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## Confronting Silences Haunting Guyana's Juvenile Justice System

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### Abstract

*Following abolition in British Guiana, laws were passed to control the movement and labour of the formerly enslaved and the indentured. Children were among those convicted of breaking these laws, with some being detained in reformatories. Independence in 1966 saw the extension with modifications of these colonial laws. Into the twenty-first century, children were still being detained for colonial era crimes such as "wandering". Yet the connections between the colonial and post-colonial treatment of juveniles in Guyana are hardly known. Framed by hauntology and Caribbean feminist criminology, this paper addresses those silences by drawing on little used archival sources.*

**Key words:** juvenile justice; Guyana; hauntology; Caribbean feminist criminology; archives.

### Introduction

In broad terms, children in contact with criminal justice systems do not leave behind archives. Children are rarely asked their opinion on the processes of moralizing and criminalization that can impact them. When we do catch glimpses of their experiences, their voices are most often mediated through the opinions or moral panic of others, including

police officers, truancy officers and court officials.<sup>1</sup> The omission of their voices leaves us with a conundrum: how can we write about juvenile offending from a child-centred perspective? In this paper, we address this problem by confronting a number of silences in the archives concerning Guyana, from emancipation in 1834 through Independence in 1966 to the present. Our goal is to explore and assess continuity and change in the representation of juveniles in the context of offending. Using a Caribbean feminist criminology lens (Evans and Kerrigan 2019) alongside concepts of coloniality (Mignolo 2007; Quijano 2000) and hauntology (Gordon 1997), we suggest and reveal new links, continuities and transformations between the colonial past and post-colonial present to provide insights, context and understanding around issues such as work, educational reform and rehabilitation in the context of child and youth justice.

Our argument is that the ghosts of the colonial past continue to haunt Guyana, its infrastructure, institutions, culture and people (Ayres and Kerrigan 2020).<sup>2</sup> The resources and training needed by young people to develop more fully in society in the past, and today, were and are limited. Assistance offered to children is often restricted to finding ways to make them fit better in society, rather than understanding the historicity of the juvenile justice systems which envelop them. Conversely, centring a child's needs to take a whole society approach would improve their chances at having richer lives. Our theoretical framework allows us to appreciate how powerfully the past has shaped the present. Criminal justice systems in the Caribbean both historically and today continue to protect, enforce and extend slavery and colonialism (Childs 2009; Saleh-Hanna 2015). They reproduce colonial institutions and legacies, including through infrastructure that was created to contain and control people conceptualized as "barbaric" and "uncivilized", such as the Indigenous, enslaved, indentured, immigrant, poor and mentally ill. This included children as well as adults. Only by examining the ghosts of

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<sup>1</sup>Roper (2019: 187) describes the construction of the category of childhood as being "pliable" in response to existing social systems. As we will see throughout the paper, who is considered a child for the purposes of criminal prosecution, conviction and detention changes over time.

<sup>2</sup>Hauntology explains how the lingering influence of the past - coloniality, violence and trauma - and their silences plague the present in spectral and ghostly ways, which can be present or absent. Hauntology facilitates and gives body to such absences and their afterlives. It acknowledges that omissions and disappearances are not the same as death, but instead emphasizes how the psychological and emotional impacts of the disappeared, the omitted and the hushed endure both in the social and individual bodies of a nation. This concept allows the authors to examine the gaps in archival repositories to re-imagine Guyana's juvenile justice system now and historically. As Gordon (1997: 197) outlines, hauntology enables us to see the "unseen forces, their harm, and the constricting parameters within which they force us to live".

the past, we suggest that the complexities of the contemporary social life of children in Guyana can be understood.

In colonial Guyana (known as British Guiana), legislation on children initially focused on the care of orphans or the destitute and was remarkably blind to the processes and practices connected to slavery. Following abolition in 1834, the treatment of youth offenders incorporated newly racialized and gendered tropes of the colonial system. In this sense, young people were another group to be demonized, controlled and utilized for the good of the economy (De Barros 2002). The emphasis on social control and the preparation of children and young people for productive labour can be seen in the introduction of laws to restrict children's mobility and to enforce attendance at school or work. These focused on "wandering", a capacious category that could be used to pick up young people living on the streets or apparently neglected by their parents and families. At first the 1838 Act did not stipulate age (TNA CO 113/1 1838). However, from 1852, children under the age of 14 deemed poor and destitute (whose parents had died or deserted them) could be put in the orphan asylum and school of industry (TNA CO 113/2 1852). Then in 1879, the Onderneeming School was used for those under the age of 16 years found to be wandering or with no place of abode (TNA CO 113/6 1879). The age of committal was later raised to those under the age of 17 (Guyana Juvenile Offenders Act 1931 Cap 10:03). Such legislation has proved remarkably enduring, spanning the colonial and independent era and its history across 150 years. It continues to haunt contemporary Guyana and is a central focus of this article.

Built on stolen lands and stolen bodies and operating on constructions of crime and criminality that were racialized and gendered (Saleh-Hanna 2015), Caribbean criminal justice systems are forged from the injustices of colonial genocide, theft and exploitation (Childs 2009). As Saleh-Hanna (2015: 3) explains: "Chattel slavery and criminal justice are both at the beginning of this system, one and the same, haunting, replacing, reforming and rebirthing one another". This important insight forms the background to our focus on the emancipatory potential of archival material despite its ghostly omissions. We propose that it can be used to better contextualize and understand the process of developing new approaches to youth offending (e.g. probation and separate institutions) during the post-Independence period (Saleh-Hanna 2015).

Though framings of hauntology and coloniality are key to our analysis, we are also influenced by the power of Caribbean feminist criminology, which also acknowledges such contexts and entanglements between the past and present, the global and local. While Caribbean feminist

criminology is still in its nascent stages, research in the Anglophone Caribbean on areas of concern to the broader field (Renzetti 2013) is well established (e.g. DeShong and Haynes 2016; Lazarus-Black 2003; Morgan and Youssef 2006; Robinson 2000; Trotz 2004). Adopting a Caribbean feminist criminological approach to archival materials grounded in ideas of coloniality and hauntology allows us not only to address their silences (Warren and Kerrigan 2021) but also to ask and explore key questions. These include: how in difference-making terms do social structures of control impact Guyana's response to youth offending across eras and into the present? How does colonialism linger in new approaches to youth offending in Guyana? And, how do contemporary criminal justice systems potentially extend forms of exploitation, victimization and discrimination intrinsic to the colonial encounter? Answering these questions is important for the construction of improved conceptual frameworks for child and youth justices, relevant to Guyana and other former British colonies. The article does so by exploring colonial constructions of juvenile delinquency and connecting them to the post-colonial period, thus revealing how their legacies and afterlives are of ongoing relevance to the representation, treatment and punishment of children and youth offending.

