The Politics of Gender and Violence in Contemporary South African Feminist Talk

Decolonial Contemplations

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1. Introduction[1]

A few years ago, in a conversation with a feminist colleague about the recent South African *#MenAreTrash* movement, she questioned the weight I was attributing to populist feminist discourse — »we know that it's not ›real‹ feminism,« she claimed easily, dismissively.

The movement was created on Twitter by black South African feminists with the aim to hold men accountable for unearned male privilege and misogyny (Mdunge 2017). I thought about what my colleague had said: having always considered popular discourse on gender, race, or sexuality to be ›real‹ and to have impact on the world, I never thought that some feminist scholars might consider this marginal and unimportant for not being serious and ›proper‹ intellectual work. My discomfort with this perspective kept moving me back to my original position: popular culture, in all its variations, matters precisely because it reflects what many people think—about gender, race, class, sexuality and so on. It is important because it

1 This paper emerges out of a critique of reductionist feminist thinking about gender in the South African context. Although located within this very context, my critique is not unique to South Africa: feminist theory and activism in the Global South continues to produce thinking that is necessarily critical of Northern feminism, and my work here is not delinked from these criticisms. However, all feminisms, no matter where they are located geographically and politically, need always be open to critique of their foundations in an effort to remain relevant and open to evolving. This is why in this essay, I am specifically questioning the usefulness of a reductionist identity politics about gender, race, and class, using South African examples. I do not, however, claim that this argument is only relevant to South African feminisms. The arguments in this paper should be read as one response to Laura Pérez's call to »engage in decolonizing coalitions that take feminist queer of color critical thought seriously as central to the work of decolonization.« (Pérez 2010, 122) The work of decolonisation is not only African work: it needs to take place in all spaces.

gives insight into dominant societal imaginations, and it also gives us some understanding of the impact that feminist movements have had on popular imaginations over time. So the recent feminist discourses about gender, race, class, and sexuality — *#MeToo* or *#MenAreTrash* for instance—tell us something about the feminist tradition they draw from, be it in agreement or resistance.

If one objective of feminism is to eradicate violence through getting people to think differently about gender, and more broadly, how people imagine their own and others' gendered identities, then it makes sense to be interested in popular configurations of how gender, race, and sexuality are imagined. As feminist social justice practitioners, we want people to think and act differently. Feminist scholars speaking to us alone is not enough to make any sustainable change possible. In other words, to be more detailed, if men are trash, as the popular South African *#MenAreTrash* movement dictates and which many feminists and other social justice practitioners recently seemed to support through both agreement and silence at a time, then there is a gendered belief in the popular imagination that men are mostly perpetrators and women are mostly victims. Men, this discourse goes, are ›worthless‹ and therefore discardable, while women, on the other hand, are worthy and ›good‹ human beings (this is a lot of pressure to place on women, might I also add, and really requires a more critical lens that I cannot engage in any detail here).[2] This discourse does little to challenge gender binaries that induce violence against women by men, violence between men, and violence between women and women and children.[3] In this paper, I therefore spend some time contemplating some current feminist discourses on gender and violence in the popular South African imagination that inadvertently work against the feminist imperative of eradicating violence.

2. The Politics of Place and Violence

Anne Garland Mahler conceptualise the Global South as »a politically useful grouping of ›spaces and peoples negatively impacted by contemporary capitalist globalization.‹« (Mahler 2017) They go on to explain that »the ›South‹ of this designation, therefore, refers to countries that in the late twentieth and early twenty-first

2 Phyllis Chesler's *Woman's Inhumanity to Woman* (2009) is an excellent, wide-ranging, and extensively researched book that questions, and provides evidence for, the commonly held skewed belief that women are inherently more peaceful human beings in comparison to men.

3 Both in the Global North and South, indirect as well as more direct forms of violence between girls and between women have been studied, with scientists producing a relatively new and intriguing body of knowledge about how and why female violence takes place within certain contexts (Chesler 2009). This is work that I am currently engaging for a different project.

centuries, have been marked by middle-to-low income economies, not those situated in any particular geographical location.« (Byrne/Imma 2019, 2):

> »[T]here is a long and august history of feminist thought and activism from the Global South that, despite not being fully recognised in the Northern and Western academy, continues to proliferate and demand an accounting for and engaged analysis. Accordingly, decolonial and Southern feminists frequently argue for moving ›the locus of enunciation,‹ which Ramon Grosfoguel defines as the ›geo-political and body-political location of the subject that speaks‹. . . . This involves re-centring the practices and discourses that originate in the Global South in order to even out the epistemological inequality that pertains between the Global South and North, and more importantly, to highlight the challenges faced and strategies developed by Southern feminists. This in turn, necessitates taking up Mohanty's call to enact ›noncolonizing feminist solidarity across borders.‹« (ibid.)

