



# Critical Historical Criminology in the Antipodean: Unthinking History and Criminology in the Global South

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## Abstract

This paper makes a call for a critical historical criminology of the antipodean and the Global South. It makes a preliminary argument for a critical historical criminology that is *against method* and in favour of political alliances with *critical perspectives* that can enrich historico-criminological understandings in an antipodean and Southern context. In particular, this paper explores the potential for a politico-academic alliance between critical historical criminology and postcolonial studies, Southern theory and Indigenous research. Such politico-academic alliances reveal that critical historical criminology is best understood as a *negation* of both criminology and history and that historical criminology does not have to be understood as a new sub-discipline and academic specialism at the intersection of history and criminology. On the contrary, this paper argues that historical criminology can be approached as a critical attempt to ‘unthink the social sciences’ and to ‘de-discipline ourselves’.

**Keywords:** Critical criminology; historical criminology; historical study of crime; Indigenous research; postcolonialism; Southern theory.

## Introduction

It has become commonplace to speak of *historical criminology* as if it were a new specialty in criminology, an emerging sub-field in the study of crime. The core assumption behind the burgeoning discourse of historical criminology seems to be that historical criminologists are intent on fulfilling the conventional tasks of criminology by incorporating historical research into the working methods of the study of crime, or else that historical criminology is still criminology but done in *historical mode* (Australian and New Zealand Society of Criminology 2023; British Society of Criminology 2023; Churchill 2017: 380; Churchill, Yeomans and Channing 2022: 6). In this paper, I offer an alternative way of thinking about historical criminology as a critical endeavour. Arguably, historical criminology is not a *continuation* of traditional criminology but rather a positive attempt to do without it, to effectively move beyond it and create something positive by negating it. To conceive of historical criminology in a critical fashion is to understand it as an attempt to overcome the strict disciplinary boundaries of both history and criminology. When viewed in this light, the novelty of historical criminology lies in a double negation that gives life to the positive affirmation of a distinctive academic positionality at the intersection of history and criminology. In what follows, I expand on this insight by showing that a critical historical criminology of the antipodean and Global South can effectively move beyond history and criminology by establishing a web of politico-academic alliances with Indigenous research, Southern theory and postcolonial studies.



It is a truism to say that works of historical criminology are neither works of history nor works of criminology—they are a bit of both. However, such a widely accepted observation has not been scrutinised with a sufficiently critical eye. Though it might be assumed that the key methodological implication of this observation is that a defining feature of historical criminology must be its *interdisciplinarity*, this is a suboptimal way of thinking about historical works on crime. The point of doing historical criminology is not necessarily that of enabling a degree of compatibility between, say, criminological classifications and historical narratives or establishing a level of integrability between criminological theories and historical data. Historical criminology does not have to be understood, by necessity, as an interdisciplinary synthesis. On the contrary, the reason we have no choice but to speak of historical criminology—to acknowledge it and recognise it as an independent reality—is because, over the years, research efforts in the historical study of crime have given life to a *history of interaction* between historians, criminologists and other participants in the historical study of crime that has made it obsolete or even impossible to classify certain historical works on crime and certain criminological works on history as either *historical* or *criminological* in scope (Godfrey, Williams and Lawrence 2008: 19). In other words, something positively new and different has emerged from this process of interaction at the intersection of history and criminology that denies both its criminological and historiographic origins.

This suggests that, when viewed in a critical light, historical criminology is about transgressing and transcending disciplinary boundaries rather than building bridges between them. Historical criminology is an attempt to *unthink* and *undo* criminology and history and not an attempt to synthesise them. Borrowing from Wallerstein (1988, 2001), it can be argued that historical criminology offers a way to ‘unthink social science’, to overcome the limits of nineteenth-century social scientific paradigms and go beyond the existing structures of social scientific thinking. Hence, historical criminology is not a criminological advance but a partial abandonment of orthodox criminology. It is neither an inherently intradisciplinary nor interdisciplinary development but a way of combating the arbitrariness of disciplinary constraints and divisions in the social sciences. As Foucault (1980: 39) would put it, historical criminology is one of the avenues through which social scientists are struggling to ‘de-discipline’ themselves. It follows from this that historical criminology is not a sub-discipline of criminology but a practice of *de-disciplinisation*. Historical criminology should not be regarded as an exclusively criminological specialty—just like crime history is not to be regarded as a *history specialisation*—however, at best, as a set of ‘conversations in a crowded room’ (Yeomans, Churchill and Channing 2020: 245) initiated by scholars from disparate fields to further a sort of dialogical and discursive transgression and transcendence of social scientific disciplinary fields.