## **Methodology**

From our broader research on the history of Guyana's prisons, it became apparent that the experience of juveniles in Guyana was often absent in the archives. This is despite children being at the centre of discussions relating to potential sources of labour and the need to create "useful citizens", particularly from the post-emancipation period. In addition to the limited archival data, the inherent bias of the archives frequently skews the experiences of children in colonial Caribbean societies. In particular, the enduring nature of the devastating effects of enslavement on intimate and family relations alongside the desire to control the freedom of the formerly enslaved ensured that juveniles were frequently labelled as delinquents lacking in parental guidance.

By examining the records of varying colonial institutions, including the orphan asylum, girls' reformatory and Onderneeming school, alongside annual reports from the Inspector General of prisons and the police, we have been able to reveal a more nuanced, yet still wanting, understanding of the lives and experiences of juveniles. Annual reports, along with Blue Books of Statistics, contain a host of qualitative and quantitative

data including rates of admission, crimes committed, nationality, religion and the condition of the facilities from their establishment in the nineteenth century to Guyana's independence. However, dealing with the administration and running of institutions, these reports often forfeit any consideration of individual children. Reliance on official records to uncover the everyday realities of individuals has rightly been criticized as presenting them as depersonalized objects of institutional action (Bredberg 1999). It was important, therefore, for us to remember that colonial bureaucrats wrote these reports for the consumption of other government officials.

There is considerable continuity in the source base from the period around Independence in the 1960s, though some changes to record-keeping occurred soon after Guyana became a republic in 1970. Thus, gathering information about juvenile offenders after this time becomes difficult (Warren and Kerrigan 2021). There are considerable gaps, but the sources we have access to from Guyana offer us valuable material which includes the views of those working in the police force and probation services as well as academics. They produced and commented on collections of statistics, made observations on teenagers in general and drew conclusions on what caused young people to become "delinquent".

We have found very few sources concerning children and teenagers for the 1980s and 1990s. This follows our wider experience of attempting to locate documents in the post-independence period (Warren and Kerrigan 2021). One possible reason is the general lack of resources that the country faced during this period. Another is the "low esteem" attached to record-keeping and archiving (Warren Kerrigan 2021: 3). Critically, we first hear the voices of children and young people in a study conducted with street children in 1992 (Danns 1992). This is followed by a few in-depth studies in the 2000s alongside further police and prison reports.

## **Constructions of Juvenile Delinquency in the Colonial Period**

Social dislocation and dysfunction were endemic in British Guiana following emancipation in 1834, the abolition of apprenticeship in 1838 and the subsequent arrival of indentured immigrants. The extractive conditions of colonialism underpinned processes of criminalization, particularly in relation to restrictions on labour movement and related constructions of "vagrancy" (UKPP 594 1848:190-192; Smith 2014: 6). The colonial government established several institutions, dedicated to

containing and controlling vagrants, "criminals" and the poor, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (UKPP 594 1848: 190–192). These included alms-houses and asylums, district prisons and a penal settlement, as the colonial government increasingly took responsibility for the population management that had previously fallen to plantation owners. This included a newly expanded judicial system to deal with the increased freedom of the formerly enslaved.

The planters' concerns centred on the scarcity of labour, as the formerly enslaved opted to leave their former owners and move to urban centres. The colonial government attempted to induce labourers to stay on the plantations by exploiting tenancy arrangements and introducing high taxes. Even as indentured labourers replaced the formerly enslaved as the predominant form of labour, the planters continued to believe they were involved in a desperate struggle against habitual idlers, absconders and vagrants (Mohapatra 2004). Within this context, the colonial authorities also established institutions for children, with the goal of ensuring they became "useful" members of society. From 1852, children under the age of 14 years faced restrictions on their mobility and could be brought before the magistrate and criminalized for a range of misdemeanours, which included begging, receiving alms, wandering, being destitute and frequenting the company of thieves (TNA CO 113/2/1 1852; Francis 1895: 150–151).

Vagrancy offences in particular were notorious for providing local authorities with the ability to detain those deemed to be objectionable (Matthews and Robinson 2019). An orphan asylum, to deal with the new and growing problem of destitute juveniles, was also established in 1852 (TNA CO 113/2/4 1852). This reflected metropolitan patterns whereby, as criminal proceedings during this period reveal, poverty was at the root of most criminal offences involving children. The role of juvenile justice, therefore, became increasingly contradictory as British reformers advocated for institutional solutions for juvenile offenders and those deemed at "risk" (Shore 2004). In Great Britain, efforts to address concerns regarding juvenile delinquency received legislative sanction in 1854 with the establishment of reformatories for convicted juvenile offenders under the age of 16 years (May 1973). This was followed in 1857 by a law to establish industrial schools for destitute children and criminals, which was later amended (1866) to include young children considered to require "care and protection" (De Barros 2005; May 1973). Thus, by the 1850s, juvenile offenders, orphans and destitute children were far more likely to be institutionalized than ever before

(Shore 1999). However, while legislation regarding juvenile institutions was transferred to Britain's Caribbean colonies it was the colonial environment that ultimately determined the form these institutions would take (De Barros 2005). In particular, the new and expanded system attempted to deal with concerns related to the increased freedom of movement of the formerly enslaved. Furthermore, debate about juvenile delinquents in British Guiana was overwhelmingly concerned with boys due to the belief that they could be reclaimed to serve the colonial economy. Consequently, the arrangements and aims of institutions for boys were more distinct than those for girls who were more targets of criminalization on "moral" issues such as sexuality and dishonesty (Zedner 1991).

Although colonial legislation initially focused on the care of children who had lost, or been deserted by one or both parents, concern quickly shifted in 1868 to include all offenders under the age of 16 (TNA CO 113/5/12 1868). From this point, both groups were sent to a single institution, the Government Reformatory and Industrial School, alongside children under the age of 12 years who had been charged with punishable offences, but not convicted. The aim of the Industrial School was to educate and reform juveniles, including through apprenticeships for anyone with a "trade or calling". This change in the law represented the colonial administration's desire to encourage the return of men to the agricultural sector.