Decolonial feminisms are based upon feminist theorising and activist work that takes geography and colonial history as inseparable from gender, race, class, and sexuality; decolonial feminisms take seriously the continued effects of colonialism—for example neocolonialism—on gender and its connection with other embodied identities such as race and class. This kind of relationality—which is commonly referred to in contemporary feminist discourse as intersectionality—must be (and has mostly been) prioritised in feminist analyses if it is to make any meaningful contribution to transformation.

Joshua Burnett reflects on the notion of »assemblage,« in contrast to intersectionality, suggesting that we think about identities and their relations to each other as »an event in time that brings together multiple identity factors in ever-changing and potentially unstable and unquantifiable ways.« (Burnett 2014, 13) Similarly, Jaspir Puar talks about identity and identification as »a process; identity is an encounter, an event, an accident, in fact,« »proffer[ing] instead the notion that bodies are unstable assemblages that cannot be seamlessly disaggregated into identity formations.« (Puar 2011) In its more flexible, less fixed approach to identities, the idea of assemblage, rather than intersectionality, could be considered a productive conceptual paradigm for thinking about identities, enabling more complex and less reductionist thinking about how identities work to produce human subjects who move through the world.

South Africa's high rates of violence against women cannot simply be comprehended and addressed through a reductionist *#MenAreTrash* campaign. If we are to work towards non-violence, including sexual violence, we must look to more complex explanations and follow through with more appropriate social interventions at multiple levels. Echoing Gabeba Gaberoon's work on slavery at the Cape in South Africa, Gqola narrates in *Rape: A South African Nightmare* that we will be unable to

> »break the strangehold of rape in contemporary South Africa if we continue to pretend that it is a recent phenonomenon . . . if we are at all serious about making sense of rape's hold on our society, we need to interrogate the histories of rape in South Africa. To do so, we need to look back to the kinds of work rape has done in slavocratic and colonial South Africa.« (Gqola 2015, 42)

The connections between slavery, sexual violence, and trauma in South Africa's colonial history is essential in understanding the current high levels of rape in the country, particularly of women of colour (ibid.). Gqola's chapter in *Rape* titled *What's race got to do with rape?*investigates the colonial histories that have normalised black women's rape by white men: »The rape of slaves was an integral part of the architecture of slave-ordered Cape society,« (Gqola 2015, 42) with slave women »being routinely raped as a means to multiply their masters' slaves« (ibid., 43) and stereotypes of African people's hypersexuality were simultaneously constructed in order to create the discourse that slave women ›could not be raped,‹ and that white women were in danger of being raped by sexually rapacious African men. As Gqola's research indicates, the notion of men of colour as dangerous is not a new one—the loud resurgence of this rhetoric through *#MenAreTrash* can be seen as a perpetuation, a revival of sorts, to maintain and perpetuate the discourse of men of colours as violent, villainous, and monstrous.

Gqola's delve into colonialism is important because it offers an historical perspective on understanding how the rape of women has become normalised in neocolonial societies. I would add here that this historical perspective helps us understand how it is men of colour who continue to be villainised in both popular feminist talk and theory: they are primarily seen as violators and damaged, as potential perpetrators rather than human beings who have also been affected by colonialism. Significantly, this villainisation of men does not account for the fact that fatal interpersonal violence »is shown to be concentrated among young men, that is, males in their late teens to mid-40s . . . specifically, urban young black men are at a disproportionately higher risk of homicidal victimisation than other groups in South Africa.« (Ratele 2016, 43) Still, violence needs to be understood across disciplinary boundaries; it is not enough to only attempt an understanding through the lens of colonialism and what it has left behind. According to Ratele, male violence needs to be researched at »structural, symbolic and subjective levels.« (ibid., 45)