This paper teases out the implications of this way of thinking about historical works on crime for a critical historical criminology of the antipodean and the Global South. In particular, it outlines a possible way forward for a number of critical criminological varieties—postcolonial, Southern and Indigenous criminologies—to work together and make politico-academic alliances across a Global Southern context. A number of forces have conspired against the coming together of the critical criminological varieties that this paper is concerned with, and it would be wrong to believe that such criminologies are natural allies. For instance, Cunneen (2018) critiqued criminological perspectives from the Global South for failing to adopt an Indigenous lens and adequately distance themselves from administrative criminology. In turn, Southern criminologists have explicitly rejected nativism and the romanticisation of *the Indigenous other* on the basis that the hegemony of colonial thought is such that criminology cannot disentangle itself from it completely, making a pure postcolonial or Indigenous lens ‘either a fantasy or an impossibility’ (Carrington, Dixon et al. 2019: 165). Trapped within the boundary constraints of their own sub-specie of criminology, scholars have overlooked the potential for historical criminology to become the theoretical glue that can make all variants of critical criminology stick together, as well as an essential epistemic conduit support for critical fluxes in criminological research.

### **Decolonisation, Southernisation and Indigenisation**

The prospects for a critical historical criminology of the antipodean and the Global South are tied to our capacity to conceive of recent changes in the structure of social scientific thinking in dialectical terms; the impact that a distinctively historico-criminological way of thinking will have in the near future heavily depends on historical criminologists’ capacity to fracture and transcend—and not to further consolidate and solidify—the disciplinary boundaries of criminology and history in the present. It is only by developing such a cognitive capacity that a sense of continuity between historical criminology and critical criminology can be established—and some remarkable affinities between the two are starting to be noticed (Catello 2022: 7-8; Tepperman 2022). Critical criminology emerged in the United States and Britain in the late 1960s and early 1970s to challenge the theoretical assumptions and practical aims of traditional criminology and not to further them (Linnemann and Martinez 2018; Michalowski 1996; Quinney 1973: 96). Relatedly, all the pioneering works in the historical study of crime from the 1970s were works of critical history—or what Godfrey (2011) called ‘critical crime history’—and their overarching aim was that of displacing rather than complementing the work of traditional practitioners of history. The new social historians of crime of the 1970s wanted the study of the past to become a vital tool for ‘the understanding of modern society and politics’ (Jones

1983: 5), and critical criminologists in the 1970s identified in critical historical perspectives on crime the possibility ‘to introduce politics into criminology’ (Cohen 1986: 469). By bringing politics into criminology, critical criminology effectively tried to *de-criminologise* criminology to make it less of a criminological science and more of a political practice.

When critical criminology was imported into Australia, it gave life to a ‘strongly politically engaged criminology’ (Carrington and Hogg 2012: 47) working on prison abolition and various struggles for justice and criminal justice campaigns around prisoners’ movements, deaths in custody, police killings, the policing of Indigenous people and young people, gendered violence and miscarriages of justice. Just as critical crime history has been centrally involved in the study of modern institutions of control, crime and empire, race and colonialism, slavery and immigration, and gender and violence (Godfrey 2011), so too a critical historical criminology of the antipodean must engage with these critical themes. However, the question is how to approach the critical study of such themes and issues. For instance, commenting on the study of death in custody, Cunneen (2011a: 169) argued that historical research should not be treated exclusively as a ‘method of understanding the past’ but also as a ‘method for appreciating the present’ because an occurrence such as a death in custody is ‘simultaneously an historical event and happening in the present’. However, arguably, an historico-criminological understanding of issues such as deaths in custody does not take a critical shape via a methodological synthesis between past-oriented history and present-centred criminology. On the contrary, historical criminology becomes critical precisely by being *against method* and focusing on the elaboration of critical historical *perspectives* rather than on the development of narrow methodological specialisms:

The advancement of historical criminology lies not in the exclusive embrace of any given method or programme, but in the assembly of a shared conceptual framework through which to make sense of and evaluate diverse historical perspectives on crime and justice. (Churchill 2018: 9)

In other words, critical historical criminology requires us to eschew strictly methodological interpretations of what the historical study of crime and crime-related phenomena is about.

The focus of this paper is on ‘the assembly of a shared conceptual framework’ for the critical study of historical perspectives on crime-related phenomena in an antipodean and Southern context. The guiding contention of the paper is that, instead of working on a gradual historicisation of criminology premised on the adoption of certain historiographic techniques like comparative analysis, archival research and long-time frame approaches, we should strive to identify valuable historical perspectives on crime and justice that will help us further de-discipline ourselves and assist us in fulfilling the task of unthinking social science. Our task as critical thinkers should be that of building politico-academic alliances between compatible perspectives that challenge conventional social scientific systems of thought and not that of artificially creating new interdisciplinary methodologies that will further help to entrench them.

