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Police violence and biocolonisation

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ABSTRACT

This essay presents a transdisciplinary, reparatory history of police violence in Britain during the nineteen seventies and eighties. I consider how the histories of transcontinental colonial nationalisms and anticolonial internationalisms were intertwined with the development of transcolonial counterinsurgency operations and local modes of policing from the late eighteenth century. I argue that this is essential to an understanding of police violence in Britain that is interwoven with the trajectories of anticolonial, antifascist and antiracist political cultures. I discuss the psychopolitical legacies of police violence which illustrates the beginnings of a broader theory of racialised subjectification that I call *biocolonisation*.

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Introduction

This essay presents a transdisciplinary, reparatory history of police violence in Britain during the nineteen seventies and eighties. This historical conjuncture was marked by political upheaval and economic crisis, official discourses that synonymized crime and race, rising neofascism and racial violence and new antifascist and antiracist countercultures and popular cultural formations (Gilroy 1985; Hall et al. 1978; Moore 2014). I consider how the histories of transcontinental colonial nationalisms and anticolonial internationalisms were intertwined with the development of transcolonial counterinsurgency operations and local modes of policing from the late eighteenth century. I argue that this is essential to an understanding of police violence in Britain that is interwoven with the trajectories of anticolonial, antifascist and antiracist political cultures. I discuss the psychopolitical legacies of police violence

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which illustrates the beginnings of a broader antinationalist theory of racialised subjectification that I call *biocolonisation* that offers an alternative to "biocentric paradigms" (Wynter 2003, 330).

Transcontinental anticolonial internationalisms and black political cultures in Britain

Cities such as London, Liverpool and Manchester grew during the nineteenth century due to migration from agricultural to industrial areas and immigration from Ireland, Scotland and Wales. This intranational migration was interspersed by smaller waves of settlement by travellers such as African, Chinese and Indian seafarers and French, German, Italian, Jewish, Lithuanian, Polish and Roma arrivals. The reconfiguration of British cities was further marked by vast emigration to the colonies of Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and North America (Pooley and Turnbull 2005). These histories of migration were continuations of non-linear, multidirectional scatterings and intranational and international dispersion and resettlement (Hammond and El Rashidi 2018). As Back et al. (2022) argue in their discussion of East London:

> In East London, stakes of empire and revolution were played out in the face of successive waves of migration from the seventeenth century expulsion of the Huguenots from France through to the flows of Jewish refugees from the nineteenth century pogroms of the Russian Pale, the formation of the first Chinatown in colonial London, and arrivals and settlers that followed the links between the docks and migrant labour. Diasporic formations arrived from areas as close as Ireland and as distant as all five continents of the planet as the Empire reached out globally and received migrants locally in Spitalfields, Limehouse, Wapping, Poplar, Bow and Stepney following symmetrical geographies of colonial power. The Gordon riots of 1780, fanned by fear of Papist Catholicism targeted concentrations of Irish in Moorfields and East London. (Back et al. 2022, 297–298)

British cities became sites where new political communities and projects came into being. As Ware observes, "new types of organisations and alliances formed expressly to articulate opposition to European colonial rule as well as industrial capitalism" (Ware 2020, 30). Anticolonial ideologies were produced through synthesising elements of political philosophies and the methods of resistance that they were entwined with from the colonies and the imperial centres (Gopal 2019; James 1992). As Said argues, "opposition to empire in London and Paris was affected by resistance offered in Delhi and Algiers" (Said 1993, 240). These transcolonial processes of syncretism continued early modern, medieval and ancient transcontinental histories of philosophical hybridization (Van Aerde 2018; Zadeh 2017). The political and cultural materials of the colonized and the colonizers were combined to invent local, bourgeois and working class nationalist and antinationalist political

discourses and cultural traditions that conveyed narratives on separateness and purity and universality respectively (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Kelley 2021). Anticolonial cultural nationalisms and religious authoritarian movements reproduced colonial nationalist formations such as their constitutive racial, ethnic, tribal and sexual taxonomies. Some anticolonial internationalisms replicated these typologies as others sought to produce counter-histories, counter-theorisations and counter-taxonomies (Mamdani 2012; Prashad 2007). Each rendition of a nationalist or internationalist philosophy was composed of a distinguishing, kaleidoscopic constellation of nationalist and antinationalist discursive elements (Asad 2018; Makalani 2011). These political cultures shared political concerns and there was some movement between them yet they simultaneously stood apart from one another.[1] As Burton notes, the colonized "simultaneously borrowed and rejected the terms of both Western feminism and colonial nationalisms as they sought to fashion their own political subjectivities" (Burton 1994, 491). These political formations further shaped the discourse of British dissidents (Gopal 2019). This suggests that anticolonial nationalisms both drew from and fed into British colonial nationalisms. Counterhegemonic discourses were produced through drawing from the philosophical resources of the colonized and colonizers as syncretic, transnational dimensions of imperial culture such as bourgeois respectability were formed through fusing materials from both the colonies and the imperial centres (Mosse 1985; Sinha 2000). As Stanard notes:

> It was not that Europeans held fixed concepts of gender and then projected those ideas through colonial conquest and rule, but that the colonial experience moulded European ideas about gender. The same holds for social class. Europeans did not show up in the colonies in the 1800s and 1900s with fully-formed received notions of social class, which they superimposed on the colonial situation. Instead, ideas about social class were formed in part on the colonial frontier or in the colonies. The same was true regarding ideas about race. (Stanard 2018, 24)

Transcolonial, transcontinental imaginations of European selfhood were indivisible from modes of inventing and policing racial populations in British cities and colonial territories and from policies and techniques of suppressing resistance in each colony. As Elkins argues:

> In the nineteenth century there were over 250 separate armed conflicts in the British Empire, with at least one in any given year. Among them were revolts in Barbados, Demerara (British Guiana), Ceylon, St. Vincent and Jamaica. They also included sustained efforts to conquer and dominate – or "pacify" as Britain termed it – the Ashante in the Gold Coast; the Mahdists in Sudan; the Xhosa, Zulu and Afrikaners in South Africa; the Afghans in Central Asia; and the Burmese in South Asia. Rudyard Kipling called these conflicts "the savage wars of peace": some were short, others were protracted and recurring. They

> became part of imperial life, consuming British manpower, lives and taxpayers funds while devastating local populations. (Elkins 2022, 10)

Counterinsurgency operations and regular policing in both the colonies and imperial centres were inseparable from the formation of undercover policing units across the British empire. As Woodman argues:

> Special Branch, for example, was initially informally known as the Special Irish Branch, designed to scupper militant pro-independence actions by Irish anti-colonials. Numerous intelligence and investigation techniques, from fingerprinting to signals intelligence collection, were pioneered in the imperial context, often in India. Slowly the mechanisms of social control, honed and perfected in the colonial laboratory, are incorporated into the domestic sphere and expand their targets to include a range of movements and individuals outside the original purview. The Metropolitan Police, from which Special Branch was spawned, was itself modelled directly on Sir Robert Peel's experience in forming a professional police force in colonial Ireland. (Woodman 2018a, 8)

Intertwined counterinsurgency and undercover and regular policing operations continued to develop as anticolonial political cultures during the inter-war years became increasingly interwoven with socialist projects. As Bhattacharrya, Virdee and Winter note, "Over the course of the 1920s and 1930s then, an already existing wave of anti-colonial and anti-racist struggles from America to Asia now became more entangled with Marxism, and communist politics" (Bhattacharyya, Virdee, and Winter 2019, 5). Transcontinental anticolonial internationalisms reconfigured strands of international communist thought through, as Makalani observes, "placing anti-racist and anti-colonial struggles at the centre of socialism" (Makalani 2011, 153). Edwards discusses how, during the inter-war years, Paris became a centre of what he calls "intercolonial internationalism" (Edwards 2003, 21). He examines the activity of a collective of the French Communist Party called the Union Intercoloniale (Intercolonial Union) and the Comité d'Etudes Coloniales (Colonial Studies Committee) and documents how writers, students, workers and communist activists from the colonies and France co-produced new disciplines, theorisations and experimental forms of writing. He portrays an internationalist anticolonial culture that produced "an *alternative universality* … written both against the grain of the universalist pretensions of high Western bourgeois culture and *also* against the grain of the communist institutional discourse challenging that culture" (Edwards 2003, 41).

British cities were other sites where "intercolonial internationalisms" (Edwards 2003, 21) were produced. There were bourgeois internationalisms that threaded through art and literary movements and more antinationalist, working class internationalisms that circulated through local vernacular cultures and specific disputes such as those on maritime labour that Featherstone describes as "subaltern articulations of black internationalism" (Featherstone 2012, 90). Some political discourses replicated biological

ideas of race as others produced counterhegemonic, antibiological, antinationalist theorisations. Other discussions focused on the connections between local forms of racial violence and empire and on the possibility of global anticapitalist and anticolonial movements. Dawson defines the Black Internationale in Britain in the nineteen thirties as a fluid, broad collective "grounded in an anti-racist ethnic pluralism and anti-fascist politics of international solidarity" (Dawson 2009, 159). Discussions on the inseparability of fascism and imperialism took place across European cities and colonies (Padmore 1941). Angolan antifascist and anticolonial political collectives between 1930 and 1945, for example, focused on both the colonization of Angola and the dictatorship of Salazar as they drew from the resources of activists in South Africa (Pimenta 2022). Antifascism and antiracism across Europe would separate and reconvene in different localities at specific historical moments yet, as Higgs observes, they continued to "contaminate one another" (Higgs 2016, 67) without interruption.

