

Sociology of Crime, Law and Deviance
Volume 14

Popular Culture, Crime and Social Control

Mathieu Deflem
Editor

SOCIOLOGY OF CRIME, LAW AND DEVIANCE VOLUME 14

POPULAR CULTURE, CRIME AND SOCIAL CONTROL

EDITED BY

MATHIEU DEFLEM

University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC



JAI

United Kingdom – North America – Japan
India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Group Publishing Limited
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2010

Copyright © 2010 Emerald Group Publishing Limited

Reprints and permission service

Contact: booksandseries@emeraldinsight.com

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without either the prior written permission of the publisher or a licence permitting restricted copying issued in the UK by The Copyright Licensing Agency and in the USA by The Copyright Clearance Center. No responsibility is accepted for the accuracy of information contained in the text, illustrations or advertisements. The opinions expressed in these chapters are not necessarily those of the Editor or the publisher.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-84950-732-5

ISSN: 1521-6136 (Series)



Awarded in recognition of
Emerald's production
department's adherence to
quality systems and processes
when preparing scholarly
journals for print



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

POPULAR CULTURE, CRIME AND SOCIAL CONTROL

SOCIOLOGY OF CRIME, LAW AND DEVIANCE

**Series Editors: Mathieu Deflem (Volumes 6–14)
Jeffrey T. Ulmer (Volumes 1–5)**

Recent Volumes:

- Volume 6: Ethnographies of Law and Social Control –
Edited by Stacey Lee Burns, 2005**
- Volume 7: Sociological Theory and Criminological
Research, Views from Europe and United States –
Edited by Mathieu Deflem, 2006**
- Volume 8: Police Occupational Culture: New Debates and
Directions – Edited by Megan O'Neill, Monique
Marks and Anne-Marie Singh, 2007**
- Volume 9: Crime and Human Rights – Edited by Stephan
Paramentier and Elmar Weitekamp, 2007**
- Volume 10: Surveillance and Governance: Crime Control and
Beyond – Edited by Mathieu Deflem, 2008**
- Volume 11: Restorative Justice: From Theory to Practice –
Edited by Holly Ventura Miller, 2008**
- Volume 12: Access to Justice – Edited by Rebecca L. Sandefur,
2009**
- Volume 13: Immigration, Crime and Justice – Edited by
William F. McDonald, 2009**

INTRODUCTION: THE CRIMINOLOGY OF POPULAR CULTURE

Crime and social control present important issues that move and affect large segments of society. Whether we consider the impact of criminal events in terms of victimization, the construction of deviance into criminalized acts, or the many socially relevant aspects related to criminal justice policies and other social control activities, crime and justice are matters that deserve our most serious attention. It is largely for this reason that scholars develop astute theoretical models and sophisticated methodologies to study crime and social control in their many significant components. Yet, the world of popular culture, which we tend to associate with playfulness and fun, has also embraced themes related to crime and its control. It is perhaps a sign of the very earnestness associated with crime and social control that these themes are also dealt with in the social institutions of entertainment. The study of such portrayals of crime and criminal justice in popular culture is the focus of the present volume.

Francois Truffaut (1985) once remarked that the task of the movie director is not to say something but to show something. Undoubtedly, this is true and, surely, this should be true of all exciting art. Yet, while not intent on saying something, artists also do say something and do transmit ideas, whether consciously or not, through their aesthetic expressions. It is possible therefore to analyze dimensions of popular culture from the viewpoint of various academic disciplines. Social scientists have particularly sought to unravel many aspects of social life as they are revealed in popular culture. Among the many sociologically relevant issues, crime and social control have received considerable attention.

More work has been done in the criminology of popular culture than can be reviewed here (see, e.g., Bailey & Hale, 1998; McMahon, 2008; Murley, 2008). Suffice it to say that diverse artistic and cultural expressions, such as paintings, sculptures, photographs, cartoons, and other visual arts in the print media, music, movies, television, and Internet-based audio-visual materials have been analyzed from the viewpoint of important matters relating to crime and social control. There also exist specialized journals in this area, such as the *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture* and

Crime, Media, Culture. It is in this rich burgeoning field of criminological analysis that the present volume is situated.