### ***For a Critical Historical Criminology of the Global South***

What are some of the key lessons to be learnt from postcolonial, Southern and Indigenous perspectives in criminology? That criminology has historically been complicit in colonial projects of domination and that it originates in the planned colonial genocide against Indigenous people, that it developed as an imperialist science designed for the control of others, and that, today, it continues to be a ‘control-freak’ discipline and a technology of social control (Agozino 2003, 2004, 2010). That criminology started as a pseudoscientific project in the Global North through the popularisation of mischaracterisations of *the criminal* as a subhuman, monstrous and evolutionarily degenerate *other* typified by members of *primitive* cultures from the Global South (Carrington and Hogg 2017). That criminology confuses *metropolitan thinking* with *universal knowledge* while mostly ignoring epistemologies from the global peripheries and that it treats justice as a *domestic* and national project, overlooking both historical and contemporary criminal justice trends and episodes from outside the Northern Hemisphere—from colonial penal practices and victimisation in postcolonial contexts to the over-policing and over-representation of Indigenous people in prisons and the Islamisation of criminal justice in parts of the Global South—as well as disregarding customary forms of justice and transitional justice movements (Carrington, Hogg and Sozzo 2016; Carrington, Hogg, et al. 2019). That criminology, in its pursuit of crime control knowledge, is complicit in the silencing of Indigenous voices, experiences and perspectives, that it views Indigenous people through the prism of dysfunctionality, that it constructs Indigenous individuals and communities as *criminal others*, furthering their stigmatisation and marginalisation, and that many Indigenous people experience criminology to be a form of settler colonialist violence (Cunneen and Tauri 2016, 2019; Tauri 2018; Tauri and Porou 2014).

Postcolonial, Southern and Indigenous perspectives in criminology unambiguously substantiate what Lynch (2000) argued over 20 years ago using a Foucauldian lens: that an attentive analysis of the history of criminology reveals it to be a science of oppression. Such perspectives tell a history of criminology quite different from the one found in most criminology textbooks; the enlightened origins of the discipline are questioned, its scientific character is put in doubt, and its modern function is exposed as a remnant of colonial times (Agozino 2003; Carrington and Hogg 2017; Cunneen and Tauri 2016). In short, such perspectives

tell an anti-history of criminology that engenders criminological counter-memories. A sustained engagement with such perspectives points at obvious solutions: decolonising criminology, internationalising and southernising it, and indigenising it. However, this is easier said than done because mainstream criminology has historically proved to be quite resilient and resistant to change. Though already in the early 1980s, critical criminology could be said to have become part of ‘the accepted order of things’ (Cohen 1980: 87), Jock Young’s (2002: 252) claim that critical criminology is no less than ‘the criminology of late modernity’ is yet to be proven true in practice. In fact, some would argue that critical criminology’s time has passed, or at least that its disruptive effects have so far been successfully contained. For instance, Garland and Sparks (2000: 14) referred to the rise of critical criminology as a ‘short-lived moment’ in the 1970s that ‘did not last long’. Similarly, Valverde (2008: 203) claimed that ‘the battle for the soul of criminology that began with the rise of critical criminology in the 1960s has been lost’. It needs to be acknowledged that, when taken in isolation, the various *strains of critical criminology* have quite little to show for their efforts. However, taken collectively, they constitute an alternative worldview that has the potential to at least act as a potent criminological ‘counter-voice’ (J Young 2002: 259).

This is why we should refrain from attempting to turn historical criminology into a new criminological specialism or even a new variety of critical criminology. Instead, we ought to explore the potential for historical criminology to become a unifying mode of thinking critically about crime and justice from historical perspectives and, at the same time, an academic practice that will take us beyond both history and criminology. Wallerstein (2008) would have probably approved of calling historical criminology a particular manifestation of *historical social science* that advocates *undisciplinarity* and the dissolution of arbitrary sub-disciplinary divisions in criminology. Moreover, the fact that, in Wallerstein’s schema of things, historical social science’s principle of undisciplinarity follows from the principle of *historicity*, which, in turn, follows from the principle of *globality* (1998: 106-107), suggests that there is some value in using Wallersteinian terms to understand the relation of historical criminology to postcolonial, Southern and Indigenous perspectives. However, one problem is that, though Wallerstein’s critique of the social sciences and their world-historical development within historical capitalism is, fundamentally, a critique of Eurocentrism, Wallersteinian world-system analysis can be accused of blurring and occluding colonial difference by relying on a quintessentially Western epistemology (Mignolo 2002). Because of this, the temptation to interpret historical criminology in exclusively Wallersteinian terms should be resisted. That said, Wallerstein’s (1988, 2001) call for ‘the unthinking of the social sciences’ offers a valuable orientation to make sense of recent calls for the decolonisation of the curriculum in social science departments across both the Northern and Southern hemispheres and can, therefore, provide some guidance to appreciate the following discussion.