So while violent masculinities must be held accountable and eradicated, we also need to »tell alternative narratives about men,« as Refiloe Makama, Rebecca Helman, Neziswa Titi and Sarah Day insist (ead. 2019, 65): narratives that move beyond the current limited feminist vocabularies about gender which conceptualise it as a rigid moralistic binary of victim and villain (Shefer 2016). It is essential that feminist theory opens up its boundaries »for boys and men, not only as comrades . . . but as fellow victims of structures of violence in which men, women and people of

all genders are all embedded.« (Makama et al. 2019, 64) This seeing of men as »fellow victims of structures of violence« becomes even more urgent if we acknowledge the ways in which neocolonialism continues to impact on economically impoverished women and (!) men in the Global South, and in the context of this paper, in contemporary South Africa. In both feminist theory and popular feminist debates the reality that men of colour also experience fear is glaringly absent—they may be fearful of other men and being seen as monstrous by women—and it is a conversation that feminists must get into if we are to continue theorising and doing advocacy with the aim of eradicating gender norms and inadvertently, violence.

3. The Problem with Trashing Masculinity

In responding to the call for »more nuanced and complex narratives about men and masculinities,« (Makama et al. 2019, 62) we need to unsettle reductionist ideas of gender that sustain dichotomies, inadvertently positioning men of colour as primarily damage-doing and violators. This means, within the South African context (and much of the Global South), that race and class must be taken seriously in any feminist theory and activism. Reductionist articulations of gender such as *#MenAreTrash* take their cue from what already exists in feminist theory, both in the North as well as in Africa:

> »As emerging feminist scholars, we find the discourses offered by the dominant feminist approaches, which we refer to here as the single feminist narrative, constraining when it comes to telling more nuanced and complex narratives about men and masculinities. We find that the different articulations of feminism (i.e., Liberal, Marxist and even African) contribute to a singular feminist narrative that is centred around the construction of female victims and male villains. This narrative is reproduced not only in feminist theory but also in feminist activism, for example the *#TheTotalShutdown* and *#MenAreTrash* movements.« (Makama et al. 2019, 62)

At last, questioning the contemporary African feminist discourse is emerging not only within Critical Masculinities Studies,[4] but also throughout the African feminist discourse. It asks us to reconsider gender binaries that normalise and perpetuate the idea of women as perpetual victims and men as perpetual villains; it asks us to better engage these damaging gender dualisms that are rooted in a singular, limited feminist lens that has its roots in Western societies. For feminism to be constantly evolving—and for feminism to ask critical questions of itself—expressing the will to re-interrogate its own fundamental premises is an essential

4 See also the chapter by Stefan Horlacher in this volume.

project. Taken further, in order to remain essential, feminism has to be critical of its own essentialism. In this regard, decolonial feminism potentially offers a more contextualised approach to thinking about gender: when race, class, and geography are understood as unstable encounters (Puar 2011; Burnett 2013) alongside gender, we are able to think about the victim-villain binary differently, and perhaps, more productively.

In Africa, feminist academics have not, until very recently, offered sufficient complex theoretical conceptualisations of men as gendered beings, although Critical Men's Studies scholars in South Africa have (Kopano Ratele's *Liberating Masculinities* is one such example). More importantly, within feminist theory, very little has been published about the ways in which colonial ideas of race impact feminist constructions of men and masculinities in ways that villianise and demonise black men (above, I refer to Pumla Gqola's *Rape: A South African Nightmare* (2015) and Gabeba Baderoon's *Regarding Muslims* (2015) as examples which do ask us to take seriously the connections between race and rape). In fact »women's movements have tended to reproduce the narrative of victim and villain, enveloping both men and women in essentialist subjectivities.« (Makama et al. 2019, 62)

Essentialist ideas of gender in feminist debates are not new, and there are recent examples of this throughout the world. In 2017, for instance, feminist fiction writer Margaret Atwood was accused by some feminists being part of the *#MeToo* campaign of failing to support female rape victims when she signed a letter at the University of British Columbia in defense of a male professor's right to due legal process in a sexual misconduct accusation in which he had not been given the opportunity to defend himself. Some critiques aggressively asserted that it is Atwood's position as an »old cis white« feminist that rendered her incapable of identifying with female victims of sexual abuse. One Twitter entry reads, for instance:

> »Margaret Atwood's latest op-ed is a very, very clear reminder that old cis white women are not to be trusted. They care more about poor widdle accused men than they do about actual f*** rape victims. They spend as much time advocating for rapists as they do attacking victims.« (Kemi 2018)

Here, we can see how any suggestion of thinking through gender, sexual violence, and power in complex ways is muted, and in Atwood's case, even regarded as ›anti-feminist‹.