This work offers a range of innovative contributions that contemplate on some of the many ways in which themes related to crime and its control are addressed in a number of different manifestations of popular culture. In Part I, chapters are brought together that focus on the representation of criminologically relevant themes in the visual arts, including movies, comic books, and television. Susan Boyd's chapter addresses arguably one of the most famous and infamous examples of the treatment of drug abuse in the world of the cinema by discussing the representation of marijuana use in the cult classic *Reefer Madness*. Also focusing on other movies that portray illegal drug use, Boyd draws on feminist and critical criminology to argue that there are enduring links presented between illegal drugs and immorality that involve a stigmatization and moral condemnation of drug users. Nickie Phillips turns to a very topical theme by analyzing the popular movie *The Dark Night* in the wake of the events of September 11. Phillips' analysis focuses on the ideological messages of crime and justice that are presented in *The Dark Knight* and specifically shows how these messages reinforce the notion of the evildoer as an outsider. Bradford Reyns and Billy Henson next focus their criminological attention on the relatively unexplored art form of comic books. The authors find that crime control and crime prevention themes can be found across a broad range of comic books. They suggest that such representations may influence the public's perception of crime and thereby affect the legitimacy of the criminal justice system. In a final chapter on the visual arts, Dawn Cecil looks at televised images of incarceration in documentaries and reality-based programs. The author shows that jails of all sizes and types are presented but always in a sensationalized manner that is supportive of official criminal justice policies.

Part II focuses on criminological themes in popular music. Judah Schept first analyzes the lyrics and music videos of Palestinian hip-hop, with a special focus on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Based on a semiotic analysis, Schept finds that Palestinian hip-hop artists rely on terms from criminal justice to narrate their lives under occupation in contrast with an organically conceived connection to the land of Palestine. Charis Kubrin and Ronald Weitzer also focus on rap music, but their attention is centered on the existing academic scholarship about rap. The authors argue that this scholarship reveals several weaknesses in lacking rigidity of research. Accordingly, they make several recommendations to strengthen such contributions. Turning attention to black musicianship, Viviane Saleh-Hanna uses the scholarship that can be found in music lyrics to broaden the focus of mainstream criminological discourse. In particular, the author argues that black musicianship can offer

an antidote to the colonialism and racism that is often reproduced in criminology. A final chapter on music is offered by Ellen Leichtman, who centers her scholarly attention on protest music during the civil rights era and in the Punk movement. On the basis of her analysis, Leichtman argues that music should not be overlooked in the study of criminal justice as it can serve an important function to those who fight for justice.

The final part of this book brings together chapters that study themes of crime and justice in the non-fictional world of popular culture. Anneke Meyer first explores the representation and regulation of child sex crimes in the news media. On the basis of discourse analysis of newspaper stories, Meyer shows that the media construct pedophiles as members of a distinct and dangerous category of people and that this image also informs formal policies. Likewise focusing on news publications, Greg Justis and Steven Chermak analyze the manner in which forensics television programs are used in the news media. The authors find that such representations of forensics entertainment have been increasingly relied on in the news and that they greatly influence public perceptions. Stephanie Kane shifts the attention to popular culture as it is practiced in everyday talk, especially in discourse on crime. The author shows that the carnivalesque lifestyles on Brazil's beaches are confronted with the reality of armed robberies and that this duality informs popular culture as practical living. In the final chapter to this volume, Nicole Rafter and Per Ystehede analyze the criminology of Cesare Lombroso in the context of late 19th-century Gothicism. The authors argue that Lombroso's criminals were Gothic creations, drawn from literature and art, thereby manifesting a connection that exists between the worlds of fiction and science. Collectively, the authors of this volume hope to have offered analyses that may further stimulate scholarship on the criminology of popular culture and bring about stimulating discussions and debate.

REFERENCES

- Bailey, F. Y., & Hale, D. C. (1998). *Popular culture, crime, and justice*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.
- McMahon, R. (Ed.) (2008). *Crime, law and popular culture in Europe, 1500–1900*. Cullompton, UK: Willan Publishing.
- Murley, J. (2008). *The rise of true crime: 20th-century murder and American popular culture*. Westport: Praeger Publishers.
- Truffaut, F. (1985). *Hitchcock*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Mathieu Deflem
Editor