### ***Decolonising Knowledge Systems***

It could be argued that, within an academic, social scientific context, decolonisation stands for a critical will to *unthink and undo* the social sciences—to *de-do* them and *redo* them, to fundamentally re-imagine and restructure them. At the heart of this effort is a desire to expose the Northern and colonial origins of the social sciences and their complicity in Western imperialism and expansionism, the subjugation of non-European peoples, and the appropriation of Indigenous lands. At the basis of this process of *unthinking and rethinking* the social sciences lies a conscious re-historicisation of social scientific developments—that is, a re-reading of the history of the social sciences. Just as recent decades have witnessed feminist, postmodernist, LGBTQIA+ and postcolonial thinkers offer a re-reading of liberalism that denies its claim to emancipatory universality and understands it, instead, as oppressive, parochial, and historically and geographically contingent (see Seth 2001), so the twenty-first century has propelled a critique of the universalist assumptions of social science. Noticeable examples of this critical dialogue are Quijano’s (2000) work on the coloniality of power in a Latin American intellectual context, Chakrabarty’s (2000) studies on the provinciality of Europe and social history in India, and Connell’s (2007) work on the geopolitical assumptions of Northern models of knowledge and the need for a Southern theory. Though social science has historically succeeded at representing itself as timeless and placeless, such critiques expose it as Eurocentric and parochial, blind to the realities of the subaltern, and ignorant of epistemic and cognitive differences. Moreover, the critical counter-narratives of Quijano, Chakrabarty, Connell and others show that the decolonisation of the social sciences refers to a process of *de-Westernisation* of such sciences premised on a historical understanding of Western expansionism and colonialism as not only political and economic processes but also epistemological, intellectual and discursive ones.

Building an alliance between historico-criminological and postcolonial perspectives is a necessary part of this process of de-Westernisation, as it allows criminologists and historians to acknowledge the parochiality of their own disciplines and facilitates the construction of subaltern counter-narratives that can invalidate the universalist presuppositions of Western social science. Colonialism is not just a specific historical moment that came to be reversed at some point in the past by getting rid of colonisers. Colonialism did not abruptly end when sovereignty and territoriality were regained by colonised people and when their local and Indigenous languages and customary practices were revived. Colonisation is not reducible to the imposition of direct rule over certain regions of the world by colonial powers. Instead, it is to be understood as ‘the whole process of expansion, exploration, conquest, and imperial hegemonisation which constituted the “outer face”, the constitutive outside, of European

and then Western capitalist modernity after 1492' (Hall 1996: 249). Colonialism is as much a system of knowledge production and symbolic representation as it is a system of power, force and subjection. This means that colonisation is, at one and the same time, a synonym for the concrete and material Westernisation of the globe and for a certain way of staging and narrating history—a way of telling a story about the Western domination of the globe. In this regard, postcolonial and decolonial thinking are to be regarded as particular kinds of critical theory (Mignolo 2007: 155) but also, I would argue, as specific ways of knowing the past and performing the present.

Some of the key aims of postcolonial and decolonial thinking and theory are: (1) resisting the ideological hegemony of Western thought by engaging in global conversations that counteract Western impulses, acknowledge cultural diversity, include and represent the voices of colonised people, and establish 'cross-cultural dialogue without the baggage of imperialism' (Chakrabarty 2005: 4812)—in one phrase, postcolonialism is about letting the subaltern speak (Spivak 1988)—(2) demystifying global knowledge formations and exposing inequalities in the existing geopolitics and political economies of knowledge by re-narrativising the story of Western capitalist modernity in a way that problematises and displaces the relationship between the *centre* and the *periphery* (Hountondji 2006) and lets peripheral histories and temporalities proliferate and intrude into the grand narratives of the West; and, crucially, (3) achieving global justice not just at a social level but also at a cognitive one, confronting 'epistemic injustices' (Bhargava 2013), acknowledging the *epistemicides* and murders of knowledge perpetrated by Western modernity (de Sousa Santos 2014: 92), and making possible a process of epistemological cleansing of the intellect that, in educational settings, takes the shape of a decolonisation of curricula, research methodologies and research fields. The bare minimum that a critical historical criminology can do to stay attuned to the past realities of colonialism and their continuing effects in the present is taking seriously and helping achieve these three overarching goals of postcolonial critique.

