Marcus, 'Fighting Bodies', 173).

<sup>36</sup> Analogously, Zoltán Kövecses, *Metaphor* (2nd edition; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 4, refers on the one hand to the 'conceptual domain' as 'any coherent organization of experience', and on the other to 'metaphorical linguistic expressions' as the 'words or other linguistic expressions that come from the language or terminology of the more concrete conceptual domain'.