Another more recent example can be found in the racist and ethnocentric articulations of the French right-wing all-woman music band Les Brigandes, who claimed that their government was doing French women harm by allowing dark-skinned (usually Muslim) male immigrants into the country, hereby allowing French women's potential sexual violation by these men (see Sanger 2019). The murder and attempted murder of two black people—George Floyd and Jacob Blake

in the United States and the murder of Collins Khosa in South Africa by the police during the country's first Covid-19 lockdown—attests to a fear of black men: they are a threat. ›They are a threat when threatened.‹ Populist feminist rhetoric such as *#MenAreTrash* often perpetuates this idea of men of colour[5] as fearsome by dismissing men as gendered subjects, or relegating men to the status of trash. Resistance to oppression tends to rely on the very same purist language of ›us‹ and ›them‹ in order to speak against marginalisation, as the example below from Twitter's *#MenAreTrash* campaign shows:

Picture 1: Screenshot twitter #MenAreTrash webpage 2018

As noted earlier, this campaign, initiated by black South African feminists, attempts to hold men accountable for misogyny and unearned patriarchal entitlements (Mdunge 2017). The underlying foundation of the campaign, of which I am critical—through the language used by the campaign's followers and creators—is that men are ›predisposed‹ to violent acts against women, even though the claim is that the campaign sets out to critique systemic patriarchy and male violence. This predisposition—the inherent damage-doing capability—is written into the essentialist binary language of gender: women are victims, men are villains. Identity politics language such as *#MenAreTrash* is understandable, to some degree: we have not yet found a more effective language from which to resist oppression. To step aside for a moment, identity politics, a term coined by the Combahee Collective in the United States in 1977, is centrally about the act of making politically-based

5 I do not use ›black‹ and ›of colour‹ interchangeably. When in research I refer to the term ›black‹ is used, I do the same. However, I find the US-American concept ›people of colour‹, or in the context of this paper, ›men of colour,‹ more representative of the stigma and stereotypes associated with men of colour more broadly. In South Africa, then, the range of apartheid categorisactions such as ›black,‹ ›coloured‹ and ›Indian‹ racial identities, would then be represented in the concept ›of colour.‹

claims based on one's own and others' lived experiences as marginalised subjects who are more vulnerable to oppression and violence. It can be strategically useful in feminist advocacy if not reduced to simplistic binaries that are left unquestioned over time. My critique of identity politics lies somewhere alongside Audre Lorde's:

> »[t]he master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change.« (Lorde 1984, 112)

Still, the facts are central to comprehend: men are the primary perpetrators of violence in South Africa, with 79,6 % of the total male prison population (97,4 %) being black (Makou et al. 2017). Most tweets in the *#MenAreTrash* campaign fail to name racism and classism as critical modalities entangled with gender (masculinity, in this instance) to produce the large numbers of male offenders in South African prisons. This discourse about men and violence is not new: the notion of black men—particularly working class and poor men—as »monstrous,« as criminals who are inherently violent, has historically been used as a means to entrench racist discourse against black people, as American feminist Patricia Hill Collins reminds us (Collins 2005, 158). Utilising a liberal politics around race, class, and gender, young black South African men are spoken about as having chosen the conditions under which they live, rather than social conditions playing central roles in the cycle of poverty which many black people struggle to escape. There are social, cultural and familial expectations of men—including black men—to economically provide for their families. Failure to meet these expectations of ideal masculinity is not delinked from men's expressions of violence. The social and political conditions—South Africa's colonial history and the current deeply unequal post-apartheid space—continues to present new challenges around race, gender, sexualities, and economics for both black women and men: men are struggling too; the primary language about black men cannot exclusively be one that locates them as violators outside of historical, social and political contexts. Feminist work continues to look at women's realities as gendered subjects within context—there is a need to do the same with masculinities. To take this a bit further, in *#MenAreTrash* rhetoric, gender is mapped onto race and class, concealing colonial logic: there is an invisibilisation and eradication of colonial and apartheid history in this discourse that is unproductive in a quest to understand why certain black men perpetrate violence, and others do not. The assembling of gender, race, and socio-economic modalities, then, is central in moving beyond the »fatalistic [biologically] essentialist discourses« (Lomas 2013, 169) that, in contemporary times, have become the language through which masculinities are contested: men are a problem, this discourse reads, and they are inherently damaged and damaged-doing (see Sanger 2019 and Sanger 2020 for a more detailed discussion on this).