There was a proliferation of reformist and revolutionary projects in Britain during the post-war era following the settlement of refugees from Europe, European nationals and British and Commonwealth citizens from Ireland, the Caribbean, India and Pakistan. This was also a time marked by the quiet mass deportation of Chinese seafarers from Liverpool to Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore. The further progression of transcontinental internationalist discussions and the Third World Project was propelled by historical events such as the Bandung Conference in 1955, the development of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961 and the Tricontinental Conference in 1966. Internationalist political cultures in Britain drew from the national revolutions in Algeria and Cuba, liberation struggles across Latin America and Africa, the movement against the war in Vietnam, struggles for racial justice in the U.S and workers' rights in Europe and the 1968 student movements (Hickman and Ryan 2020; Narayan 2019; Prashad 2007; Saney 2019).

Internationalist political discourses filtered through transnational black expressive cultures in Britain and continued to offer political and cultural resources to anticolonial and antifascist struggles in other nations (Dawson 2009; Gilroy 1985). This can be illustrated by the political narratives that circulated through cultural forms at carnival in London and the editorials of the *West Indian Gazette* and *Afro-Asian Caribbean News* (Davies 2011). As Jones writes in the souvenir booklet of the West Indian carnival in St. Pancras, London in 1959:

> Maybe the aim of our mutual efforts to help build the *West Indian Gazette* and above all in that endeavour help to extend the already acknowledged cultural influence of the Caribbean throughout the Commonwealth. And may that be the leaven to weld still more firmly the brotherhood and unity of West Indians and other peoples of colour as well as the friendship for all peoples that will be the fruit of this cultural exchange. (Jones 1959 quoted in Davies 2011, 167)

There were discussions on national liberation movements and bourgeois nationalist leaders and whether they represented the working class in the colonies; on working as nurses and doctors and factory, building and transport workers in Britain; on racism in trade unions; on the Commonwealth Immigrants Act and on new beginnings and cultural identities in the colonies (Davies 2011). Black political collectives prioritized different projects such as campaigns that focused on political prisoners in South Africa and the torture of Irish political prisoners in Britain (Back et al. 2022; Klein 2009). As Wild observes:

> The UK groups expressed solidarity with, publicized the struggles of, and fundraised for, African liberation movements in Mozambique, Rhodesia, Angola and Guiné-Bissau, among others, and campaigned against apartheid in South Africa. They also supported Irish Republicanism and regarded the UK army's presence in Northern Ireland as a colonial occupation. (Wild 2015, 28)

Police violence in Britain in the nineteen seventies and eighties cannot be fully understood without the intertwined histories of transcontinental anticolonial internationalisms, transcolonial counterinsurgency and policing operations and antifascist and antiracist political cultures.

Cartographies of police violence

The summer of 1969 marks the beginnings of the imprisonment and detention without charge or trial of thousands of Irish during the Troubles and the normalization of torture in British prisons. "Five techniques" or methods of "deep interrogation" were honed by British military counterinsurgency operations across Aden, Cyprus, Kenya, Malaya and Palestine over decades (Cobain 2013; Moore 2014). The Heath government directed security forces to suspend their use in 1972 yet they continued to be employed in addition to forms of sexual violence, beating and burning. Sexual torture was routinely used in Northern Ireland by police, prison guards and soldiers in police detention centres, prisons and army barracks and during house raids against the families of suspects and campaigners and this corresponded to an escalation in domestic violence (O'Keefe 2017). Distinctions between suspects, civil rights leaders and those that they loved became indecipherable.

Methods of policing neighborhoods, urban disorder and industrial strikes across Britain were shaped by policing in Northern Ireland and counterinsurgency operations in other colonies. As Gilroy argues, "police writings on community policing make extensive reference to the Northern Ireland situation" (Gilroy in CCCS 1981, 171). The use of techniques such as surveillance and arbitrary raids on homes and community centres, searches, arrests and beatings became unremarkable. Forced and false confessions, isolation and threats of deportation during interrogation were normal. The detention of family members of intersecting categories of suspects and campaigners

became ordinary and subjects of all genders were targeted (Ford 2016; Mama 1993). Bowling and Phillips document the shift towards "a military model of policing that emphasises crime fighting, the pursuit of 'enemies within' and adopts practices such as stop and search 'swamps', surveillance and proactive intelligence gathering" (Bowling and Phillips 2003, 24). This took place as police support for white nationalist collectives became pervasive.

The routes that prosecutions took were marked by the failure and refusal of police to investigate other avenues, the alteration, fabrication and destruction of evidence, the intimidation and invention of witnesses and judicial refusal to acknowledge police violence and corruption. Legal campaigns were redirected and defence work interrupted due to the infiltration and interventions of informants and undercover police. This led to wrongful prosecutions and convictions including innumerable cases that have never been publicly recognized as miscarriages of justice (Bonino 2018; Savage and Milne 2012; Schlembach 2016; Undercover Policing Inquiry 2022; Woodman 2018a, 2018b).

The political ideal of the inseparability of different struggles and the imperative to offer sanctuary to others that were drawn from the political philosophies of anticolonial internationalisms threaded through the practices of local black legal collectives in British cities. This shaped their representation of West Indian, African and Asian and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, Irish, Jewish and white working class defendants which further enabled them to produce panoramic cartographies of police violence. These fluid collectives simultaneously worked with legal organizations in other countries as they became subject to intensified transnational undercover policing operations (Davies 2011; Herbert 2018).