As the century progressed, concern about youth crime, locally referred to as "centipedism" or "hooliganism", significantly increased (BL C.S.F 351 Report of the Inspector of Prisons 1907-8; De Barros 2002, 2004). As in Britain, this was centred in urban areas where authorities encouraged the idea that there was a growing sense of lawlessness among the young (De Barros 2005; Pinchbeck & Hewitt 1973), connected to claims of high levels of illegitimacy among the labouring population. Blinded to the disruptions to family and kin induced by the demands of colonial labour, contemporary reports reasoned that illegitimate children fell into crime because their parents were irresponsible (Kirke 1898). Towards the end of the century, these views had significant implications for the juvenile population as they were used to justify the establishment of new kinds of reformatories (Roper 2018). In 1879, for example, the Onderneeming Plantation in Essequibo became the site of a school (Onderneeming School) for the instruction and training of male vagrants and criminal offenders under the age of 16 (TNA CO 113/6/5 1879). The school was initially built to accommodate 54 boys; however, this

increased to 204 in 1893, as conviction rates continued to rise (UKPP Cd. 416 1900: 805).

Though in part an educational establishment, work primarily dominated the boys' time as they were expected to labour for six to seven hours a day. To minimize the effect of the colony's declining labour force, the school sought to find employment for the juveniles and where possible, contribute towards diversifying the colony's dependency on sugar (UKPP Cd. 1768-18 1904: 26; UKPP Cmd. 1-37 1919: 6). Most inmates were trained in agriculture, cultivating coffee, cacao, rubber, limes and nutmeg, while a small number learned skills as carpenters, tailors and bakers (UKPP Cd. 7622-24 1914-6: 22). To expand the reach of the institution, the maximum age at which the boys were able to remain increased in 1883 from 16 to 18 years. Colonial officials believed the additional time would help to establish the boys as agriculturists in the country districts (TNA CO 116/252 1883: 4; TNA CO 113/7/9 1883). From this point, colonial officials adopted the idea of industrial schools and reformatories as an alternative to imprisoning children. One element to consider here is the gendered nature of the colonial historical record and a general lack of archival material on historical institutions connected to girls (Hosein 2019). For example, we are less certain about provisions for girls, as changes instituted by the 1868 legislation referred specifically to delinquent boys (De Barros 2002). This reflected the contemporary belief that the role of women was limited to that of a domestic servant, wife or mother, while males could be reclaimed for their potential labour.

While colonial officials initially argued that there was no need for an institution for delinquent girls, a reformatory was eventually established in 1888 (TNA CO 116/260 1891: 19; De Barros 2002). Built in Georgetown, it was founded to instruct and train those deemed too young (9-16 years old) to be committed to prison for minor offences (TNA CO 116/257 1888: 11). Unlike delinquent boys, who were frequently described as unwilling to work, terms such as "dirty", "foul-mouthed" and "dishonest" were instead used to evoke girls' "impropriety" and alleged propensity to prostitution (De Barros 2002; Kirke 1898). In particular, the reformatory aimed to end practices of cohabitation, by reinforcing the cultural perceptions of a woman's role, either as a wife or in domestic service (TNA CO 116/258 1889: 9; TNA CO 116/259 1890: 13; Kirke 1898). As such, training at the reformatory encouraged girls to adhere to colonial gender norms by developing their ability to undertake various domestic tasks, including needlework and washing (BL C.S.F 351 Report on the Girls' Reformatory 1892-3, 1894-5). However, while the focus was on "immorality", rather



than "criminality", the overriding rationalization for the girls' reformatory remained the same as for boys, namely that Afro-Guianese parents provided poor training and guidance for their children (Kirke 1898). This stereotype had significant implications for the colonial government which increasingly sought to remove, and criminalize, those they felt were unwilling to contribute either economically or socially to the colony (De Barros 2002). However, by the early twentieth century, these institutions not only propagated evolving gender norms, but they also served as the foundation of juvenile welfare policy in British Guiana.

Despite efforts to distance these children from the alleged criminal elements of Guianese society, contemporary sources continued to highlight the negative effect of "old associates" on their release (TNA CO 116/261 1892-3: 12; Kirke 1898). Furthermore, efforts by officials to secure suitable employment for juveniles frequently failed due to the children's reluctance to work on the land (CO 111/740/22 1939: 2; BL C.S.F 351 Report on the Onderneeming School 1903-4). This also no doubt reflected Afro-Guianese unwillingness in a post-slavery society to be controlled by colonial officials (Brereton 1999: 81-82). Indeed, a 1939 report noted: "the grand-children of the African migrants suffer from a memory-association of soil and slavery and will not willingly work on the land" (TNA CO 111/740/22 1939:2).

However, while the reformatories were often unsuccessful in producing workers for the agricultural sector, colonial officials justified their existence by pointing to declining rates of juvenile conviction. In 1896, for instance, just one boy was committed to the Onderneeming School, compared to 115 two years earlier, and the Girls' Reformatory recorded just two-thirds of the number it housed in 1894 (TNA CO 116/264 1895-6: 11). The reality was that the reduction in juvenile convictions simply reflected a drop in committals throughout the prison system, as large numbers of Afro-Guianese males departed for the gold fields. Nonetheless, despite the decrease in convictions, "hooliganism" and "idle women" continued to be the focus of moral panic and held responsible for outbreaks of crime (UKPP Cd. 3026 1906: 73; BL C.S.F 351 Police Report 1907-8; BL C.S.F 351 Police Report 1914-5).

To consolidate legislation and amend the laws relating to offences and procedure in respect of summary convictions, two ordinances were introduced in 1893 (TNA CO 113/8/15; TNA CO 113/8/21 1893). They were used to expand the range of behaviours deemed unlawful (Paton and Romain 2014; TNA CO 113/8/21 1893). In particular, the ordinances sought to legitimize the need for social control over "undesirable" and

"threatening" populations, which was heavily focused towards the unemployed. As a direct result, legislation to regulate the movement of juveniles was intensified. This included the ability to send anyone charged with having committed an offence against the provisions of any ordinance relating to vagrants, rogues and vagabonds to the alms-house, Onderneeming School or the Girl's Reformatory (TNA CO 113/8/15; De Barros 2002). The ordinance also sought to control the behaviour of juveniles by providing local authorities with the ability to convict those carrying a "deadly, or dangerous weapon", including sticks, with the intent to cause terror or alarm. Under this act, men and women could be charged for having "no lawful excuse" to carry cutlasses despite being on their way home from the cane fields (TNA CO 113/8/21; UKPP Cd. 3026 1906: 63).

