'From Overseer to Officer: A Brief History of British Policing Through Afro-Diasporic Music Culture'

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Author's Biography:

Lambros Fatsis is a Senior Lecturer in Criminology at the University of Brighton. His research interests revolve around police racism and the criminalisation of Black music (sub)culture(s), fusing Cultural Criminology with Black radical thought. His writing on the policing of UK drill music won the first-ever Blogger of the Year Award from the British Society of Criminology and an Outstanding Research & Enterprise Impact Award from the University of Brighton. When he doesn't teach or write, he continues to exist as a never-recovering vinyl junkie and purveyor of Afro-diasporic music.

ABSTRACT:

Policing and music are rarely thought together in mainstream criminological literature, despite the insights that their relationship offers on how and why policing emerged as an instrument for suppressing musical expression throughout the African diaspora, from the era of colonial slavery to the present day. This chapter traces the origins of British policing to its colonial roots, by demonstrating how colonial militias were formed to police the music of the enslaved as a sign of rebellion, insurrection and disorder. Drawing on Afro-diasporic music –as an indicative case study– policing and racism will be contextualised as concurrent, constitutive and dependent on each other; exposing the historical mission and function of policing as a force of racial violence. By rethinking police racism through Afro-diasporic music(s), this chapter encourages a (Southern) decolonial approach to police scholarship – to reintroduce the police as guardians of a social and political order that is marked by racial hierarchies, whose roots lie in the imperial ideology that created racism, "race" and policing.

KEYWORDS:

Police racism, Colonial history of British Policing, Policing Black Music

Main Body of chapter:

In the aftermath of the 2020 #BlackLivesMatter protests, renewed calls to decolonise university curricula and abolish the police became hot topics within UK academia. This is certainly not the first time that such debates have captured the criminological imagination[1]. The sheer energy of such mass mobilisations, however, compels criminologists to think decolonisation and police abolition anew; as inextricably intertwined demands that ought to be brought together. Alas, discussing decolonisation and police abolition in the same breath reveals a dearth of criminological literature on the links between colonialism and policing[2] and a profound lack of non-Eurocentric approaches to knowledge production. In an attempt to address such a lacuna in the 'white'[3] mainstream criminological canon, this chapter narrates a brief history of British

[1] For indicative discussions on decolonisation within criminology, see: Cain, 2000; Agozino, 2003; Cuneen, 2011; Cuneen and Tauri, 2016; Carrington *et al.* 2016; Moore, 2016; Carrington and Hogg, 2017; Moosavi, 2018; Unnever, and Owusu-Bempah, 2019; Phillips, *et al.*, 2020; Cavalcanti, 2020; Moore, 2020; Dimou, 2021; Fatsis, 2021d. There is also a dedicated criminology journal on decolonisation: *Decolonization of Criminology and Justice*, which was launched in 2018. Unfortunately, debates on police abolition remain marginal(ised) in mainstream criminological discourse, textbooks, conferences and curricula in the UK—notable exceptions notwithstanding (Hope, 2014). The 2020 #BlackLivesMatter protests gave new impetus to discussing the issue -however timidly- but the relevant literature on police abolition continues to be led by US scholars, or UK-based academics; most of whom are not criminologists (see, e.g.: *Critical Resistance* (n.d.), Williams (2015), Vitale (2017), Correia and Wall (2018), Maynard (2020), Elliott-Cooper, (2021), Purnell (2021), Duff (2021), Maher (2021), Fatsis and Lamb (2021).

[2] Not unlike police abolition (see previous footnote), criminological literature on colonialism and policing also features as an absent presence, with the exception of Brogden (1987) and Emsley (2014). Other relevant texts include: Arnold (1986), Das and Verma (1998), Brown (2002), Williams (2003), Bell (2013), Jackson (2016) and Trafford (2021).