Undercover anti-subversion units infiltrated and disrupted more than a thousand political collectives such as the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, the Anti-Apartheid and Troops Out Movements, the CND and trade unions such as the NUM (Bonino and Kaoullas 2015). They infiltrated strikes such as the miners' strike and Grunwick, prisoner collectives and internationalist feminist organizations formed across communities (Woodman 2018b). Queer cultures that can be traced through the history of squatting in Brixton in the nineteen seventies intersected with collectives that had been placed under surveillance (Cook 2013; Undercover Research Group 2018). Undercover police units collaborated with corporations such as building developers and blacklisted unionized construction workers (Lubbers 2021). Individuals and organizations who focused on deaths in police custody and prisons and who documented details of police violence and corruption case by case, which could potentially lead to the dismissal, prosecution and imprisonment of police officers, were intimidated and arrested. There were reports that homes and offices had been broken into and cars run off the road. Prisoners were informed that the lawyers who they asked for were

not available. Lawyers were charged with misdemeanours due to their exposure of police corruption and violence and judicial indifference and complicity (Herbert 2018). Collectives, communities and families were infiltrated, divisions were cultivated and suspicion and fear were nurtured. Informants and undercover police formed friendships and sexual partnerships with subjects who were under surveillance and befriended children. Those who publicly raised their fears that they were subject to undercover policing operations and that their work was being disrupted faced the ridicule and fury of both the red tops and the broadsheets (Hall et al. 1978; Lewis and Evans 2013).

This took place as narratives that formed connections between police negligence and violence, counterinsurgency operations and histories of colonial wealth production began to circulate within courtrooms across Britain. Arguments were presented during the trials that followed the unrest in Bristol in 1980 that illuminated how the West Indian history of the city shaped the policing of St. Paul's and this led to the acquittal of the defendants (Narayan 2018). These policing operations, launched in the name of national security, were indivisible from the desire to preserve British courtrooms as discursive spaces where connections between race, colonial labour and the formation of modern British institutions could not be formed and where Britishness could only be aligned with honour and justice. The desire to preserve nostalgic imaginations of life in the colonies and inventions of a benevolent British society propelled these forms of police violence and the prosecutions that they led to. As Mamdani argues, "violence is an act of constructing the political community. Rather than aberrational, it is essential. Violence is a means of defining who is a member and who is not – where the boundaries of the community lie" (Mamdani 2020, 329).

The braided histories of counterinsurgency and regular and undercover policing operations, transcolonial internationalisms, wrongful prosecutions and convictions and industrial action testify how the discursive structure of separate communities with distinct histories of political violence erases histories and cartographies of police violence. These forms of policing or "essential violence" (Mamdani 2020, 329) led to riots in Notting Hill and Handsworth and the prosecution of the Mangrove Nine in 1970, the Metro Four in 1971 and the Oval Four, the Stockwell Six and the second trial of Olive Morris in 1972. Police violence at the miners' strikes and the Shrewsbury strike in 1972 gave rise to the prosecution of the Shrewsbury Twenty Four. This was followed by a series of trials such as the Belfast Ten in 1973, the Cricklewood Twelve in 1974, the Birmingham Six in 1975, the Guildford Four and Maguire Seven in 1975 and 1976 and the Tottenham Court Road Two and the Leeds Bonfire Ten in 1976 which was the year of the racist murder of Gurdip Singh Chaddar in Southall. Police violence led to disorder at the Notting Hill carnival in 1976 and 1977, at the Grunwick strike from 1976 to 1978 and to the

prosecution of the Virk Brothers in 1978. This year was further marked by the racist murder of Altab Ali in Whitechapel. This decade came to an end with the police killing of Blair Peach in Southall in 1979.

The "focus on fiscal monetarism restricting public expenditure and market reforms of the public sector" (Back et al. 2022, 125) that defined the Thatcher government framed the police violence and the unrest that followed in Bristol in 1980 and the consequent charging of ninety protestors (Peplow 2019). Police violence and the invigorated law and order ethos that sanctioned it inspired a brutal institutional indifference towards the murder of thirteen young black people in the New Cross Fire of March 1981. It led to disorder in Brixton in April 1981, the wrongful prosecution of the Bradford Twelve and to further unrest in Brixton, Southall, Handsworth, Chapeltown, Toxteth, Moss Side and other neighborhoods in July 1981. This year was further marked by the racist murder of Parveen Khan and her three children in Walthamstow. Police violence gave rise to disorder at the miners' strike in 1984 and 1985, in Handsworth and Toxteth, in Brixton following the police shooting of Cherry Groce and in Tottenham following the police killing of Cynthia Jarett in 1985. It led to the case of the Newham Seven and the Pryce Family in 1985, to smaller pockets of unrest in different localities including the Wapping strike in 1986 and 1987, to the wrongful prosecution of the Tottenham Three in 1987 and to the Hillsborough disaster in 1989 (Bovell 2018; Bowling 1999; CCCS 1981; Keith 1993; Kelliher 2021; Sivanandan 1976; Solomos 2003). Police violence marked protests against Section 28 that took place towards the end of the decade. The nineteen eighties was distinguished by these notable legal cases and campaigns, murders, strikes and eruptions of disorder but these years were littered with prosecutions and convictions, undercover policing operations and acts of police violence that are still unknown (Undercover Policing Research Group 2018).