In response to international interest regarding the treatment of children, legislation for the establishment of juvenile courts was introduced to British Guiana in 1931 as part of the Juvenile Offenders Ordinance (TNA CO 113/19/11 1931). In addition to the ongoing criminalization of those under the age of 14 for wandering, a status offense that allowed for the detention of youths left unsupervised in public spaces, the act further fostered the stereotype that Afro-Guianese parents provided inadequate guidance and support for their children with the issue of parental fines (TNA CO 113/19/11). However, despite the long-held belief that reformatories and industrial schools were the ideal space to train children, concerns regarding their ability to produce industrial labourers for the agricultural sector remained in question throughout much of the early twentieth century (TNA CO 111/740/17). These were highlighted in 1937 following a visit from Alexander Paterson, Commissioner of Prisons for England and Wales, who was sent to investigate Onderneeming,<sup>3</sup> (TNA CO 111/749/14 1937; TNA CO 113/12/8 1907). In addition to the use of excessive caning following a "wave of indecency" (sexual activity), he noted that the school suffered from several defects which "handicapped, rather than helped" the boys. Indeed, the function of reformatories was to inculcate the values of a heteronormative family, hard work and discipline (NLS Essequibo Annual Report 1945). In particular, Paterson drew attention to the school's lack of training; out of the 80 boys in the school, only 25 were engaged in "useful" work, while the remaining were left to carry out menial tasks such as fetching firewood. This, Paterson felt, stemmed from the difficulty in trying to train

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<sup>3</sup>Following the introduction of the 1907 Training Schools Act, Onderneeming was renamed the Government Industrial School. However, the name Onderneeming continued to be used in official documents.

boys from urban backgrounds, who would inevitably return to town, for agricultural life (TNA CO 111/740/17: 22–24). Instead, Paterson suggested resituating the school so that the boys could be trained in more relevant skills, such as carpentry, tailoring and building (TNA CO 111/740/17: 25), and called for youth clubs to stop boys from being led astray in their leisure time (TNA CO 111/740/22 1937: 3). Despite Paterson's radical proposals, the treatment of juvenile offenders continued to be influenced by those who perceived young offenders as a social threat and source of free labour. As a result, juveniles, many of whom were victims of poverty, faced increasingly retributive and extended forms of punishment for minor offences, such as petty theft (NLS Essequibo Annual Report 1945).

By the late 1930s, crime and disorder had become dominant political issues throughout the British Caribbean due to disputes over wages and working conditions following the decline of the sugar industry (Nehusi 1992). Concerned by these disturbances, and what was termed a "large loafing population", in 1938, the British government appointed the West Indian Royal Commission to investigate and make recommendations on the various territories (UKPP Cmd. 3705 1930–1). In addition to exposing deficiencies in the education system, referring to the passing of the Children and Young Persons Act (1933), the report called for the alignment of Caribbean reformatories and industrial schools with parallel institutions in England and Wales (UKPP Cmd. 6174 1939–40; UKPP Cmd. 6607 1944–5; UOLL CO D4250 1940–2). Based on the recommendations of the commission, British Guiana applied for assistance under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act 1940, to remodel the Onderneeming site on the lines of an "approved school". The aim of these schools was to break down the barriers between "neglected" and "delinquent" children of school age and abolish the associated stigma (UOLL CO D4250 1940–2: 244).

In 1944, the colony also secured financial assistance for means to train "destitute and delinquent" girls at a place called Belfield, under the administration of the Salvation Army (UKPP Cmd. 6656 1945; SAIHC 1948–9: 208–09; Sandall 1947). Reflecting the gender bias of the colonial state, institutes for boys frequently took priority in discussions regarding the allocation of resources, while facilities for girls were primarily left to the organization of charitable organizations, missions and social groups (Calixte 2015; Boa 2005). This reflected a larger transnational tradition of keeping girls outside of public state facilities, but it can also be explained by competing definitions of maturity which meant that girls were often judged, and sentenced, as women. In particular, there was a perception in race and class terms among colonial authorities that

Afro-Caribbean girls matured more quickly than girls in Europe (Boa 2005: 65–86).

Despite these initiatives, tensions between rehabilitation and punishment continued in British Guiana and the Caribbean more widely (UOLL CO D4250 1940–2: 239; TNA CO 111/749/14 1937: 3). Indeed, Paterson himself noted that it would be fairer to move the boys' school at Onderneeming and give it a new name due to the stigma attached to it (TNA CO 111/749/14 1937: 4). This meant that juvenile institutions continued to lack clarity in their aims. For example, as the only alternative to jail, the renamed Essequibo Boy's School (previously Onderneeming) often took in boys over the age of 14 (TNA CO 111/787/9 1945). Nonetheless, by 1945, the number of boys being sent to prison had increased (TNA CO 111/787/9 1945). Despite efforts to segregate young offenders, overcrowding meant that juveniles, first offenders and prisoners on remand were often housed with dangerous criminals and old offenders. One superintendent of prisons wrote that these conditions "bordered on mutiny" (TNA CO 111/771/9 1939; CO 111/787/9 1945; BL C.S.W.A.C. 50/44 1943: 4–7). Efforts to hear juvenile cases in magistrates' courts were attempted during the 1940s; however, they were overstretched, and the initiative failed (Briggs 1947: 102). A 1943 report suggested numerous alternatives to prison for young offenders such as the levying of fines, the improvement of the probation service and the use of extra-mural sentences (BL C.S.W.A.C. 50/44 1943: 4–7). However, these were not immediately adopted. Moreover, as we will see in the next two sections, the colonial ideologies that pathologized the behaviour and criminal offending of boys and girls in Guyana, including gendered forms of moralization that promoted heteronormative family forms, continue to haunt contemporary Guyana and its criminal justice system.