4. The Gender Politics of Us and Them

Colonial and apartheid logic was primarily predicated on binary modes of thinking which violate the primary tie we have to each other as human beings. As Judith Butler has so concisely articulated, this violation as »broken intimacy« in a world where we are »physically dependent on one another« and »physically vulnerable to one another,« (Butler 2004, 27) is always then »an exploitation of that primary tie, that primary way in which we are, as bodies, outside ourselves and for another.« (ibid., 27) Cartesian dualisms frame and fix notions of ›us‹ and ›them,‹ ›human‹ and ›animal,‹ ›black‹ and ›white,‹ and ›man‹ and ›woman,‹ amongst other identity markers, allowing for the possibility of violence—if we do not see someone as part of ›us,‹ they are easier to violate. In terms of race and class, these dualisms have allowed for the perpetuation of cruelty over people of colour, and particularly those who are poor and working class. Similarly, in terms of gender and sexuality, these dualisms allow for the abuse of women and gender non-conforming people. Colonial thinking is perpetuated through racially purist conceptualisations of race and various kinds of violence globally attest to how this logic has been internalised—it is built into everyday life. In order for oppression and marginalisation to continue to be successfully exercised, these dualisms need to be believed to be rooted in firm, unmoving ›truths.‹ Feminist articulations that covertly and overtly perpetuate singular and essentialist gendered notions of ›us‹ and ›them‹ (read as ›men‹ and ›women‹ here) undermine the ways in which, as human subjects, we are »physically vulnerable to one other.« (Butler 2004, 27) Feminist identity politics then helps to keep these dangerous dualisms in existence.

Language matters; it creates social truths in the world, and this matter of language is central to the process of changing how people see themselves and are seen by others. Seeing then—how we see, when we see, and what we see—requires unsettling and reframing through intervention. It means a disturbance—a cutting through—into the deep tissue that are the building blocks of gender, class, sexuality, and race. And sometimes, this cutting through will also appear as a question to feminist thinking and practice: is this the kind of change we have fought for? Through a rhetoric of feminist identity politics that perpetuates essentialism, a certain kind of social truth is articulated in ways that construct gender, racial, class, and sexuality categories in definitive and limiting ways. So how, through feminist work, do we think ourselves out-side of categories that depend on purist, stable notions of identities? How do we move away from the male-perpetrator and female-victim binary in our feminist politics when levels of violence between men and against women point to aggressive masculinities in a deeply unequal and divided South Africa? What are the feminist methodologies and epistemologies that might allow for a different imagination so that we might move towards what Butler cogently articulates, as »being for another and being undone by one another«

(Butler 2004, 24)? In addition, what would it mean to always see gender in relation to race and class, as unstable assemblages that cannot fit neatly into binary discourses? What would it mean then to attempt to see none of these identities but to look beyond them? What would it mean to look at poor and working-class men of colour and see fear instead of feeling fear?

Some South African feminists argue that we cannot focus on men at the expense of women, the latter who are the victims and survivors of violence. However, it is a fact that men are not only perpetrators of violence; like women, men inhabit and express multiple subjectivities. Ratele notes how masculinities cannot be understood as singular, monolithic states of being: on the contrary, men change in response to other transformations, such as shifts in women's lives and the political and socio-economic climate. Ratele asks us to reconsider a gender discourse that »remains skeptical about men as subjects of feminist interventions or, at best, is largely indifferent to men, except in connection to violence against women.« (Ratele 2016, 138) The ideology of men as trash, reliant on biological essentialism, should be located in a broader perspective of studies about men and masculinity, where the approach avoids constructing new orthodoxies while working at deconstructing the old: a decolonial feminism cannot afford to disregard this.

At traffic lights dispersed throughout South Africa, it is very young boys of colour who are begging for money and food from the drivers of cars who stop at these traffic lights. Except in cases where it is a mother and a baby or toddler doing the same, girls somehow do not make it to the traffic lights. It is common sense that their absence at traffic lights is to shield them from sexual violence by strangers. However, in South Africa, sexual violence primarily takes place between people who know each other, but in the South African imagination, keeping girls close to home ironically means that they can be kept an eye on by older siblings, parents, or guardians. Boys, however, are expected to move away from the confines of home to go out in public to beg, as if they have a biological predisposition to not being sexually violated. There are no statistics of which I know that reveal that boys are not sexually violated when begging or merely moving about without adult guidance in public spaces: this means that it is not a question feminists have been asking in our decolonial work on race, gender, class, and sexuality. There is a rich body of literature dedicated to violence against women and girls, informed by feminist epistemologies that account for patriarchy and how power works to allow for this violence. There is a less researched field focussing on boys and men as both victims and perpetrators of violence. This is feminist work, too. We need to develop this knowledge within the context of our colonial and apartheid history and how these systems of violence and control impact on gender constructions today.