[3] 'Whiteness' here and throughout the text, does not refer to skin colour or physiological traits. Rather, whiteness is understood as a political term that describes ways of being *structurally* 'white'; a social identity *and* a social structure that upholds it. 'Whiteness' is therefore approached here as an ontology (a way of *being*), a racist ideology (a way of *seeing*) and a power relation (a way of *doing*) that enables the domination, authority and perceived humanity of those who are racialised and identify themselves as 'white'. As Olsen (2004: 43) aptly puts it: whiteness has historically been "not a biological status but a political color that distinguished the free from the unfree, the equal from inferior, the citizen from the slave". This echoes similar perspectives on 'race' and racialisation that approach 'whiteness' and 'blackness' as "the colour of [people's] politics and not the colour of [their] skins" (Sivanandan, 2008, p. xviii).

policing by excavating its colonial roots and unearthing Black or Afro-diasporic music[4] as an undermined resource for decolonial scholarship. Drawing on the policing of UK drill music as a contemporary example that illustrates historical continuities in how 'race' is policed through the policing of Black music(s), British policing will be reintroduced as colonially configured and therefore racist by design—if not by default (Owusu-Bempah, 2017; Elliot-Cooper, 2021; Chowdhury in Duff, 2021: 85-94; Fatsis, 2021a; 2021b, Fatsis and Lamb, 2021). Black music, therefore, features here as an instrument of scholarship with which to trace the origins of British policing in the colonial militias that patrolled, captured and controlled the enslaved through suppressing their cultural expression (Fatsis, 2021b: esp. pp. 35-7). Documenting or "phonograph[ing]" (Moten, 2003: 68) the history of policing Black forms of creative expression, however, doesn't just help us place British policing in its proper historical—that is to say, imperial-colonial context (Brogden, 1987; Emsley, 2014; Elliott-Cooper, 2021; esp. 23-30; Chowdhury in Duff, 2021; Fatsis and Lamb, 2021: 23-8). It also enables us to embrace Black music as a decolonial "Black method" (McKittrick, 2021: esp. 5, 9, 41), that disrupts and subverts modes of knowledge production that reproduce (neo)colonial(ist) ways of seeing, thinking about, acting towards and being in the world. In so doing, this chapter aims at ridding criminology of its "Occidentosis" (Al-i Ahmad, 1984)—while also ushering Black music in; as an alternative scholarly praxis (Fatsis, 2021b: 42-5; Lee, 2021) that offers arresting insights on how the "*overseer* who rode in the plantation", becomes the "*officer* who patrols the nation" (KRS-One, 1993; emphasis added).

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[4] References to 'Afro-diasporic' or 'Black' music, culture(s) and politics throughout this chapter, are limited to the strict Afro-diasporic sense and meaning of the word 'Black'—to refer to the people and cultures of the African diaspora. This is not to strip the term of its coalitional potential, by including other visible minority ethnic communities who are also oppressed by racism, but to stress the specific usage adopted here.

Beat(s) For Blame: Policing Against UK Drill Music

UK drill music is a contemporary and popular rap subgenre—boasting no. 1 hits in the UK charts, while simultaneously featuring as public enemy no.1; due to lurid media imagery and legal penal system[5] tactics that represent and pursue it as such (Fatsis, 2019b). Originating in Chicago in the mid-noughties, it rippled across the Atlantic and took root in the UK rap music scene soon after. Unlike other forms of rap music, UK drill is decidedly darker in sound and more graphic in its violent imagery. It is unabashedly edgy and violent in its posture, lyrics, imagery and sonic qualities—depicting fictional larger-than-life personas, who tell their story in the first person and pose as violent. As such, drill lyrics are often (mis)taken for real-life descriptions of crimes committed, rather than as first-person narratives that may be partly or purely performative, fictional, hyperbolic or fabricated even, as is the case with many other music lyrics or literary works. Crucially, drill rappers consciously exploit stereotypes of violence, 'gangsterism' and 'ghetto life' as a sought-after commodity to be consumed online by followers whose clicks, views, likes and shares can and *do* yield material rewards (Stuart, 2020). Rather than offering a