### **Transitional Period: 1950s to Mid-1960s**

The volume of "young prisoners", consisting chiefly of first offenders (aged 16–21), rose significantly during the 1950s (TNA CO1031/610 1953), and their separation from adult prisoners was virtually impossible due to overcrowding (TNA CO 1031/2644 1958). Colonial officials argued that prison was no real deterrent for them as prison sentences were often much shorter than stays in approved schools. Indeed, youths under the age of 16 were known to claim that they were older to avoid the latter (TNA CO 1031/2644 1958). While clear changes had emerged in the treatment of juvenile

offenders by the middle of the twentieth century, attempts at reform remained inadequate due to financial limitations, which frequently resulted in a dependence on incarceration (TNA CO 1031/2644 1958).

Concerns about juvenile delinquency continued to frame responses to children and young people locally in the 1950s and became a focal point internationally from the mid-1950s. In particular, it was a main agenda item for the first three United Nations Congresses on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (1955, 1960 and 1965) (UNDL A/CONF.6/L.17 1955: 37-40). Despite considerable effort being devoted to arriving at a universally applicable definition of juvenile delinquency, this proved impossible because as the 1955 Congress found there were wide variations in custom, law and philosophy. Instead, in a continuation of the methods already used to deal with the prevention of delinquency in British colonies, the Congress concluded that attention should be directed primarily to pre-delinquency; the prevention of offending where no prior legal violation had occurred (UNDL A/CONF.6/L.17 1955: 37-40). Based on this decision, it was proposed that services, both official and unofficial, should be organized and drawn together to ensure that children and young people in danger of committing offences were discovered and guided towards social conformity. It was also at the 1955 Congress that the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners were agreed. The rules did not mention juveniles specifically but stipulated that young prisoners should be kept separately from adults both before and after conviction (UN 1955).

One of the three main items on the agenda at the second UN Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in 1960 was "new forms of juvenile delinquency: their origin, prevention and treatment" (UN 1960: 2). The concept of juvenile delinquency was linked to issues with the "social structure of the state" (UN 1960: 61), for it was noted that increases in juvenile criminal offending were connected to "a better organization of prevention and treatment" as well as its definition. Indeed, the report noted that while some states identified a "series of minor acts of indiscipline or social maladjustment" as delinquency, these were often exaggerated (UN 1960: 61). Furthermore, there was concern at the international level that, in increasing access to "unsuitable material", mass media was contributing to an increase in juvenile delinquency (Williams 1961: 258). Such arguments often had a religious basis and the link between media and crime remained questionable (Morris 1961). However, overall there was a lack of agreement about how to deal

with juvenile offending, including whether education, or the family, was the most important factor.

It was recommended at the 1960 meeting that the issue not be "unnecessarily inflated" and that the term should be restricted to the contravention of criminal law. This would mean that juveniles could not be detained for offences for which adults would not be prosecuted. Also, recommendations were made for: increases to existing and trials of new forms of prevention and treatment; support after release for those who were put in correctional institutions; and the commission of studies to ascertain the nature of "new" forms of juvenile delinquency. It was suggested that the latter should focus not just on the alleged crimes but also on the "personality and social history of young offenders" (UN 1960: 61).

In Guyana, the 1961 Report of the Treatment of Offenders shows that, in the wake of the 1960 UN Congress, the number of boys admitted to the Essequibo Boys' School increased to 72: the highest figure for two decades (Murray, Rohlehr, and Aitkens 1963: 10). Vocational training and work in agriculture remained the main emphasis of the school. The Report explained that "[b]oys were given training in Woodwork, Metalwork, Shoemaking and repairing, Tailoring, Bread making, Animal Husbandry and Agriculture, and ... Masonry" (Murray, Rohlehr, and Aitkens 1963: 11). The work boys undertook furnished the school with meat, bread and dairy products with the surplus being sold to nearby Suddie hospital and the public (Murray, Rohlehr, and Aitkens 1963: 12). Most boys received a basic education, and those deemed to be of "more than average intelligence" were sent to nearby St. John's Anglican School. They had access to recreational activities such as participation in the Boy Scouts, a brass band and both indoor and outdoor games. In what was to become a reoccurring theme, teachers were in short supply due to a combination of continual resignations and absence of training (Murray, Rohlehr, and Aitkens 1963).

Again, reflecting on the absence of girls from the historical record and the relative lack of attention bestowed on them, girls were barely mentioned in the report. This may have been because they were seen as less of a problem (of the 1,136 youths found guilty of an offence, only 125 were girls) (Murray, Rohlehr, and Aitkens 1963: 33). As the gender of offenders was not noted, it is impossible to say what girls were convicted of and for which offences they were likely to be detained. However, there were 45 cases of wandering and 11 cases of vagrancy – offences that would later come to be associated with girls. Further, of those convicted, six were

admitted to Belfield Girls' School,<sup>4</sup> which continued to be run by the Salvation Army showing that the colonial state continued to outsource girls to a non-governmental organization.

Aftercare was also assigned to the Salvation Army. An Army officer had sole responsibility for the supervision of boys released within Georgetown, where most came from, and received assistance from probation officers for boys outside the city. Helping boys gain employment was a key aim, but this was challenging when unemployment rates in British Guiana were high. The Army also acted as "a link between some of the boys and their homes" (Murray, Rohlehr, and Aitkens 1965: 36). Despite this aftercare, recidivism was high, with at least one-third of boys being convicted of new offences while under supervision (Murray, Rohlehr, and Aitkens 1963: 13; Murray, Rohlehr, and Aitkens 1967: 44). By the 1960s, there was an attempt to shift towards rehabilitation. However, the old emphasis on vocational and agricultural training remained. Most boys came from urban areas where unemployment remained rife. Those who reoffended within two years were said to be failures (Murray, Rohlehr, and Aitkens 1967). However, failure could be said to lie with the school, probation services, Salvation Army and, most significantly, the colonial state. Boys were released from institutions and returned to a society not adequately equipped to address the challenges they faced.

Part of this framing was reliant on ideas of who was considered a child and who was not. A working paper from the third UN Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in 1965 noted significant national variance (UN Secretariat 1965). In British Guiana, the Juvenile Offenders Act and the Training School Act applied to young people up to the age of 16 sentenced to detention in a training school (Cameron 2019; Reynolds 2011). Those over 16 but under 18 – thus still minors – were not covered by these laws. Therefore, the ways in which childhood and adolescence were viewed and understood towards the end of the colonial era in British Guiana had a direct and consequential relationship to the ways in which young people were treated, not least in the justice system.