As a feminist analyst living and working in the Global South, and South African in particular, I am troubled by this discourse that has come to be taken-for-granted rhetoric about boys and men of colour. It is a discourse that ignores the ways in

which boys and men are gendered, as well as the historical, social, and economic impacts of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa. In her discussion on Negro-feminism in African contexts, Nigerian-American feminist Nnamaeka Obioma highlights the differences between Western and African feminisms: Western feminism, she argues, focuses on challenging, disrupting and deconstructing while African feminism focuses on collaborating, negotiating and compromising. Obioma highlights that African feminisms »are more inclined to reach out and work with men in achieving set goals« by »not casting a pall over men as a monolith.« (Obioma 2003, 380) A decolonial feminism should centralise the importance of context (location and geography) in producing knowledge about women and (!) men of colour. In this regard, Argentinian feminist Maria Lugones' decolonial feminist work moves us forward. She speaks of the »categorial, dichotomous, hierarchical logic« central to »modern, colonial, capitalist thinking about race, gender, and sexuality« as a »colonising reading« that draws hierarchical and essentialist dichotomies onto colonised societies, erasing how gender as a binary system has been created through colonialism (Lugones 2010, 742). A decolonial feminism, Lugones argues, pays attention to the ways in which coloniality has been, and continues to be, resisted by those who inhabit a »fractured locus,« on the borderlands, as subalterns. This resistance is about affirming »beings in relation, rather than dichotomously split over and over in hierarchically and violently ordered fragments.« (ibid., 754)

Lugones' decolonial perspective here is critical of the ways in which colonial creations of gender binaries and hierarchies have created »worlds of meaning« (ibid., 752) which continue to frame our analysis of race, gender, class, and sexuality in ways that erase other possibilities, such as our ›doing of identities‹ differently, outside of colonialist frames.

We know from decades of feminist research that various kinds of gendered expectations place girls in danger, but we continue to ignore the dangers of gender for boys. For boys and girls of colour in a highly unequal and violent society, we cannot therefore condone *#MenAreTrash* as either a suitable or acceptable form of feminist activism: in fact, it reveals a feminism that only works in the interests of girls and women, as if boys and men do make up just slightly under half of the human population throughout the world. There are differences in the kinds of gendered expectations we have of women and men: for people of colour living in impoverished circumstances within a global capitalist gender economy, these expectations of gender place them more directly in the line of danger and violence. My argument in this paper is that a decolonial feminist practice must insist on equality and freedom from capitalist and other forms of violence for all people of colour, not only for women. A language insistent that men are trash not only demonises poor and working-class men of colour, but also ignores history and the continuous violent effects of colonial history on boys and men of colour. This should be part of our feminist decolonial work in South Africa. Lindsay Clowes makes

a necessary argument when she notes that men get ill and die from particular diseases which are directly linked to patriarchy. By speaking only of women as gendered subjects, we fail to understand gender as relational; to see how patriarchy demands of men that they »engage in acts of psychic self-mutilation.« (Clowes 2013, 15)

As Patricia Hill Collins reminds us, in developing a more intricate language about gender and violence, we need to avoid undermining complexity and ambiguity: we need a richer, more complex anti-racist and gender politics (Collins 2005, 158). It then becomes significant that the language of decolonial feminism in South Africa is one that »contribute(s) to the development of graduates who are critical citizens equipped with the tools and motivation to work towards gender equity and social justice.« (Clowes 2013, 17) It is troubling when a simplistic discourse becomes the means through which we base our new, evolving language of gender and power; a new rhetoric on what it means to be in relation to others as gendered beings, and simultaneously, what it means to relate to ourselves. We need evolving methodologies moving us away from purist discourses on identity—we need another language that is firmly located in decolonial feminist practice relevant to our geographical and political context.

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Picture

Picture 1: Screenshot Twitter *#MenAreTrash* webpage 2018.