[5] The neologism 'legal penal system' -not unlike the abolitionist catchphrase 'criminal legal system'- is coined here to problematise, refute and refuse the term 'criminal justice system'; insisting that the latter is a system of laws that (literally) *creates* 'crime' -both as a concept and a reality- through turning certain activities into punishable offences. This is not to deny that violence and harm exist, or that there are people who commit violent acts that cause harm. Rather, it is to stress that 'crime' is a political category that condemns, stigmatises, marginalises and racialises violence as the inherent trait, individual anomaly, cultural pathology and personal responsibility of 'deviant' individuals and groups. Notions like 'law' and 'justice', therefore, are not understood here as interchangeable or synonymous. As Ben Quigley (2007: 15) argues, "[w]e must never confuse law and justice. What is legal is often not just. And what is just is often not at all legal". Legal practitioners, therefore, do not (necessarily) observe principles and ideas of 'justice', but enforce 'the law'; the technical and legal(istic) restrictions on the behaviour, actions and activities of 'the public'. While 'justice' denotes and embodies notions and ethical standards of fairness, 'the law' is "the technical embodiment of attempts to order society" (Williams, 1993: 139). What we refer to or think as 'the law', therefore, simply refers to "written law, codes, [and] systems of obedience" (Williams, 1993: 138), *not* that higher, 'just' ethical plane that we think that the law signifies, or stands for. For that reason, the term 'legal penal system' is used throughout this chapter to stress that the state's juridical infrastructure delivers punishments, not justice— using 'the law' as an instrument of political (mis)rule.

simple or 'authentic' voice, rappers are highly attuned to the commercial relations of their work and deploy themes of violent crime that they know to be very marketable (Quinn, 2005). A central impetus and theme of the music, therefore, is the desire to become a successful rapper to escape poverty and the violence in drill is part of the genre's conventions and part of its commercial appeal too. UK drill enjoys a huge following among young listeners of all ethnic backgrounds. The main audience of UK drill music, however, is young Black people who can relate to the themes of marginalisation and social exclusion, as well as consume and produce it as an outlet for creative expression— in line with the artistic conventions of the genre and without conflating what the literary with the literal (Dennis, 2007; Stoia *et al.*, 2018; Nielson and Dennis, 2019; Lutes *et al.*, 2019; Owusu-Bempah, 2020).

Lacking the cultural literacy (Ilan, 2020) to distinguish between performative and actual violence, the police, prosecutors and judges energetically criminalise UK drill through various discriminatory and unjust interventions that turn Black cultural activity into a legally punishable offence. These include: Criminal Behaviour Orders, gang injunctions, suspended prison sentences and the monitoring and removal of drill music videos from video-sharing platforms such as YouTube. The Metropolitan Police even formed a Drill Music Translation Cadre, consisting of police officers who act as 'rap expert' witnesses; decoding lyrics and translating them into evidence for the prosecution (Quinn, 2018). Similarly, the Crown Prosecution Service has published decision-making guidance which makes direct references to drill music as 'evidence' of gang-affiliation and 'bad character' to establish joint enterprise convictions (CPS, 2021). Recent amendments to the Government's Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill (Liberty, 2021), also increase the likelihood of subjecting drill rappers to expanded suspicion-less stop and search (Fatsis, 2019b: 1304; Fatsis, 2021c; Fatsis *et al.*, 2021;)—as does the introduction of Serious Violence Reduction Orders and Knife Crime Prevention Orders, which accompany existing stop and search powers that already disproportionately affect young, Black Britons (HMICFRS, 2021; Shiner *et al.*, 2018).

So far so good (at least for the punitively-minded), provided that hard, tangible evidence could connect drill to criminal wrongdoing (Fatsis, 2019b; Ilan, 2020; Lynes, *et al.*, 2020). Alas, where drill lyrics or videos are adduced as evidence in court, they often have no direct connection to the offence charged—as case law evidence reveals (Owusu-Bempah, 2022). Such measures, therefore, are only justified because drill music is pursued as dangerous by legal penal system functionaries, without being able to substantiate what amounts to little more than pure suspicion. In the absence of any real evidential weight that would lend some credence to such penal hysteria, the only evidence that exists, points to the discriminatory, illiberal and unjust logic, nature and outcomes of such legal penal tactics (Paul, 2021). This is not to deny, justify or condone any violence in (*some* but not *all*) drill music—which rarely amounts to anything more than isolated incidents anyway (Fatsis, 2019b; Ilan, 2020). Rather, it is to note that this is not what all drill is (and indeed, that this is all that drill is) —while also stressing that it is *selectively* criminalised in ways that prompt more questions about policing and racialised state-sanctioned violence, than they do about the danger that drill music ostensibly poses. To do justice to such a provocative assertion, this section aims at pointing out that what may be thought of as an unusual stigmatisation of an entire genre, actually shows what is typical about policing in the way it chooses its targets from (racially and otherwise) minoritised "suspect communit[ies]" (Hillyard, 1993). The British state's 'war against drill', therefore, is not seen here as a deviation from what policing is and does. It is approached instead as a normal and normalised feature of policing as an instrument of discriminatory suppression, with a long history of targeting Black music(s) and other forms of Black cultural expression—dating back to the era of colonial slavery day (Fatsis, 2021b: 35-7).