Postcolonialism is not a *disciplinary field* but a *political project* that aims to restructure Western knowledge formations, turn global power structures upside down and refashion the world from below through a critical interrogation of histories of oppression, violence and injustice—and the twenty-first century can be said to be already 'the century of postcolonial empowerment' (Young 2012: 20). One of the core tasks for a critical historical criminology of the antipodean and the Global South, I would submit, is that of contributing to such empowerment by way of two interrelated research strategies. First, to disturb the relationship between postcolonial studies and the study of history (Cooper 2005) by: (1) elaborating on Agozino's (2003) claim that imperialism is the quintessential form of criminality and that typical criminal acts and behaviours in today's society can be analysed through a postcolonial lens by reference to imperialist violence; (2) initiating and continuing participation in critical research projects on the colonial origins of the study of such topics as crime, policing, criminal justice institutions and international law; (3) further researching the structural and *inherently eliminatory*—and at times genocidal—qualities of settler colonialism (Wolfe 2006) and their relevance for an understanding of contemporary crime-related phenomena in settler colonialist societies and elsewhere; (4) using critical historical perspectives to further expose the triangulation between colonialism, crimes of the state and the over-representation of marginalised peoples in criminal justice systems worldwide (Cunneen 2011b); and (5) bringing closer together critical criminological and postcolonial perspectives by advancing a critical interrogation of colonial and settler colonialist histories of oppression, violence and injustice—and, critically, doing so in consultation with justice movements active in the political field today so that a critical historical criminology of postcoloniality does not become just another ivory tower.

The second research strategy consists of assisting with more general tasks relating to: (1) the democratisation of historical and criminological knowledge; (2) the de-Westernised internationalisation of the historical study of crime; (3) the careful scrutiny of the historical, geographical and politico-economic specificity of historico-criminological knowledge production; and (4) the recognition of the value of peripheral thinking and Southern theorising. In this context, *the South* and *the periphery* ought not to be confused with purely geographical domains. As Carrington, Hogg and Sozzo (2016: 5) put it, the term *Southern* is a 'metaphor for the other, the invisible, the subaltern, the marginal and the excluded' and, accordingly, *Southern* criminology is not simply a criminology of the Southern Hemisphere but a criminology of the other, the invisible, the subaltern, the marginal and the excluded. The *South* is a social construct and a 'metaphor for the global inequality in knowledge and power' (Carrington, Hogg, et al. 2019: 8) that serves as a symbol of representation for the collective peripherality of voices lost in the deafening noise of colonialism, Eurocentrism and Westernisation.

### ***Southernising Historical Criminology***

Southern criminology is inextricably linked to postcolonial theory and decolonising projects in the Global South and is centrally concerned with addressing two interconnected problems. First, the history of colonialism has instituted a geopolitics and political economy of knowledge at a global scale that creates hierarchical stratifications of epistemologies that tend to invalidate the contribution to knowledge made by scholars from the Global South. Second, such a state of affairs in the dynamics of global knowledge production pushes 'criminologies of periphery' (Carrington 2017: 67) into a subordinate role in the global organisation of criminological knowledge. The solutions offered by Southern criminology are informed as much by postcolonial

theory as by Southern theory and are, therefore, part of a project that is integral to campaigns for justice worldwide. Such solutions rely on a systematic weaponisation of Southern epistemologies, cosmologies and realities to fundamentally transform the global dynamics of criminological knowledge production. Southern criminology aims to unthink and undo the Northern side of criminology and to reorganise the criminological enterprise as a whole in a way that is inclusive of peripheral perspectives and Southern voices and, therefore, is truly global. Southern criminology is about ensuring that Southern theory receives the credit it deserves for theorising the South *in its own terms* and that critical perspectives on imperialism and colonialism from the South are integrated into contemporary analyses of crime and justice.

Thus, *southernising* criminology means dealing with current imbalances in the global production of criminological knowledge and abandoning the Northern bias that has historically energised conventional criminology. Southernising criminology requires overcoming the Western limits of criminology in pursuit of an ideal of social science that does not equate the *globalisation* of knowledge with its *peripherisation* and that knows how to distinguish between the mere availability of information and a genuine sharing of knowledge. Just like Southern theory more broadly, Southern criminology aims to challenge Eurocentric knowledge systems; it attempts to move beyond ‘the self-referentiality of Northern social science and the extraversion of intellectual work in the periphery’ and move towards a ‘more democratic structure of theory on a world scale’ (Connell and Dados 2014: 134). Relatedly, Southern criminology borrows from Southern theory a sense of urgency about the need to rearrange the global division of labour within university settings. Even in a *rich periphery* like Australia, academics have historically assumed a peripheral attitude of intellectual subordination to and dependency on academic authorities from the Global North. As Connell (2017: 7) put it, ‘we travel to Berkeley for advanced training, invite a Yale professor to give our keynote address, teach from [United States] textbooks, read theory from Paris’. It is here that the benefits of an alliance between Southern and critical historical perspectives become clear. Without a clear sense of its historical subservience to Northern intellectual hegemony, Southern criminology risks becoming a useful tool of Western administrative criminology that perpetuates the creation of peripheral reservoirs of new facts and data extraction sites and lets the epistemic injustice intrinsic in processes of peripherisation go unchallenged.