CONTENTS

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS	vii
INTRODUCTION: THE CRIMINOLOGY OF POPULAR CULTURE	ix
PART I: CRIME AND SOCIAL CONTROL IN THE VISUAL ARTS	
<i>REEFER MADNESS AND BEYOND</i> <i>Susan Boyd</i>	3
<i>THE DARK KNIGHT: CONSTRUCTING IMAGES OF GOOD VS. EVIL IN AN AGE OF ANXIETY</i> <i>Nickie D. Phillips</i>	25
<i>SUPERHERO JUSTICE: THE DEPICTION OF CRIME AND JUSTICE IN MODERN-AGE COMIC BOOKS AND GRAPHIC NOVELS</i> <i>Bradford W. Reynolds and Billy Henson</i>	45
<i>TELEVISED IMAGES OF JAIL: LESSONS IN CONTROLLING THE UNRULY</i> <i>Dawn K. Cecil</i>	67
PART II: RESISTANCE, CRIME, AND PROTEST IN MUSIC	
<i>"I BROKE THE LAW? NO, THE LAW BROKE ME!" PALESTINIAN HIP-HOP AND THE SEMIOTICS OF OCCUPATION</i> <i>Judah Schept</i>	91

**RAP MUSIC'S VIOLENT AND MISOGYNISTIC
EFFECTS: FACT OR FICTION?**

Charis E. Kubrin and Ronald Weitzer

121

**CRIME, RESISTANCE AND SONG: BLACK
MUSICIANSHIP'S BLACK CRIMINOLOGY**

Viviane Saleh-Hanna

145

**THE DIFFERENT SOUNDS OF AMERICAN PROTEST:
FROM FREEDOM SONGS TO PUNK ROCK**

Ellen C. Leichtman

173

**PART III: CRIME AND JUSTICE
IN NON-FICTION**

**EVIL MONSTERS AND CUNNING PERVERTS:
REPRESENTING AND REGULATING THE
DANGEROUS PAEDOPHILE**

Anneke Meyer

195

**FRAMING THE SCENE: PRESENTATIONS OF
FORENSICS PROGRAMMING IN THE NEWS**

Gregory G. Justis and Steven Chermak

219

**BEACH CRIME IN POPULAR CULTURE:
CONFINING THE CARNIVALESQUE IN
SALVADOR DA BAHIA, BRAZIL**

Stephanie C. Kane

243

**HERE BE DRAGONS: LOMBROSO, THE GOTHIC,
AND SOCIAL CONTROL**

Nicole Rafter and Per Ystehede

263

INDEX

285

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

<i>Susan Boyd</i>	Studies in Policy and Practice, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC, Canada
<i>Dawn K. Cecil</i>	Department of Criminology, University of South Florida St. Petersburg, FL, USA
<i>Steven Chermak</i>	School of Criminal Justice, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, USA
<i>Mathieu Deflem</i>	Department of Sociology, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC, USA
<i>Billy Henson</i>	School of Criminal Justice, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH, USA
<i>Gregory G. Justis</i>	Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice Studies, University of Southern Indiana, IN, USA
<i>Stephanie C. Kane</i>	Department of Criminal Justice, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, USA
<i>Charis E. Kubrin</i>	Department of Sociology, George Washington University, Washington, DC, USA
<i>Ellen C. Leichtman</i>	Department of Criminal Justice, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, KY, USA
<i>Anneke Meyer</i>	Department of Sociology, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK
<i>Nickie D. Phillips</i>	Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice, St. Francis College, Brooklyn, NY, USA
<i>Nicole Rafter</i>	School of Criminal Justice, Northeastern University, Boston, MA, USA

- Bradford W. Reyns* Department of Political Science and
Criminal Justice, Southern Utah
University, Cedar City, UT, USA
- Viviane Saleh-Hanna* Department of Sociology/Anthropology/
Crime and Justice Studies, University of
Massachusetts at Dartmouth, North
Dartmouth, MA, USA
- Judah Schept* Department of Criminal Justice, Indiana
University, Bloomington, IN, USA
- Ronald Weitzer* Department of Sociology, George
Washington University, Washington,
DC, USA
- Per Ystehede* Department of Criminology and Sociology
of Law, University of Oslo, Norway

PART I
CRIME AND SOCIAL CONTROL
IN THE VISUAL ARTS

REEFER MADNESS AND BEYOND

Susan Boyd

ABSTRACT

Purpose – This chapter analyses the independent U.S. film Reefer Madness, a fictional full-length feature about marijuana use and selling that has grown in cult status since it was produced in 1936. In addition, this chapter discusses a number of examples of early and contemporary illegal drug films that focus on marijuana, including a short film scene from Broken Flowers (2005).

Methodology – Drawing from critical and feminist criminology, sociology, and cultural studies, this chapter provides an analysis of fictional illegal drug films with a focus on marijuana.

Findings – The significance of a century of film representations that reinforce a link between illegal drug use, immorality, and crime is discussed. It appears that these themes are quite enduring.