These observations around framing suggest that the same concerns around youth delinquency from the colonial period, alongside the colony's differential treatment of boys and girls, haunted the foundations of independent Guyana. The legacy of control around youth that began

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<sup>4</sup>It is possible that some of this number were younger boys. Boys under 10 and up to 11 were sometimes sent to Belfield Girls School (Murray et al. 1967: 8). The reason for this is not stated in the available document but, based on what we know concerning prisoner classification more broadly, presumably this was to prevent their mixing with older youths.

in the colonial period extended with modifications into the post-colonial period including in international debates. The evidence provided on youth delinquency paints this transitional phase of the colonial state in British Guiana as one maintaining patriarchal structures via systems of control that were exploitative and discriminatory. This can be seen in the relative importance accorded to boys' development for employment and the neglect of state support and financing for girls. The gendered afterlife of colonialism in this regard may also partially explain why the voices of children are rarely found in the archives. Until relatively recently, children's needs, presences and voices in both colonial and post-colonial justice contexts have been either significantly under-represented (Ame 2018) or dominated by the question of what is considered "juvenile" (Abrams, Jordan, and Montero 2018). As we will see in the following section, this is also reflected in the records and archives of contemporary Guyana, which illustrates young people's ghostly and marginal existence within a society in which, like most modern states, they are excluded from decisions concerning their lives.

### **Post-Independence Colonial Hauntings in the Criminalization of Children**

As noted in the introduction, the laws concerning wandering that were formed in the post-emancipation period changed little after independence. It remained one of the main offences for which young people were arrested and subsequently detained. In the year following Independence in 1966, the main offences for which juveniles were reported to the Police Force's Juvenile Branch were "simple larceny, larceny from the person, assaults and wandering" (CRL GPF 1967: 25). Two years later, about half of all the cases in which guilt was established were "directed against the person and against property" (Murray and Davis 1970: 2). Of the remaining cases, the greatest number of youths were picked up for mainly "trivial" traffic offences and wandering. Thus alongside the more common crimes of assaults and larceny, echoes of the colonial past could be found in the continued criminalization of wandering. Moreover, while the state sought redress for victims of crime in the prosecution of these offences, they centred punishment over social care in the treatment of their perpetrators. This was especially the case in the ongoing criminalization of wandering for which there was no clear victim other than the detained children.

A noticeable increase in the arrest of young people occurred after independence. There were over 1,000 convictions in each of 1966 and 1967



with a further 844 arrested in 1968 for an average of 1,084 (CRL GPF 1967: 16; CRL GPF 1968:17).<sup>5</sup> There was then a drastic drop in convictions of 43% in 1969 (CRL GPF 1969: 3). Probation services suggested that the increase that occurred in the mid-1960s had been due not to a rise in "juvenile delinquency as such, but rather, an increase in vigilance against juvenile offenders" (Murray and Davis 1970: 3). Wandering remained a key colonial holdover for why young people were arrested.<sup>6</sup> Police noted that those arrested for wandering were "juveniles in need of Care and Protection" (Murray and Davis 1970: 2). Such statements bring into question whether delinquency was rising or if the focus on the behaviour of young people was being partially framed in this way due to the perception of what young people should be doing.<sup>7</sup> Almost nothing is said in the police reports about why children were participating in certain activities or the extent to which the rate of crime was impacted by increased police focus on the movements and activities of young people. Moreover, in the continued arrest of young people for an offence created to control post-emancipation labour mobility, and women's and girls' "propriety", we see clear echoes of the colonial past.

Though reports do not reveal much about what the police thought of the young people they apprehended, we do learn that the social element of this work was not missed altogether. For, in addition to working closely with the Probation Service and Schools Welfare Department, three officers completed "a three-month introduction to Social Development Course sponsored by ... the University of Guyana" while a senior officer started a two-year social work course (CLR GPF 1973: 11-12). The attempt to enhance understanding of the wider context within which young people were criminalized continued over the next two decades. Into the 1990s, the juvenile section of the police force's methods of operation was described as "reflect[ing] the reality of sociological and economic factors that adversely affect the lives of our young people" (Liverpool 1996: 3).

Roper (2019: 188) suggests the need to consider the changes brought about by the process of decolonization and introduction of political

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<sup>5</sup>The average for the three preceding years (1963-1965) was 615.

<sup>6</sup>Numbers for wandering are hard to identify after independence as they become subsumed in statutory offences. We are limited to specific statements made about wandering by police and probation services.

<sup>7</sup>Mathews and Robinson (2019: 125) also reflect on the distinction between "being" and "doing" in the ways the vagrancy acts operate. They explain that such laws "produced expansive and imprecise categories of impugned conduct" which supported attempts of social control both during and after colonial rule.

independence in how children and their place in society were understood. It is with the creation of the Republic in 1970 that we see the biggest shift in both language and approach to children and young people. However, there were also continuities. As was shown earlier in the paper, the Juvenile Offenders Act and Training School Act were passed in the colonial era. The first post-independence amendments to the acts were made in 1972, but these retained many of the aspects of colonial law, including the ability to detain young people for wandering. Tracy Robinson (2020) explains this as "legislative inertia". But she also notes that such colonial era laws had come to be claimed by the newly independent nation. Some of them, vagrancy laws in particular, were useful because of their "vagueness and wide enforcement discretion [which made them] ... a flexible and almost limitless resource for policing undesirables" (Robinson 2020: 61).

The New Opportunity Corps (NOC) was one branch of national service created during this period of change.<sup>8</sup> Part of the Ministry of Education rather than the Guyana Prison Service,<sup>9</sup> it was established for children and young people up to the age of 16 who were in reform schools. The NOC sat alongside school and "special correctional training", with Guyana's first Prime Minister Forbes Burnham emphasizing its rehabilitative aims through an emphasis on young people's "worth and value as citizens" (Burnham 1973: 9). Alongside this, Burnham noted the need to install the values of Guyanese society, encourage a love of country and show the need for all citizens to be productive and contribute to society.

During a parliamentary debate in early 1974, the prime minister differentiated between colonial reform schools and the NOC by explaining that the government would emphasize correction rather than punishment (Hansard 1974: 23). He went on to explain that many young people were "maladjusted" rather than "wicked" or "sinful". He further noted, in quite gendered terms, that some did not know their fathers, while others knew their mothers but were negatively impacted because they worked long hours and "return[ed] too late at night to exercise ... maternal functions" (Hansard 1974: 23). It was suggested that such children needed care beyond "teaching the three R's" including help from mental health

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<sup>8</sup>The other branches of the National Service included the Young Brigade for those aged 8-14; the National Cadet Corp for those aged 12-18; and the Pioneer Corps that was aimed at those aged 18-25 but took in those aged 14 and over who were not in a school or training institution.