Put differently, criminologies from the Global South need to reckon with the fact that often ‘ideas run, like rivers, from the south to the north and are transformed into tributaries in major waves of thought’ (Cusicanqui 2012: 104). At a fundamental level, this means that Southern criminology is at risk of becoming a derivative discourse and of being absorbed by mainstream trends in global and comparative criminology. As Brown (2018: 85) provocatively asked, ‘is Southern criminology anything new or different, or is it fundamentally but one more variant of criminology’s oldest game, comparative or transnational observation?’ According to Brown (2018), for Southern criminology to bring about a different state of affairs in criminology, Southern criminologists cannot simply limit themselves to supplementing mainstream criminology with peripheral observations. Instead, they need to aim at fundamentally changing the discipline as a whole. Southern criminology ought to make it possible to unthink criminology as it is, to imagine a different criminology. It has to enable the flourishing of a criminology that does not resemble its historically Northern and Western characteristics and culminate in a new science of oppression, this time with a Southern face. Arguably, this will only be possible once Southern criminology abandons its current docility, as its practitioners seem more interested in *reorienting*, *modifying* and *augmenting* criminology than in *denouncing*, *opposing* and *displacing* it (Carrington, Hogg and Sozzo 2016). This is where the need for a fully historical Southern criminology—and for a critical historical criminology of the Global South more broadly—becomes apparent; if the historical development of criminology can be said to have coincided with the emergence of scientific techniques of oppression and control that played a crucial role in the subjection of colonised and Indigenous peoples, then we have no choice but to be against criminology, to be willing to undo it and unthink it.

That said, it would be inaccurate to suggest that Southern criminology is inevitably prone to be coopted by administrative criminology because criminologies of the Global South have historically come to life as political projects—and not just empirical and theoretical ones (Carrington, Hogg and Sozzo 2016: 2). As Carrington, Dixon, et al. (2019: 182) pointed out, ‘critical studies of crime, crime control, punishment, and state violence in the Global South ... did not arise in a vacuum. Rather, they emerged at times of resistance’. As Connell made clear, the issues raised by Southern theory must be formulated not purely in intellectual terms but practically: ‘what does this *ask us to do* that we are not now doing, as knowledge workers?’ (2014: 218). The decolonisation of university systems must be understood both as theory and as praxis—that is, as a discourse that takes imperialism, colonialism and racism as serious objects of study and as a political practice that aims to introduce concrete changes in educational settings (Bhambra, Gebrial and Nişancıoğlu 2018: 2). The practices associated with the decolonisation of the curriculum and southernisation of theory do not necessarily constitute an attempt at *destroying Northern knowledge*; however, they do point towards processes and activities of the *decentring* and *de-territorialisation* of Eurocentric systems of knowledge and power (le Grange 2016: 6). This is why it is imperative for Southern criminology to take a critical and oppositional stance. Not doing so would render Southern criminology vulnerable to being turned into a curricular instrument for administrative criminology departments in the Global North to engage in *decolonial washing*—that is, in managerial tactics

designed to give the impression that decolonised forms of knowledge are being taught at university when this is not really the case (see le Grange et al. 2020).

Borrowing from Cusicanqui (2012: 107), it could be argued that today, the real challenge for criminologies of the Global South lies in constructing ‘South-South links’ that will allow Southern criminologists ‘to break from the politics and academics’ of Northern criminology and enable the making of a truly Southern theory of crime and establishment of a fully Southern dialogue on justice. Unavoidably, such a dialogue on justice will only be truly just if it gives prominence to Indigenous voices.

### ***Indigenising Historical Criminology***

Indigenous criminology is unabashedly oppositionist (Cunneen, Rowe and Tauri 2017; Tauri, 2017, 2018). The reason for this is obvious: respect for indigeneity has never been a defining quality of Western criminal justice. Though Western laws were declared a *sanctuary* for Indigenous people living in Australia when the Jack Congo Murrell’s Case was decided by the Supreme Court of New South Wales (*R v Murrell* 1836), the reality is that the development of a reign of British law on Australian land in the early nineteenth century coincided with the suppression of a pre-existing system of Indigenous self-governance and customary law (Muldoon 2008). The fact that, in the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* of 2017 (The Uluru Statement 2022), Indigenous leaders used the word *Makarrata*—or ‘the coming together after a struggle’—to describe the culmination of the agenda of Australia’s First Nations Peoples is a telling indication of the low level of trust that Indigenous people have for the Western language of justice. From an Indigenous point of view, the history of colonialism and the history of crime control are one and the same; they are interconnected projects—a fact that, on its own, implicates criminology in the continued subjugation of Indigenous peoples in settler colonialist societies (Cunneen and Tauri 2019; Tauri 2013; Tauri and Porou 2014). Why, then, would Indigenous scholars participate in the criminological enterprise? Certainly not to further the subjugation of their own people. On the contrary, Indigenous criminology is critical criminology (Cunneen and Tauri 2016: 29)—a form of anti-criminology, a criminology against criminology that can have a rich and productive dialogue with historical criminology.