The discourses of black legal collectives that threaded through these events seeped into academic discussions as they dispersed through postcolonial vernacular political vocabularies and cultural styles. These cases illustrated critiques of dominant criminological and sociological discourse on crime and criminality and theorisations of criminalization and raised persistent questions on race and class (CCCS 1981; Hall et al. 1978). An irreverent indifference towards patrolling the borders of colonial categories and counterhegemonic ideas of justice and truth were tied to the defence of those deemed by the police to be disposable. These discourses filtered through black expressive and popular cultural narratives on work, love as a political ideal and the potentially lethal consequences of state negligence and violence (Gilroy 1985). This cartography of police violence in the nineteen seventies and eighties and the antinationalist internationalist histories and theoretical resources that

circulate through it lead to a discussion on the psychopolitical legacies of police violence that are essential to histories of political violence in postcolonial Britain.

Categorization, ascription, inscription

Colonial nationalist taxonomies were essential components of modern colonial statecraft (Mignolo 2011). Thousands of years of migration and hybridization within and between colonies were replaced with both new and reinvented local systems of classification that were represented as timeless. The colonized were fractured and divided as they were incorporated into the colonial state. Disparate taxonomies were instituted in each colony and subjects were sorted into categories and subcategories such as race, tribe and caste. These classifications were invented as immutable and each one was defined by a separate cultural trajectory and distinguishing characteristics. This took place under multiple forms of both direct and indirect rule. As Mamdani in his discussion of how ethnic groups were redefined as tribes under indirect rule argues, "The native is the creation of the colonial state: colonized, the native is pinned down, localized, thrown out of civilization as an outcast, confined to custom and then defined as its product (Mamdani 2012, 2)". These typologies were central to the administration of forced removal, land expropriation, resettlement and law and order (Bhandar 2018; Day and McBean 2022). Colonized subjects faced laws and administrative processes and were ascribed rights, customs and conventions specific to each category and subcategory in each colony yet as the borders of classifications shifted. As Stoler in her discussion of racial taxonomies in the Dutch East Indies states:

> The category 'European' also included an ill-defined population of poor whites, subaltern soldiers, minor clerks, abandoned children of European men and Asian women, as well as creole Europeans whose economic and social circumstances made their ties to metropolitan bourgeois civilities often tenuous at best. At later moments, it was to include Japanese, Africans and Chinese. Being 'European' was supposed to be self-evident but was also a quality that only the qualified were equipped to define. (Stoler 2000, 93)

The production of counter-typologies became a distinguishing feature of internationalist anticolonial and antiracist movements that refused to replicate colonial nationalist systems of categorization. Some Caribbean anticolonial nationalisms produced theorisations of West Indianness and Caribbeanness that turned sharply away from colonial racial typologies. These anticolonial counter-taxonomies, that were intertwined with specific political projects, shaped internationalist antiracist narratives that circulated through black political and expressive cultures in Britain. As Hall states:

> And what's more, we became consciously West Indian in London. I came as a Jamaican. I'd never been to anywhere else in the Caribbean … And then suddenly we discovered what was common between Caribbean people. In spite of the fact that the islands are all different, nevertheless there's a kind of core commonness. So I discovered myself as a West Indian at that point. That was a very liberating moment for me. I mean there's a dark moment in that as well because what that meant was that politically the idea of West Indian Federation became the focus of all of our hopes. We thought we can't do this without each other. It works in London. It produces wonderful literature. Each place is too small to sustain independently. And I suppose if eventually a West Indian Federation had come off, I might well have gone home. (Hall and Back 2009, 668)

The formation of these new identities led to the transcontinental proliferation of multidisciplinary work on creolization and Caribbeanness (Hall 2003). The political project of producing anticolonial counter-taxonomies is further exemplified by the philosophy of the Black Consciousness Movement (Biko and Stubbs 1978). As Mbembe observes, they "dispensed with the idea of race as a biological essence while continuing to embrace blackness as an emancipatory weapon" (Mbembe 2007, 141 quoted in Hook 2012, 25). Colonial nationalist systems of classification and different counter-typologies travelled within and between colonies and through the imperial centres. Internationalist political discourses illuminated the importance of categorization in relation to the consciousness of being of the colonized. They emphasised the necessity of producing counter-theorisations of racialised subjectification that did not reproduce colonial nationalist taxonomies and could thus lead to unifying divided colonized groups and to new liberatory modes of existence (Biko and Stubbs 1978; Hook 2012; hooks 2000; Nandy 2015). The theoretical resources produced by antinationalist internationalist political and intellectual cultures and the vernacular forms that bleed into them lead to a new theorization of categorization, ascription and inscription that does not reproduce colonial nationalist typologies and is essential to an understanding of the psychopolitical legacies of police violence.