<sup>9</sup>It is currently under the Ministry of Home Affairs. Since its inception, it has come under a number of other ministries including Culture Youth and Sports, Social Protection and Public Security (Cameron 2019).

professionals (Hansard 1974: 24). Thus in what appears to be a change from the colonial systems of the past, the prime minister wanted the NOC to address the "social", "mental" and other issues faced by children. However, simultaneously, he reveals ghosts of the colonial past in his expression of ideas of the "broken" family and a mother's "maternal functions".

Questions around the nature of the treatment of juvenile offenders would be raised later that summer when Guyana held the first crime conference in the region. A number of the papers presented addressed the issue of juvenile delinquency, either as part of a wider focus or specifically. For instance, Professor Howard Jones made reference to youths in general observations on crime in Guyana. Along with Guyanese sociologists Michael Parris and Tara Singh, he had carried out a two and half year study into Guyana's "crime problem" (Jones 1974: 1). He explained that much of the crime that occurred in "developing countries", including Guyana, was committed by those under 30 with those aged 16–20 representing a significant proportion. This was in part because they made up a large percentage of the population, but high levels of unemployment among young people were also a factor: "the feeling of worthlessness and rejection, of resentment, caused by unemployment, must not be overlooked" (Jones 1974).

The detention of children up to the age of 16 was not only blamed on the lack of family care but also on the inability of the state to offer proper alternatives. Chief Probation and Welfare Officer Cecil N. Murray suggested that there was a correlation between the entry of young people into the approved school and the lack of support for those who did not have a guardian or whose "guardians [did] not exercise adequate control" (Murray and Davis 1970: 3). Murray explained that attempts to find a "fit person" or utilize foster homes to take in children required better legislation and funding to prevent the exploitation of "wandering or unwanted children" for labour (Murray and Davis 1970: 3).

The connection between children who needed care and detention at a juvenile facility was well understood into the 1990s. Surveys conducted by Danns (1992: II; 2003: 22) show that most of the children who ended up in the NOC were street children who had "engaged in survival strategies such as working, begging, gambling, or prostitution". By this time, the continued detention of young people for wandering contravened international rules. In the 1980s and 1990s, several new protocols and guidance were introduced by the UN for the protection and care of children, which applied to arrested, convicted and detained young

people. Provisions in Guyana's Juvenile Offenders Act were not always in line with these rules. For instance, the UN had repealed status offences (connected to particular groups) in the 1990 Riyadh Guidelines (Hamilton 2011; Riyadh Guidelines 1990). Wandering is such an offence because only children could be charged with it. Moreover, as Director of the Children's Legal Centre Carolyn Hamilton explained, wandering was "a social welfare issue under the child protection system" (Hamilton 2011: 19; UN 2007). Nonetheless, courts continued to decide whether children could be detained or placed with someone other than their "natural parents" for a period (Reynolds 2011).

The scale of the issue in Guyana was revealed in 2015 when former UN Country Representative for Guyana and Suriname, Marianne Flach, noted that about 75% of individuals in the NOC had been detained for wandering (Kaieteur News 2015). Thus into the twenty-first century, children were being arrested for crimes first instituted to keep order in the wake of emancipation in the 1830s. These were primarily Afro-Guyanese children, and their home lives were said to be one of the causes of their detention (Danns 1992; Reynolds 2011).

### **Education, Vocation and Rehabilitation at the NOC in the Twenty-First Century**

The beginning of the twenty-first century saw more of the same at the NOC with education, preparation for work and other forms of rehabilitation continuing to be under resourced. Additionally, many of those being confined were there because of social issues rather than for committing offences that would have seen them jailed if they were adults. We can thus see that for just under 20 years into this new century, things continued much the same as they had in the colonial era and the first four decades of Independence.

During her visits to NOC in 2007, sociologist Bertlyn Reynolds (2011: 178) observed that the focus of the programme centred on "vocational and physical training" which reflects the focus found in the colonial period. She cautioned that this was inadequate and needed to be complemented by "literacy training" to ensure that young people had a better chance of acquiring employment after release. However, ten years later, Queenela Cameron reported that there had been some improvements. She explained that the education and vocational training provided by the NOC were aiding many of those detained in the facility as they were able to use "the skills and knowledge acquired to seek meaningful

employment and/or to further their education on release" (Cameron 2019: 134). Yet, she also noted that a lack of resources impacted the young detainees. One example given was the lack of appropriate books and other materials in the library (Cameron 2019: 133).

The lack of adequate staffing and resources also shaped the availability and nature of rehabilitative programmes at the NOC. In an echo of colonial times, in 1992, Danns highlighted that as vocational training was advocated by the NOC, detained children were made to work but were not receiving adequate rehabilitation. He stated that this was largely attributed to NOC staff who were mainly untrained and as a result were not able to provide instruction (Danns 1992; 2003: 22). Reynolds also concluded that better staffing was needed, but her ideas of what constituted a successful rehabilitative programme differed. She started from a point which accepted that the detainees were "delinquent" and needed to be taught to conform to societal norms. In this vein, Reynolds (2011: 183) pointed out "NOC's need for more skilled staff members who could determine what causes juveniles to become delinquent in each case". Additionally, she called for rehabilitative programmes which helped young people "understand their situation, modify their bad habits, suppress their tendencies to delinquency and to better their self concepts" (Reynolds 2011: 177). Subsequently, Cameron focused on the need to better support young people's mental health. She observed that while detainees were provided with basic health care, there was no drug treatment programme, and general psychological and psychiatric care was inadequate suggesting that "the mental health of detained juveniles is not a priority" (Cameron 2019: 133). She further explained that better drug treatment and counselling facilities were needed to improve rehabilitation rates.

The consequences of the failed approaches within the institution were reflected in aftercare. Reynolds (2011) observed that the provisions in the early 2000s were inadequate, with many young people returning to the environments from which they left without any follow-up. Cameron's research shows a significant shift in approach over the next decade. There were moves towards better social reintegration, and these met with some success (Cameron 2019: 134). Such support was shown to be wide-ranging, including sourcing accommodation, providing cash and clothing, organizing enrolment in technical schools and other forms of further education and assistance with employment (Cameron 2019).