Value – It is worthwhile to analyze illegal drug films, not just to explore the stigmatization of users, but to examine the social/political effects of these films, particularly the ways that certain kinds of negative images support drug regulation and its attendant policing.

INTRODUCTION

Film is one medium amongst many producing discourse about criminalized drugs, addiction, and justice. Print media, literature, music, art, and numerous other media contribute to our understanding of the images we see on the screen. Since the early 1900s, representations of illegal drug use and trafficking have often been central themes in Hollywood and independent films. Federal and state drug prohibition and film emerged during the same era in the United States. Before and since the criminalization of specific drugs such as opium, cocaine, and heroin, and later marijuana, filmmakers have contributed to discourses about drugs and the people who use, sell, and produce them. In addition, they have contributed to cinematic representations of criminal justice and societal responses to drug use and trafficking. The term “illegal drug films” refers to films that focus primarily on drug use, selling, production, and their consequences. Today, illegal drug films are common fare in Hollywood and independent film productions. In addition, movies that cannot be categorized as illegal drug films often include illegal drug use and selling in references or in short scenes.

This chapter examines the independent U.S. film *Reefer Madness*, a fictional full-length feature about marijuana use and selling that has grown in cult status since it was produced in 1936. In addition, this chapter discusses a number of examples of early and contemporary illegal drug films that focus on marijuana, including a short film scene from *Broken Flowers* (2005). It is worthwhile to analyze illegal drug films, not just to explore the stigmatization of users, but to examine the social/political effects of these films, particularly the ways in which certain kinds of negative images support drug regulation and its attendant policing. Drawing from critical and feminist criminology, sociology, and cultural studies, this chapter provides an analysis of illegal drug films with a focus on marijuana. Finally, the significance of a century of film representations that reinforce a link between illegal drug use, immorality, and crime is discussed (Taylor, 2008, p. 369).

POPULAR CULTURE, FILM, AND ILLEGAL DRUGS

Illegal drug films and short scenes about illegal drugs in movies provide systems of meaning about drugs, pleasure, states of consciousness, addiction, treatment, morality, criminal justice, order, disorder, and punishment (Boyd, 2008; Doyle, 2006; Manning, 2007; Valentine & Fraser, 2008;

Valverde, 2006). Mariana Valverde reminds us that representations “move us, stimulating the passions – pity and compassion as much as fear and anger – and triggering powerful memories, fears, dreams and hopes” (2006, p. 163). Illegal drug films also trigger laughter, grief, horror, recognition, disbelief, and hope – in other words, a wide spectrum of human emotions. Most important, films provide us with entertainment and are made for profit. Since the discovery of film in the late 1880s, viewers have been riveted by motion pictures, flocking first to penny arcades to watch half-minute silent films and later to movie theatres to view feature-length films. With the discovery of television in the late 1930s, and later video, computers, DVDs, and iPods, film viewing has expanded in the United States and elsewhere. Today the average American spends four hours a day watching television, DVDs, or iPods (Sourcebook for Teaching Science, 2009).

Illegal drug films are cultural products that provide a lens to understand the interplay between representations of illegal drug use, selling, crime, and criminal justice regulation. The cultural criminologists Ferrell and Websdale question the expansion of criminal justice practices in Western nations. They propose “a mode of analysis that embodies sensitivities to image, meaning, and representation in the study of deviance, crime, and control” in media and popular culture (Ferrell & Websdale, 1999, p. 3). Stuart Hall has long been interested in visual images of crime (Hall, 1981, 1997). He illustrates how pictures, or photos of crime, have ideological significance for they can “*enhance, locate, or specify*” ideological themes (*italic in original*, Hall, 1981). Visual representations of marijuana and other illegal drugs, users, dealers, and drug paraphernalia are fetishized in film, re(producing) images that we come to recognize and attach meaning to. When examining representations, whether film or print media, Valverde also emphasizes looking outside of the boundaries of criminology and the “crime and media” subdiscipline, and breaking out of the singular gaze on crime and law (2006, p. 11). The “domains of law, justice and crime are constituted in part through representations – and through people’s responses to these representations” (2006, p. 163). Film representations introduce and contextualize social problems and transmit ideas about the scope of these issues as well as notions about the appropriate methods of formal and informal regulation of these “problems.” For example, Doyle (2006) notes that “systems of meaning about crime and punishment develop in complex interplay between various cultural representations of crime, some modern, some age old, and with the pronouncements of other key authorities on crime, such as police and politicians” (p. 876). These systems of meaning, myths, and ideologies intersect on and off the film screen, informing our understanding of illegal