Beat Cops Now and Then

Placing the birth of British policing in the context of colonial rule, this section will demonstrate how pre-professional slave-catching militias are the forgotten precursors of the 'new' or modern police that was established in 19th century England (Taylor, 1997). This neglected "colonial dimension" (Brogden, 1987) in the history of British policing, situates its origins in the policing of Black music culture(s) in Britain's colonial outposts—pointing at the necessity of its formation to clamp down on activities that would encourage resistance to the violent domination, subjugation and exploitation of the enslaved. Anchored in this alternative conceptualisation and periodisation of policing (building on Fatsis, 2021b: 35-7 and Fatsis and Lamb, 2021: 23-8), what follows restores policing to its imperial-colonial historical context and reintroduces policing as a fundamentally cultural and political institution, rather than a (purely) crime-fighting one. To achieve this, the remainder of this section draws on the historical suppression of Afro-diasporic music(s) and culture—as the keynote through which colonial overseers kept the enslaved and their expressive activities in check. An exhaustive account of how the music of the enslaved was targeted, monitored, disciplined and censored goes beyond what could be achievable in the space of a book chapter. What follows nevertheless offers a potted history of the racist logic and legislation that made the prohibition of Black music possible, out of fear for the danger it poses as the soundtrack to revolt and resistance to racial oppression; colonial and post-colonial alike.

Let us begin at the beginning with the banning of African drumming and dancing in Britain's colonies in the Caribbean, in Africa and that other former British colony; the US, where slave patrol legislation was introduced to 'prevent all caballings amongst negroes, by dispersing of them when drumming or playing' (McCord, 1841: 640). Such statutes were of a piece with similar ordinances that targeted "the tumultuous gatherings of the Negroes" (Du Bois, 2007: 166) and banned "Negro Frolicks" (Whitfield, 2016: 27). Further South, British colonial rule in the Caribbean became almost synonymous with "police regulations" that "lay at the very heart of the

slave system"—so much so, that "without them, the system became impossible to maintain" (Goveia, 1960: 82). Such police regulations, were aimed at "the pursuit, capture, suppression and punishment" of the enslaved— who were "forbidden to beat drums and blow horns, since these were means of communication which might be used to help runaways. All such activities were dangerous, too, as means of concerting uprisings— another reason for the existence of these laws". (Goveia, 1960: 84). A characteristic example is the 1787 Consolidated Act[6] (especially Clause 21), which was introduced to enable the "government of slaves" and prevent "rebellions concerted at negro dance" (Wynter, nd.: 84). Similar legislation across the Caribbean, outlawed religious rites and ceremonies like *obeah*, prohibited drum dances like Calenda/Kalinda, Belaire and Bongo—and suppressed cultural festivals like Jonkonnu parades in Jamaica and Carnival/*canboulay* processions in Trinidad (Robinson, 2021: 246; Quevedo, 1983: 55-6; Cowley, 1996), for their potential to function as "mechanisms of rebellion […] sited in culture" (Wynter, nd.: 411-2[7]). Such regulatory measures were also enforced under colonial rule in Africa (Drewett and Cloonan, 2006) through bans on "drums of African origin in all types of public meetings" (Moore, 1997: 69) and prohibitions on "playing objectionable native tunes" (Collins, 2006: 172–173). Banning drumming, dancing and musical performance that accompanied religious rites and cultural festivals, however, did not end with the abolition of colonial slavery. It continued apace, but morphed into police harassment of Trinidadian calypso/*kaiso* (Quevedo, 1983) and West African *Àsìkò* music (Collins, 2006). In Britain, Carnival celebrations (APC, 1989; Gutzmore, 1993; Blagrove Jr., 2014: 123-159), reggae soundsystems (Bradley, 2001: 427-8; Gilroy, 2002: 95–