There is no subject before categorization. The subject is classified, before and after they are born, in disciplinary spaces such as the hospital, in institutional care and in different branches of their family. They are categorized according to classifications such as family lineage, disability, legal citizenship, gender and ethnicity which reproduces broader dominant discursive formations on ancestry, normality, national belonging, biological sex and race. The subject who cannot be categorized such as the subject whose parents are unknown and the possible movement of subjects from one category to another does not lead to the dissolution of these typologies. The subject comes into being as they are categorized and as they gradually respond to the numerous, potentially incommensurable, contested and shifting categorisations that took place before and after their birth. As Butler argues:

> Bound to seek recognition of its own existence in categories, terms, and names that are not of its own making, the subject seeks the sign of its own existence outside itself, in a discourse that is at once dominant and indifferent. Social categories signify subordination and existence at once. (Butler 1997, 20)

The subject interprets the classifications of others. They categorize themselves and others as they draw from local and international colonial and postcolonial nationalist taxonomies and antinationalist, antibiological political discourses that seek to displace colonial systems of classification.

Police violence categorizes the subject and ascribes them with subhuman or prehuman properties such as the compulsion to violate. As Fassin argues, "Ascription is the foundational act through which racialization is produced. It is the imposition of difference" (Fassin 2011, 422). The subject is categorized and ascribed as they are confronted with the threat of death or loss entrenched in police violence. They face imaginations of themselves as "a bundle of drives" (Mbembe 2001, quoted in Hook 2012, 212), as a being who the nation and the police must be protected from as they are ascribed with the drive to destroy that gives rise to both the insistence that they are responsible for the violence that they befall and the extrajudicial right to kill. The subject is encircled by public discourses which ridicule, humiliate and hate because they were violated (Ahmed 2016; Solomos 2003).

They are confronted with the attribution of properties such as biological instincts, innate inabilities, cultural characteristics and predispositions such as the impulsive drive to kill, pure irrationality and potential criminal abnormality. They inscribe themselves as they respond to these ascriptions. As Butler argues, "power not only *acts on* a subject but, in a transitive sense, *enacts* the subject into being" (Butler 1997, 13).

The subject inscribes themselves with potentially contradictory properties. Fanon discusses the "internalization – or, better, the epidermalization – of this inferiority" (Fanon 1986, 13). Hall defines "epidermalization" as "literally the inscription of race on the skin" (Hall 1996, 16). This suggests that the subject inscribes the surface of a body but they inscribe and carve the interior and exterior of the self out of different properties as they fabricate distinctions between the inside and outside of the subject and the biological and the social. They produce different interpretations of the ascriptions of others and sculpt themselves with potentially incongruous subhuman and human properties. This "self-inscripting" (Wynter in Scott 2000, 206) subject may become someone they define as naturally physically weak yet potentially strong, criminal and innocent, pathological and normal and responsible and not responsible for the coldness and cruelty that they have faced. Fanon traces the racialising ascriptions fabricated "out of a thousand details, anecdotes, stories" (Fanon 1986, 111). He describes, as he faces the terror of a white child in Paris, how he is "given back" (Fanon 1986, 113) to himself in monstrous form yet as he protests against this. He states, "My body was given back to me,

sprawled out, distorted, recoloured, clad in mourning in that white winter day" (Fanon 1986, 111). He further illuminates how the subject inscribes others as they inscribe themselves. He observes, "All those white men in a group, guns in their hands, cannot be wrong. I am guilty. I do not know of what, but I know that I am no good" (Fanon 1986, 139). The subject may be left with themselves as someone who is afraid, "guilty" and "no good" as they wonder what it is that they have done and as the police become those who "cannot be wrong" (Fanon 1986, 139).

Subhuman and human properties

The properties that the subject inscribes themselves with such as biological drives and innate abilities, potential and temperament were produced by modern disciplinary discourses across the social and life sciences and arts and humanities from the late eighteenth century. Capacities and attributes that were built upon early modern inventions were constituted through drawing from discursive materials across disciplines (Foucault 2003, 2009; Spade 2010; Wynter 2003). Different categories of beings such as races, tribes and sexes were invented through aligning elements such as moral sensibilities, innate intelligence and cultural development with bodily characteristics. These inventions of different populations developed across disciplines such as Racial Anthropology, Criminology, Philosophy and Psychology in the nineteenth century and Eugenics in the early twentieth century (Bauman 1989; Mosse 1985). These disciplinary discourses and the customs and conventions that they gave rise to circulated through cultural forms such as fine art and modern literature, new modern public institutions such as universities and prisons and the new bourgeois public sphere transforming common sense modes of thought (Said 1993). These classificatory systems continue to shape, as Rose argues, how "individuals experience, understand, judge and conduct themselves" (Rose 1996, 128). The subject inscribes themselves with properties defined as hereditary, innate and environmental cultural, biological and psychological characteristics that will further classify them as abnormal or pathological or healthy and normal.