Indigenous criminology challenges mainstream criminology by demanding a seat at the criminological table for formerly colonised people. Indigenising criminology is one way of decolonising criminology, exposing the problematic influences of the Western criminological gaze and countering the positional superiority of criminological knowledge produced in the Global North and within Western epistemic frameworks. In the context of Indigenous research, decolonisation can be understood as a process of doing research ‘in such a way that the worldviews of those who have suffered a long history of oppression and marginalization are given space to communicate from their frames of reference’ (Chilisa 2012: 14). This is not simply a matter of welcoming and fostering cultural diversity in academic settings. *Diversifying* university departments, higher education curricula and research fields is not the same as decolonising them. Indigenous scholars that participate in criminological discussions and debates do not simply complement and supplement such discussions and debates by adding a touch of diversity to them (Tauri 2013). Indigenous criminologists actively seek to disrupt and disturb the basic assumptions of criminological reflection and the taken-for-granted canons of criminological research. As Tauri (2013: 11) put it, Indigenous scholars ‘challenge the hegemony of criminological practitioners who empower themselves to speak for us, while employing mythological constructs to silence our voices’. Just like historical criminology, Indigenous criminology represents an attempt to move beyond criminology.

Indigenous criminology provides an opportunity to unthink and undo what Tauri (2013) calls *authoritarian* criminology—that is, mainstream, administrative criminology in settler colonialist societies—by bringing Indigenous politics into criminological settings. In fact, it is its unmistakably political and oppositionist alignment that makes Indigenous criminology unquestionably critical from a criminological point of view (see Tauri 2018: 14). Indigenous criminologists do not conceive of their criminological function in purely academic or theoretical terms (Cunneen and Tauri 2016). Rather, they experience their criminological interventions as forms of political participation in a struggle for justice, emancipation, reconciliation and reparation. Indigenous criminology is as much about offering a more truthful understanding of Indigenous people’s relationships with criminal justice and of their (mis)representation in criminological discourses as it is about siding with Indigenous people in their resistance against historical injustices. As Smith (1999: 2) put it, Indigenous scholarship overcomes the conventional distinction between theory and practice and utilises Indigenous counter-narratives as forms of resistance. In that regard, Indigenous criminology—and Indigenous research more broadly—is openly *against method* in a Feyerabendian sense. As Feyerabend (1993) argued in *Against Method*, to be against method is to have humanitarian rather than intellectual goals in mind when acting in a scholarly capacity—that is, to work on *supporting people* rather than *advancing knowledge*. It is to be able to understand that Western science is not the only science available but only ‘*one science among many*’ and that the ‘prophets of truth’ in any given field would benefit from engaging in dialogue and consultation with non-experts (1993: xiii).

To be against method is to realise that the advancement of Western science—which in Western countries has been historically and traditionally perceived as a sign of progress of knowledge and civilisation—has been experienced, in many parts of the world, as an imposition of ‘Western ways and values’ and as a ‘killing of minds’ (Feyerabend 1993: 3). Indigenous researchers’ emphasis on *Indigenous data sovereignty* (see Kukutai and Taylor 2016; Walter and Suina 2019) and the right to control data from and about Indigenous communities, on the need to learn from Indigenous voices and to treat Indigenous people as *subjects* and not *objects* of knowledge, on the imperative of designing research strategies that foster community empowerment and are considered valuable by Indigenous communities all point to ways of unthinking Western science and methodology. Accordingly, Indigenous research in criminology is conducted in accordance with a set of principles that are more political than methodological in nature: the principles of ‘committed objectivity’ and ‘speaking truth to power’; ‘giving back’ to communities that have contributed to generating knowledge and insights; making research ‘real’—that is, based on the experiences of Indigenous people and communities—and making research endeavours emancipatory or ensuring that research helps Indigenous people decolonise their existence and lived experiences of settler colonialism; and, ultimately, achieving justice (see Cunneen and Tauri 2016: 30-42).