[6] This Act legislated for the treatment and punishment of the enslaved people in Jamaica. A digital copy is available at the Wellcome Collection's online archive and can be retrieved from: https://wellcomecollection.org/works/azdsb5wh

[7] This citation has no date, coming as it does from Sylvia Wynter's *Black Metamorphosis*: a highly influential, but hitherto unpublished text from the 1970s by foremost Caribbean scholar Sylvia Wynter. The full text is housed in the Institute of the Black World papers at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture at the New York Public Library.

104, 115-6; Gilroy, 2007: 152; Campbell, 2007: 5, 191-5, 200, 428; Tebbutt and Bourne, 2014; *Transpontine*, 2015; Ward, 2018), garage, bashment and grime music (Fatsis, 2019a) faced similar suppression—bringing echoes of the colonial, "plantation archipelago" (Wynter, nd.: 372) closer to Britain's post-colonial shores. The policing of Carnival in colonial Trinidad (Quevedo, 1983), for example, was hardly different from the policing of Carnival in post-colonial Britain as a site of 'criminality' and disorder (Chowdhury, 2019). To further emphasise such continuity today, it is worth comparing the policing of Calypso/*kaiso* in 1930s Trinidad with the policing of UK drill today—in ways that reintroduce policing as an ideology and technology of racial rule; colonial and post-colonial alike. At first glance, the two genres could not be more different. While calypso is celebrated for its jolly, jump-up rhythmic feel, as well as for its imaginative and risqué wordplay and picong, drill is feared for its haunting beats, menacing pose and graphic lyrics. Yet, a closer look at the negative police attention they both have received should make us pause and think about whether policing Black music serves any other purpose; beyond enforcing an unequal social order through oppressive and discriminatory social control.

The year is 1934 in sun-kissed Trinidad and as calypsonians sharpen their minds, flex their muscles and ready their tongues to showcase their musical poetry in calypso tents during the Carnival season, a Theatre and Dance Halls Ordinance comes into force, setting up the "benighted police force and alien high-ranking [colonial] officers as the supreme authority over the kaiso[8]" with powers to "ban records" and forbid calsypsonians to "sing in [calypso] tents without a license duly signed by the police officer superintending the district" (Quevedo, 1983: 57-8), on the grounds that the characteristic "barbed wit, biting satire and ridicule" (Quevedo, 1983: 27) -that are essential characteristics of the genre- can be "insulting" to individuals and certain section of the community, "whether referred to by name or otherwise" (Quevedo, 1983:

[8] Calypso is also often referred to as '*kaiso*', a word whose origins are unclear. As such the word's etymology is thought to derive from the Hausa language of West Africa (kaico), or creolised versions of the French word 'carrousseaux' (cariso) and the Spanish word 'caliso'. It eventually became established as 'calypso' owing to the growing dominance of the English language in Trinidad (Hill, 1967; Quevedo, 1983: 4)