They carve and inscribe themselves as they reproduce and redefine human and subhuman properties such as an immutable, innate low intelligence. They thereby assume the responsibilities of contemporary public and private bodies who are responsible for the cultivation of capabilities. The inherent incapacities or absence of innate talent that the subject inscribes themselves with dissolves the failure of different state bodies and the private companies that they work with to meet their legal responsibilities to develop abilities. The subject who faces police violence is confronted with the refusal of the police to assume their legal accountabilities and with the legal and ethical obligations that are not extended to them

(Wynter 1994). Fein argues in her discussion on the Armenian genocide and the Shoah that:

> both Jews and Armenians had been decreed by the dominant group that was to *perpetrate in the crime to be outside the sanctified universe of obligation* – that circle of people with reciprocal obligations to protect each other whose bonds arose from their relation to a deity or a sacred source of authority. (Fein 1979 quoted in Wynter 1994, 2)

Wynter applies the analysis of Fein to her discussion of the classification "no humans involved" that was used by judicial officials in Los Angeles to refer to young, unemployed black men who had faced police violence. She illuminates in her argument on the riots of 1992 how police violence places the violated subject "outside the sanctified universe of obligation" (Fein 1979 quoted in Wynter 1994, 2). Police violence articulates how the subject is a being whose life can be threatened or destroyed and whose present and future are both immaterial and predestined. The absence of protections accorded to the subhuman rest upon the protections and obligations that encircle the human. The subhuman can be disturbed as the human lives in peace.

The subject is left with the responsibility for the suffering and incapacitation produced by police negligence and violence which illuminates the instability of the binary between homicide and suicide (Mbembe 2003). They are faced with their debilities and incapacities as they assume or refuse the refuted responsibilities of the police (Puar 2017). The subject is left with the need to return responsibility for the police violence that they have faced.

The properties that the subject is ascribed with and inscribes themselves with such as an innate destructiveness or an inability to defend themselves or those that they love further produces a discourse about the past, present and future of the subject. The innate attributes, abilities and incapacities, which the subject is deemed to possess, are used to explain what they will face and be able to accomplish in the future. The subject inscribes themselves and others as they reproduce and contest categorisations, properties and responsibilities. They reproduce and reinvent human and subhuman taxonomies as they reclassify and reinscribe themselves and others, assume and refuse responsibility for the police violence that they have faced and produce a historical narrative about the past, present and future.

Exoneration and resubjectification

The silent refusal to examine the psychopolitics of police violence nurtures the criminalization and pathologisation of subjects who are faced with a ferocious indifference towards their necropolitical incapacitation. The suicidal subject, the addicted subject, the debilitated subject, the subject who is

unable to flourish, the subject who has not been able to achieve "perfect supremacy of the self over the self" (Foucault 2003, 369) is left with responsibility for their own subjection and the need to exonerate themselves from the negligence and violence that they have faced. Butler argues:

> The insistence that a subject is passionately attached to his or her own subordination has been invoked cynically by those who seek to debunk the claims of the subordinated. If a subject can be shown to pursue or sustain his or her subordinated status, the reasoning goes, then perhaps final responsibility for that subordination resides with the subject. Over and against this view, I would maintain that the attachment to subjection is produced through the workings of power, and that part of the operation of power is made clear in this psychic effect, one of the most insidious of its productions. (Butler 1997, 6)

The binary between histories and legacies of neglect and violence becomes unstable. The subject is categorized and ascribed with properties as they face police violence and inscribe themselves with capabilities, inabilities and characteristics as they reckon with responsibility for this violation.

The distinction that Freud argues for between "mourning and melancholia" (Freud 1914) and Du Bois' notion of "double consciousness" (Du Bois 1989) are two paths that lead to a theorization of an essentially divided, melancholic and mournful subject. Freud observes how mourning is a necessary, productive condition of working through and recognizing both what was experienced and its afterlife. He further defines melancholia as a state of being where the subject does not know what they have suffered and how this hardship continues to shape their life in the present. He argues that the subject must recognize what they have endured and reconstruct their history if they are to be liberated from the legacies of this loss. The argument of Du Bois on "two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps from being torn asunder" (Du Bois 1989, 5) further leads to a divided subject who continuously moves between melancholic and mournful states of being reinscribing themselves with different properties and responsibilities.

I have argued that the subject categorizes and inscribes themselves with abilities, incapabilities and responsibilities as they face the categorisations and ascriptions embedded in police violence. The subject who has assumed the responsibility of the police for their own debilitation or for the killing of others is left to exonerate themselves. They may punish themselves and potentially lead themselves to their own death or return themselves through their suffering to the need to reinterpret the histories and legacies of political violence that they have been abandoned with. They may be confronted with the question as to whether and how they can live if another has been incapacitated or killed. They are faced with the need to exonerate and resubjectify and humanize or rehumanize themselves. They may move between melancholic states of existence where the police violence

that they have observed and endured and its afterlife are not thought of and mournful states of being where these histories are pieced back together with their consequences and responsibility for the state abandonment and violence that the subject has faced is returned to the police. The subject is propelled by the desire to speak and the desire to be silent, the desire to reconstruct this history and the desire to turn away from it. They move between brutality and peace, hate and love and bare life and the pursuit of freedom. They collide and struggle with themselves and others as they move between guilt and condemnation and exoneration and autonomy reinscribing themselves with different properties and responsibilities as they produce competing discursive narratives. The subject may form an interpretation that imagines them as a person who should have been protected and must now be defended and vindicated and another narrative which insists that the subject is less than human and responsible for both the violence that they have faced and the legacies of these violations.