Further change came with the introduction of the Juvenile Justice Act in 2019, when status offences such as wandering were abolished. Cameron's research has revealed the way in which the use of the law had changed over time as well as the profound impact of reform: all the girls in the NOC were let go as they had all been remanded for wandering. No mention is made of boys being released at this time showing the extent to which this offence had become gendered (Cameron 2019). The proximity, time wise, of Cameron's research to the passing of the Juvenile Justice Act offers a marker for reflection of what occurred up to that point and what is needed to encourage practice that meets local and international standards of care. Under scrutiny here is the future purpose of the NOC. Some of Cameron's recommendations point towards creating systems of oversight to ensure better care of young people within the NOC. For instance, although NOC administrators are committed to ending the use of solitary confinement, it was up to the Juvenile Justice Committee and other authorities to implement this change.

It is also necessary to consider the possibility of a further reduction in the use of the NOC. In this, the release of girls for wandering can be seen as a critical step. Colonial approaches to juvenile offending were embedded in strategies of governance that ignore the deleterious effects of economic extraction on family and society and was overtly punitive. Its ghosts linger, and this should be of concern to those who make policy.<sup>10</sup> As the section on British Guiana shows, issues of estrangement from families resulted in a higher number of children who were wards of the state. This is also of concern to those who make policy. The 2019 Juvenile Justice Act called for institutionalization to be made a "last option"; this in turn led to the call for more foster placements and homes for children and teenagers as alternatives to being held by the NOC (Guyana Chronicle 2019). The formation of the Juvenile Justice Department, which predated the introduction of the Act by a year, showed a move towards protecting and assisting rather than criminalizing young people found in trying circumstances (UNICEF 2020). There have been reports of the early success of these interventions (Cameron 2019), but there remains a need to ensure the various agencies responsible for the processing of children who encounter the law work together more harmoniously to ensure they are treated fairly and humanely (UNICEF 2020). Those within the Juvenile Justice Department have stated their commitment to this ambition (UNICEF 2020).

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<sup>10</sup>While we do not have the space to explore the policy implications in this paper, we plan to engage with them elsewhere.

## **Reflecting on Coloniality and Hauntology**

Using historical archives and sources spanning over 150 years, this paper has illustrated how a contemporary system of state social control in the context of criminal justice and youth offending, no matter its best intentions, extended forms of exploitation, victimization and discrimination intrinsic to the colonial encounter. It has shown that colonial regimes and the building of empire produced and represented the Guyanese "other", largely premised on race, gender and socio-economic status (e.g. poverty). They also policed the social and cultural protocols surrounding children and juveniles that reflected the racialized and gendered tropes of the colony. Moreover, colonial legacies continue to produce/reproduce inequalities in contemporary Guyana, while the colonial institutions created to educate and control children and juveniles have taken on new forms. In colonial times, as today, they are often indistinguishable from each other and from plantation slavery regimes and have been used "to rescue young citizens and subjects in the making to shape young bodies and minds, [and] were central to imperial policies and their self-fashioned rationalities" (Stoler 2006: 43).

Juvenile justice institutions – just like slavery and the plantation – captured children's bodies and time as they endeavoured to create productive citizens undertaking purposeful education and labour while restricting "wandering" and vagrancy. Indeed, it was believed that idle young men and women were responsible for outbreaks of crime, particularly violent crime. However, the general lack of resources – consistently over the past two centuries – has impacted on efforts to create truly rehabilitative regimes.

Deficiencies in the education and support services available to young people under state care, both then and now, increased dependence on strategies of confinement. This is not to say that the post-colonial state and its various actors did not attempt to develop and build across eras a new more progressive system of control for young offenders. However, the judicial system of the colonial authorities failed to tackle the various injustices on which it was built, and this was replicated in the post-colonial era. The new system retained the injustices of the past, many of which continue to haunt the contemporary Guyanese criminal justice system, including the representation, treatment and punishment of children. Thus, colonialism and empire are continually rebirthed and perpetuated in Guyana's criminal justice system, systems showing clearly that decolonization and independence

were established through the same political structures (Saleh-Hanna 2015; Stoler, 2006; Quijano 2000).

The legacies of colonialism pervade contemporary Guyana, its systems and its people, and this includes children. Whether we are looking at the institutions created to control and punish young people, or at the archives that record these histories of governmentality, they are imbued with the ghosts of empire and its colonial afterlives. Children are the phantoms of history, omitted from but also entombed within the archives. The preceding discussion shows how archival material can be used to try to capture their lived experiences. However, the archives themselves are also "spectral" – "neither present nor absent 'in the flesh', neither visible nor invisible, a trace always referring to another whose eyes can never be met" (Derrida & Prenowitz, 1955: 53). This means that certain forms of knowing are prioritized over others, including a regimented monopoly over race/ethnicity, criminality, childhood and youth, which have created racialized and gendered regimes that operate within contemporary Guyana (Saleh-Hanna, 2015; Stoler, 2006; Quijano 2000). These gendered norms and other tropes of the colony have left their legacy in Guyana, particularly on the representation, treatment, criminalization and punishment of children through the juvenile justice system, its agents and institutions. The omission of children from the archives – unless mediated by an adult – is also a legacy of colonialism.

Adopting a Caribbean feminist criminological approach alongside ideas of coloniality and hauntology not only facilitated an understanding of these colonial afterlives, but also how colonialism has and continues to structure the world around us, which includes foundations of knowing and forgetting (Quijano 2000; Stoler, 2006). Indeed, every text contains "phantoms" (Royale 1995: 35). Despite their spectrality, the archival materials have allowed us to fill some of these silences and to ask and explore key questions surrounding juvenile justice in Guyana. Maintaining the afterlives of colonialism, the punishment and rehabilitation of children have been achieved through a combination of education and labour, themselves closely related. The relationship between "work" and "rehabilitation" is a recurrent theme in our analysis of the past and the present as is the highly gendered educational opportunities afforded to young Guyanese, none of which are sufficient to enable them to build a life for themselves beyond the institutions. However, this has been excluded from official discourse as well as the archives, as most records ignore the wider political economy or how capitalism limits the options available to some children. It is these which result in



"survival strategies" and committing crimes of poverty just to get by (Danns 1992). Thus, this article illustrates how the legacies of empire – both visible and invisible – are replicated in contemporary Guyana and how they reproduce gendered, socio-economic and racialized inequalities in youth justice.

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