61). Attempting to 'cleanse' Carnival festivities from what the authorities perceived as lowly, vulgar and perverse lyrics, the police and the Colonial Secretary -who had the power to enforce such regulations- could effectively determine who could sing and what they could sing about, while also imposing sanctions that put calypsonians in a position of legal and economic disadvantage— through the banning of their live performances and records. Worse still, such judgements were made by people with a questionable understanding of "the subtleties, innuendos, insinuations and nuances connected with this art medium" (Quevedo, 1983: 58). Raymond Quevedo, who is quoted here as an authority on calypso and a renowned calypsonian to boot (Atilla [*sic*] the Hun), spoke against such police regulations in the Trinidad Legislative Council, lambasting amendments to the original Theatre and Dance Halls Ordinance as "wicked", "nefarious", "perverse", "pernicious" and "dictatorial" (Quevedo, 1983: 60, 63), on the grounds that: "the police arrogated to themselves the right to decide what calypsos should or should not be sung - - a responsibility for which they lack the necessary ability and even appreciation", in an attempt to "suppress the calypsonian from expressing his views" (Quevedo, 1983: 62). In his speech, Quevedo also referred to calypso as a "form of West Indian art"—insisting on the word "'art' despite whatever some of my friends around this table may think" (Quevedo, 1983: 60). Nearly nine decades later, in the British Isles—where sunshine is a rare sight, the police target drill rappers with Criminal Behaviour Orders that require artists to inform the police before publishing their music online and warn them before any planned live performance, as was the case with drill group 1011 and drill rapper Digga D (Browne & Hudson, 2018; Mohamed, 2020). Such restrictions essentially amount to banning drillers from sharing their music with their audience (Evans, 2018) at the discretion of police officers, who routinely use drill music videos as evidence of criminal wrongdoing in court proceedings, act as expert witnesses and even question the artistic merit of drill—despite their own lack of formal qualifications or sufficient knowledge with which to judge such matters, if they ever should

(Ward and Fouladvand, 2021: 6-8; Dennis, 2007; Nielson and Dennis, 2019; Lutes, *et al.*, 2019; Owusu-Bempah, 2020; Lerner and Kubrin, 2021; Paul, 2021; Garden Court Chambers, 2020).

As this snapshot into the policing of calypso and drill reveals, colonial and post-colonial police officers act as arbiters of aesthetic judgement and cultural taste: through regulating the creative output of calypsonians and drillers, by restricting what they can say and limiting their means for doing so—through a criminalising process, which converts artistic expression into a legally punishable offence, on the grounds that it offends the state and is dutiful subjects. As such, what connects the "oppressively restrictive measure[s]" (Quevedo, 1983: 57) against calypso in 1930s Trinidad to the discriminatory suppression of drill in 2020s Britain, is their racialised state-sanctioned criminalisation. Such comparisons, however, don't simply highlight how and why Black music is policed. They also invite questions about the very nature of policing, as an institution that is imbued with a cultural and political role— rather than a strictly crime-fighting one. This is an important consideration, which illuminates how and why the aesthetic, the cultural and the political merge in the policing against Black music—which is treated as "as aesthetically 'out of tune', culturally 'out of place' and politically 'out of order'" (Fatsis, 2021b: 38). The policing of Black music(s), therefore, shows that policing has less to do with what is 'criminal' and more to do with what is (racially) 'criminal*ised*'—owing to a political ideology (racism) which sorts human difference (biological or cultural) in a rank order, to establish hierarchies of belonging according to social status. Such power relations are not accidental, but inscribed on policing at birth; due to the imperial-colonial origins of policing, as an order maintenance institution which was *instituted* to suppress the enslaved through their cultural activities (in not dissimilar ways to how young Black Britons are policed through their music today). Thinking *with* Black music about British policing and its long colonial history -which is ignored as it is erased in criminological research and teaching alike (Moore, 2016; 2020)- attunes us to insights that encourage a different approach to criminological scholarship itself. The final section of this chapter below, weaves those observations together through a discussion of

policing as an intrinsically cultural and political institution and Black music as an instrument for the sharpening of the decolonial criminological imagination.