Nationalist discourses composed of ideas of separate communities, cultural trajectories and political histories fragment the histories and cartographies of police violence and political hybridization that I have discussed. Gilroy in his discussion of "postcolonial melancholia" argues:

> before the British people can adjust to the horrors of their own modern history and start to build a new national identity from the debris of their broken narcissism, they will have to learn to appreciate the brutalities of colonial rule enacted in their name and to their benefit, and to understand the damage it did to their political culture at home and abroad, and to consider the extent of their country's complex investments in the ethnic absolutism that has sustained it. (Gilroy 2004, 108)

He illuminates the connections between nationalism, the erasure of colonial history and melancholia. Melancholic nationalist discourses cannot be used to reconstruct colonial and postcolonial histories of police violence as they fragment these cartographies. Nationalist formations cannot be utilized to exonerate the subject as they are further composed of ideas of essential biological and psychological capacities, predispositions and characteristics. These discourses shield and absolve state and corporate bodies from charges of negligence as the subject is held responsible for the path that their life has followed through turning to their choices, inabilities and lack of innate potential or drive.

The subject must turn to antinationalist, antibiological discourses that stem from "intercolonial internationalisms" (Edwards 2003) and the antiracist political philosophies that they gave rise to if they want to reconstruct a panoramic history of police violence and the accompanying "history of contemporaneous and subsequent cover-ups and denials" (Hall and Pick 2017, 15). They must turn away from properties of essential, innate personhood if they want to exonerate, resubjectify and rehumanize themselves (Biko and

Stubbs 1978; Fanon 1986; Wynter 2003). The subject can reinscribe themselves with different properties, recategorise themselves and others or redefine these classifications, return the responsibilities that they have assumed back to public institutions such as the police and produce a reconstructive, reparative narrative which can exonerate them from the violence that they have faced. They can be absolved of their own subhumanisation.

Conclusion

I presented a transdisciplinary, reparatory history of police violence in Britain during the nineteen seventies and eighties. I argued that transcontinental colonial nationalisms and anticolonial internationalisms were entwined with the development of transcolonial counterinsurgency operations and modes of undercover and regular policing since the late eighteenth century. I discussed how this furthers our understanding of histories of police violence in Britain that are interwoven with the trajectories of anticolonial, antifascist and antiracist political cultures. I drew from counterhegemonic historical narratives and antibiological theorisations borne out of internationalist political cultures as I sought to reconnect histories of police violence to their psychopolitical legacies. This discussion further illustrated the beginnings of a broader, antinationalist theory of racialised subjectification that offers an alternative to new postcolonial nationalist ideologies that erase these histories of political violence. The subject cannot be exonerated from responsibility for the police violence through which they have come into being if their histories have been fragmented. The work of producing reconstructive academic counternarratives and the reparatory work of mourning, exoneration, resubjectification and rehumanization are inseparable.

I wanted to consider the braided histories of police violence and internationalist cultures that the contemporary antiracist university is indebted to particularly as this is rarely acknowledged and remember those who have never been exonerated from the police violence that they have faced (Sivanandan in IRR 2019). As Rodney asks, "And even for those whom we might not remember in poetry and song, what about their lives?" (Rodney in Prescod 1976, 126). This essay examines how distinctions between forms of state and corporate abandonment and violence such as police violence and violence against the self are untenable (Fanon 1986; Mbembe 2003; Nandy 2015). This discussion could further contribute to debates on justice and reparatory academic work, on sexual categorization and sexual torture and on other forms of state and corporate negligence and violence and racialised subjectification (Hall 2018).

I want this "theory of monstrosity" (Bacon in Skeggs 2019, 31) to illuminate how each subject may become someone who is horrifying, who can be

debilitated and killed with impunity, who must die due to the thoughtlessness and brutality that they have faced and insist that they are responsible for or someone who must be defended and exonerated. I hope that it can reflect how we are deeply implicated in the biocolonisation or invention of different biological populations and the production of different subjects that are closer to and further from notions of the imperfect, undesirable, abnormal, disposable and subhuman.

Note

1. Internationalist academic cultures which normalise nationalist formations of bourgeois respectability illuminate similar connections and disconnections between nationalist and internationalist communities and philosophies (Mosse 1985). Nationalist and antinationalist ideologies furthermore circulate through cultures such as conscious hip-hop. These political philosophies share some discursive elements and are articulated through similar cultural forms yet they are distinct and opposed.

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