Indigenous criminology is, by default, an Indigenous critique of criminology. Such a critique starts with a critical historicisation of the very notion of indigeneity and its relation to coloniality. In strictly etymological terms, the word *indigenous* comes from the Latin *indigenus*, an adjective that refers to someone who is *native* to a given place, someone who was born in a given geographical location. In principle, this means that indigeneity is a universally shared trait rather than a particularistic one (Agozino 2014). This explains why the movement to indigenise the social sciences that gained momentum in the early 1970s had a universalising rather than a particularising mission. This was a movement led by ‘Indigenous scholars from the Third World [who] raised their voice against the implantation of social sciences perpetuating “captivity” of mind’ (Atal 2004: 99). The movement’s mission was encapsulated in the belief that indigeneity in social science could be an antidote to the universality of Western social science and its coloniality. The ultimate goal of the movement was intellectual *self-rule* (i.e., making social science in non-Western countries independent from Westernised influences). Thus, the notion of Indigenous social science emerged as an attempt to de-Westernise social science, to unthink conventional ways of doing social science in non-Western settings. Hence, when Loubser (1988: 179) made a call for the indigenisation of the social sciences, he did not have in mind specific groups of people (i.e., *Indigenous peoples*) but rather understood indigenisation as a process of developing ‘communities that are self-reliant, self-sufficient and self-directing, in other words, autonomous and independent’. Likewise, Mukherji spoke of the indigenisation of social science, not as a way of particularising and making it a property of specific groups of people but as a means of universalising it or as a ‘process of generating relevant concepts or providing a testing ground for examining the goodness of fit of concepts generated elsewhere, including in the non-western world’ (2005: 318).

By contrast, when Cunneen and Tauri (2019) claim that the negative nature of the interactions between Indigenous peoples and criminal justice systems would not change unless criminology started supporting Indigenous peoples’ desires for self-determination, they clearly have particular *peoples* in mind. Similarly, when Tauri and Deckert (2014: i) speak of an ‘international Indigenous School’ of critical social science, they are referring to a particular set of social scientific trends started by Indigenous scholars rather than to a universalistic mode of doing social science in the non-Western world. Conversely, coloniality infects our minds and makes us perceive Indigenous peoples as the *other*, as non-Western peoples that exist ‘somewhere over there and not here’ (Mignolo 2009: 39). Indeed, the term *Indigenous peoples* emerged in the 1970s out of the struggles of the American Indian Movement and Canadian National Indian Brotherhood and, in that context, it came to symbolise the internationalisation of the experiences of oppression of colonised people from around the world (Smith 1999: 7). Indigenous criminology and historical criminology arguably meet in this space where indigeneity and universality both clash and coincide, where indigeneity is both a technology of exclusion and *othering* and a way of feeling included in processes of de-Westernisation and of struggles for freedom and emancipation that are global and yet local. Indigeneity is a way of being global, but in a Southern sense, but also a way of being excluded simply by *staying home* (Rose 1991).

## Conclusion

This paper offered some preliminary thoughts and reflections on the development of a critical historical criminology of the antipodean and Global South. Though as early as the mid-1990s, criminologists like John Pratt (1996) started to notice the emergence of distinctively historico-criminological trends in Australia and New Zealand, today, historical criminology remains a marginal undertaking within the antipodean study of crime. This is particularly problematic for the thriving of critical criminology in the Southern Hemisphere. Recent developments in Indigenous criminology and calls for southernising and decolonising the study of crime will have beneficial long-term effects on the criminological enterprise in settler colonialist societies, the Global South and beyond. However, taken on their own, postcolonial, Southern and Indigenous perspectives will not succeed in countering mainstream criminology’s administrative tendencies without the support of a critical criminology that is fully historical. In this paper, I argued against a strictly methodological understanding of historical criminology and for



the need to advance a critical conception of historical criminology that will help us *unthink history and criminology* and allow us to *de-discipline ourselves*. Such a critical conception of historical criminology can help criminologists working historically to build politico-academic alliances with critical perspectives that have the potential to enrich and be enriched by historico-criminological views of crime and justice.

An ahistorical critical criminology of the antipodean does a disservice to the emancipatory project of critical criminology in the Global South, but making critical criminology more historical by appealing to traditionalist historiographic rigour and methodological syntheses is not the right solution. A more fruitful way of advancing the cause of a critical historical criminology of the Global South is that of thinking less like criminologists and historians and more like postcolonial, Southern and Indigenous scholars. Indeed, the prospect of a critical historical criminology of the antipodean and Global South is inextricably bound to our capacity to collectively participate in these interlinked processes of unthinking and de-disciplining the social sciences and to rethink our theoretical and practical priorities in the present. Some might argue that a historical criminology that does not link directly to strictly criminological and historical approaches, models, theories and methodologies effectively renounces to be *historico-criminological*. This might as well be the case, but making historical criminology *more historical* and *more criminological* will have an even greater nullifying effect; as sociologist and criminologist Pat Carlen (2016: xxi) argued, discourses tend to *destroy* each other and create a 'discursive abyss' in the process, making it irrelevant whether scholars 'style themselves critical, cultural, public, Marxist, feminist and/or ... whatever'. We have to resist the discursive forces that are trying to turn historical criminology into just another *whatever* in criminology.

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*R v Murrell* (1836)