Decolonising Criminology and Thinking With Our Ears, One Beat at a Time

The preceding discussion on the policing of Black music(s) across time, strikes a jarring note in the conventional portraiture of what policing is and does—swimming, as it does, against the current of the criminological mainstream. Instead of taking policing to be the democratic, kindly, benevolent institution that it is usually mistaken for (Fatsis and Lamb, 2021: 31), this chapter has offered a different interpretation of policing as a *cultural* institution. Such a 'deviant take' on police scholarship, involves an understanding of policing that goes beyond common and unfortunately false conceptions of it as a 'crime-fighting' institution[9]. What is offered here instead, is a deep reckoning with the role of policing as a governing logic that rationalises, normalises, legitimises, serves and protects hierarchies of power through enforcing laws that uphold a socio-political order that does not police 'crime', but cultural belonging. Simply put, when Black music is policed what is *actually* being policed is 'blackness' as a signifier of cultural (un)belonging and the very embodiment of political disorder (Fatsis, 2021a). Dismissed on aesthetic grounds by having their artistic status denied, Black music cultures are policed as noisy violations of "normative, respectable, cultural codes" (McKittrick, 2021: 162). Their "subterraneally subversive" (Wynter, nd.: 218) character, however, does not simply pose a threat as cacophonous noise to be eliminated. Their sonic presence also features as an assault to a social and political order that is racialised as 'white'. Indeed, in what Charles Mills terms the "racial contract" -to describe the colonial origins and contemporary afterlives of the modern state- disorder is embodied by people who are not racialised as 'white', but who can be "conceptualized in part as carrying the state of nature around with them, incarnating wildness and wilderness in their person" (Mills, 1999: 87). This racist ideology is what allowed colonial overseers to target

[9] For good critical discussions that challenge established mythologies of policing as a crime-fighting institution, see: Bayley, 1996: 3, 10; Reiner, 2010: 19; Vitale, 2017: 36; and Loader, 2020: 10-11.

"any slaves [that] assemble together and beat their military drums or blow horns" that "every white person [finds] so offending" (Wynter, nd.: 84; quoting pro-slavery legislation) and metropolitan officers to deny drill its status as music (see, e.g. Hurley, 2021).

Viewing policing as a cultural institution by focusing on how Black music has *always* been policed, therefore, rejects racist fantasies about how Black music endangers public safety. Rather, what becomes obvious is the ideological justification for such policing—whose colonial legacy is laid bare: as a world view which imagines Black cultural presence to be an affront to a social and political order that is protected through law and order. While none of the above suggests a linear progression from colonial to metropolitan policing (Elliott-Cooper, 2021: 148), the (colonial) history of policing against Black music nevertheless points to the legacy of racist logics and tactics that remain unchanged. In narrating the colonial history of British policing in the light of the history of policing against Black music(s), the latter is enlisted as decolonial, Black epistemology that brings to view what is otherwise omitted in dominant, Eurocentric criminological scholarship. Doing so, has not only allowed a proper historicisation of policing as an instrument of political rule from the era of colonial slavery to the present day. Black music also features here as a generative force that enables a different kind of criminological scholarship: a 'musicriminology' (Lee, 2021) that is sensitive to the sonic and the sensory as modes for thinking and knowing (Herrity e*t al.*, 2021; Fatsis, 2021b: 42-5). By listening carefully to what insights Black music can offer as sonic testimony and a "sonic critiqu[e] of colonialism, racism, structural inequalities, and other forms of violence" (McKittrick, 2021:50-1), police historiography and policing itself have both been remixed producing different versions to standard, conventional and 'white' hegemonic scholarship.

With Black music as our guide, this chapter sounds a note of caution against any interpretation that fails to see policing and legal penal institutions as a cultural ensemble of state institutions that orchestrate social, cultural and political life through regulation and social control—punishing

those who do not, could not and should not belong *here* socio-culturally and politically too. Dismissed though such an approach might be as an oddball rumination beyond the perimeter of acceptable scholarly conventions, no other medium could have illuminated better the tactics and rationales that would explain how and why Black music genres continue to be policed the way they are. Equally, by virtue of its Afro-diasporic nature, no better medium than Black music could have been drawn on to question the very scholarly norms we have come to accept and uncritically inherit as neutral, natural givens. Might they also have a colonial history that we neglect and ignore? Could there be a historical connection between forms of colonial rule (discipline) and modes of knowledge (disciplines)? Could it even be that such histories of knowing and governing *police* who can know and who needs to be governed as police property? Legendary rapper, KRS-One -who inspired this chapter- may have the answer—rhyming, as he did, about how: "I'm stolen property, kicking the flavor to society. Police be clocking me, but logically they got to be. Cause they were taught that serious poetry would come from Socrates. But that ain't it, in '94 I'll kick the hit" (KRS-One, 1993). Finishing this chapter at the tail end of 2021, I am inclined to believe that rappers like KRS-One once again hit the right note. Will criminologists listen and learn?

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